

THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH 6/11/23
(Joh 1:3 Jesus created all things, Mat 16:18 then church)

Scriptural definitions:

1. Body of Christ, we are members of His body (1Co 12)
2. Bride of Christ, we are His bride - holy and pure (Eph 5)
3. House of God, we are family by adoption (1Ti 3)
 Temple of God, serve as priests there (2Cor 6, Heb 8:5, 1Pe 2:5)
4. Kingdom of God (Luke), heaven (Mat), Son (Col), we serve the king
5. Congregation (church, assembly), we assemble for all these reasons (Mat 16)

Previously, we looked at innovations of men in religion. Denominations claim John 15 (branches of the one vine) make up the one vine/universal church. To many, the origin, doctrine, name, and practice is not important; after all, we don't all wear the same hat!

But Jesus is speaking of individuals. (JOH 15:5,6) "I am the vine, you {are} the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast {them} into the fire, and they are burned.

How does scripture speak of the organization of believers?

1. Body of Christ.

Rom 12:5 so in Christ we who are many are one body, and each member belongs to one another.

Eph 4:12 to equip the saints for works of ministry and to build up the body of Christ,

1Co 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

2. Bride of Christ

Christ is married. We are His wife.

Eph 5:25-27 Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

They both work together to save souls. Rev 22:17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" Let the one who hears say, "Come!" And let the one who is thirsty come, and the one who desires the water of life drink freely.

3. House (family Heb 11:7) of God / Temple of God

1PE 2:5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Christ is the head of this house/family. 1TI 3:15 But if I tarry long, that you may know how you ought to behave yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

Hebrews 3:5-6 And Moses indeed {was} faithful in all His (God's) house as a

servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken {afterward}, but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.

1Pet 4:17 For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household;

Priests in the temple

Eph 2:20,21 Christ Jesus Himself as the cornerstone. In Him the whole building is fitted together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

2Cor 6:16 For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among *them*. I will be their God, And they shall be My people."

Moses faithfully built the things of the temple. Heb 8:5 who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See *that* you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."

Jesus is the king and high priest now. Rev 1:6 and (Jesus) has made us (little) kings and priests to His God and Father,

4. Kingdom of (God, Heaven, Son)

Jesus was prophesied to be a king and a priest at the same time. Zec 6:12,13 And you are to tell him that this is what the LORD of Hosts says: 'Here is a man whose name is the Branch, and He will branch out from His place and build the temple of the LORD. Yes, He will build the temple of the LORD; He will be clothed in splendor and will sit on His throne and rule. And He will be a priest on His throne,

In Luke's account, John the immerser announced the coming kingdom of Messiah. Luk 16:16 The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the gospel of the kingdom of God is being preached, Luke uses "kingdom of God"

Matthew uses "kingdom of heaven". Peter given the keys in: Mat 16:19 And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

It is also the kingdom of the son in Col 1:13 For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,

5. Congregation, church, assembly

The Holy Spirit used words (1Cor 2:13) to reveal the mind of God. Finding the definition of the word translated "church" will help us see the mind of God on this unfortunate translation.

The translator's job is to find a current English word that most nearly conveys the meaning of the original greek word. This gives us the best possible translation, but a single word does not always do the job. In many cases, several words are better able to explain the meaning of the original Greek word. This is so in the case under consideration. Yet the translators chose "church" from an old English word "chirche" which came from old high Greek word "krihha" which came from late Greek word "kyriakon" from "Kuriakos" 2960; which means: kuriakos {koo-ree-ak-os'}; from 2962; belonging to the Lord (Jehovah or Jesus): -Lord's.

It is used 2 places: REV 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's "Kuriakos" Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, (NKJ) 1CO 11:20 Therefore when you

come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's "Kuriakos" Supper. (NKJ)

But the translators did not do us a favor, even if they can say "people have always done it this way". Somebody started the tradition. They probably started referring to the assembly as the Lord's, just like the Day and the Supper which are part of it.

The Greek word "EKKLESIA" means "called out or forth" properly; an assembly of those who are called out. (THAYER'S 1577).

So then, "ekklesia" is a collective noun and the collectivity is made up of Christians, not other groups, denominations, faiths, etc.

-Example of collective nouns: the unit of a flock is a bird. The unit of a herd is a cow. If there are 5 birds in the midst of 5 cows and someone asks: "How many in that herd over there"? Is the answer 10?

The unit of a church is a Christian. The body, bride, house, temple, kingdom and church are the same thing. COL 1:18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. (NKJ) Since the body is the church, we can substitute the terms. Paul says in (1CO 12:27) that the Corinthians were the church and members in particular. Now, if God asks Christ: "How many in Your church?", Christ will begin to count the branches abiding in Him; are they Christians or denominations?

Locally and universally: The word is used to describe Christians in the Bible in two different senses: a local group and all of the Christians in the world. . (1CO 1:2) Unto the church of God which is at Corinth (locally), to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called {to be} saints, with all that in every place (universally) call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: (KJV)

The purpose of the church

a. The Father is glorified in the church by Christ (Ephesians 3:20-21 NKJ) (20) Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, (21) to Him {be} glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Christ gave His church gifts to be able to carry out her duty. (Ephesians 4:11-12 NKJ) (11) And He Himself gave some {to be} apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, (12) for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

Great expectations warranted a great sacrifice: (Ephesians 5:25-27 NKJ) Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Maintain purity of the bride.

Spiritual work (fellowship) has nothing to do with physical food, fun, or exercise. JOH 6:26 Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. (NKJ)

Our fellowship is teaching the word. If we hold out anything else as the means to convert, we are running in vain. (PHI 2:16) Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in

vain. (KJV)

It will make the spiritual ones strong stronger, the weak ones strong, and the stubborn and rebellious ones will quit and go find other stubborn and rebellious people to meet with. In this case, we still make an effort to regain such a one. 2T 3:14,15 and ROM 16:17

Without God's discipline of sound doctrine, we are reprobate. God will "spew us out of His mouth". (REV 3:16) So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. (KJV) Just like leaven, the unfaithful will cause all to become less faithful. The faithful are responsible for the unfaithful. GAL 6:1,2 AND JS. 5:19

We must separate ourselves from those who walk disorderly (2John 1:9-11) (9) Whosoever transgresses, and abides not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abides in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. (10) If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into {your} house, neither bid him God speed: (11) For he that bids him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

In doing this, the faithful manifest their love for:

1. God (1John 5:2-3) (2) By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. (3) For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

2. Our salvation (both ours and theirs) (1TI 4:16) Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee. (KJV)

b. The work of salvation - converting the lost and restoring the fallen 1TIM 2:3,4 God's desire is for all men's salvation; PRO 11:30 wise men convert sinners.

There are two parts to our spiritual work:

1. Living godly
2. Teaching others

Both are commanded. Both take time, but there comes a time when we should start teaching. (HEB 5:12)

When we think of a faithful member of the Church, what comes to our mind? Just attendance?

Remember JAMES 2:14: What {doth it} profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?