

What is the Church?

Church - from the Greek word: ecclesia, literally means “the called out ones”.

Does that sound voluntary? That the church is an organization which can be joined by choice, by anyone?

Who does the calling out of the ones who make up the church—which is also defined as “the body of Christ”?

What if there is scripture which declares that such membership of His body of believers is pre-ordained? Which, of course, there is. That is, the establishing and continual enlarging of His church is guaranteed to happen for those chosen, by a direct act of God, at his appointed time.

Acts 13:48 “and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed”.

Man, by preaching, calls out—that is, outwardly, or generally. But that call is not efficacious in itself. It is God who calls inwardly, those whom he has elected to save. There is no spiritual certainty of results in man’s calling. But in God’s calling, His work is always spiritually effective, and accomplishes his objective—that being the regeneration of His elect, and them only.

In another place in scripture, those selected to be redeemed are spoken of as gifts from God the father to the son, Jesus. John 17:11-12, “.....Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me.....” “.....those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost.....”

In a word, those who become saved, are not so by human choice, but divine. The plan of the Father, the execution of it by the Son, and the application of it to the elect by the Spirit is all a work of the triune God—sovereign, and independent of any human, or other external factors.

Referring again to the church, the passage in Acts 2 (vs. 47), says that “.....the Lord added to the church daily such as should be (were) saved”. All of which is precisely according to the divine plan.

Man may add members to churches (the organizations); some of which are not true believers. But God adds to the church (the organism, or literal spiritual “body of Christ”) only actual Christians, because he makes them to be such!