

What Is The Church – Lesson 2: To God

Revelation 3:13 He that hat an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Did we learn our lesson? Study Questions from lesson 1 (Foundation)

1. According to Revelation 2:1, who is Christ addressing?

Answer: The angel of the church.

2. According to Revelation 2:8, how does Christ refer to Himself?

Answer: The Son of God.

3. According to I Corinthians 3:11, who is the only acceptable foundation?

Answer: Jesus Christ.

4. According to I Peter 2:5, how is a believer described?

Answer: Lively stones.

5. Complete the following scripture:

Ephesians 5:32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.

True / False

True Christ describes Himself as having divine authority (REV 2:1, 12)

True Christ describes Himself as eternal (REV 2:1, 8, 3:14)

False The Church is founded upon Peter (1Cor 3:11 – Founded upon Christ only)

True Peter is honored as a judge of Israel in the New Jerusalem (MATT 19:28)

Lesson 2: What is the Church to God?

“Church is who we are, not where we go.” – On-line posting by RCCG Pavilion, of Redemption, Saint John

The church has an identity, not an address. If you are basing your relationship with God on your worship activities in a building, you may not know where the Church actually is, and you may need to find out.

A scriptural look at how God defines the ‘Church.’

Acts 2:47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

The Church belongs to God – It was initiated by God, is increased by God, to fulfill the purpose God assigned:

Acts 1:5, 8 – Jesus Christ defines the moment of transition to start the ‘Church.’

(5) For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

- Until the Day of Pentecost, no one had the indwelling of the Holy Spirit – No one was literally part of God, as the Spirit of God fills the believer (2 COR 5:17 – A new creature), no one was part of the body of Christ.

(8) But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

- Once filled with the Holy Spirit, (as a member of His body – His Church), the believer is capable of performing works pleasing to God.

The church's purpose is immediately following "and ye shall" – and defined as witnessing of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior – The Son of God:

- o Not to establish rituals
- o Not to build buildings
- o Not to set a dress code
- o Not to define a day of the week for giving God your attention

Acts 2:1-4 – The first day of the 'Church'

(1) And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

- Although not yet filled with the Holy Spirit, all were of a common intent – to Glorify God as believers in Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ

(2) And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

(3) And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

- God commissioned the Church with an observable act:
 - o A mighty wind filling the house – God defining His presence, as the believers are accepted by God through their faith. **Romans 5:1** Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ
 - o Cloven tongues (like fire) – God demonstrating his acceptance of each believer with an individual physical event that is seen by all.

(4) And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

On that first day, the members were endowed with gifts to the Word of God to the world.

The Church described

1 Corinthians 2:12-14 – The 'Church' is a 'variety pack'

(12) For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

- The Church is not merely a collection of people, it is a collective of a single being, unified in Jesus Christ (believers are literally part of Christ – This relationship between God and man does not exist in any other time {dispensation}, it is an exclusive invitation by the grace of God to those who would accept God's gift and trust in Christ)

(13) For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

- No disqualifying worldly trait (Jew/Gentile, bond/free) that prevents one from believing and receiving the gift of God, and becoming a member of the Body of Christ (His Church)
- Regardless of position, the believer becomes part of 'one Spirit.'

Exodus 20:1-3 And God spake all these words, saying, **(2)** I *am* the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. **(3)** Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

- One God (not many)

Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

- One Christ (not many)

John 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

- One Holy Spirit (not many)

John 10:30 I and my Father are one.

- All (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) are one: If you know the Son, you know the Father and the Holy Spirit.

(14) For the body is not one member, but many.

- Each believer has their unique relationship with God, and their own responsibilities under the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19 – Go ye therefore and teach. . . .) based on their own talents.
 - o The Church is a body with many different functions and abilities – it is only limited by the imagination of God.

The ‘Church’ is God (Christ), with the believers integrated into His Spirit

I Corinthians 12:27 Now ye are part of the body of Christ, and members in particular.

- An inseparable part of Christ.

Romans 12:5 So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

- Believers are also an inseparable part of each other (in Christ)
- Not considering abilities, the only distinction between members are the ‘crowns of glory’ (**1 PET 5:4**) received, which is not based on station or member function, but faithfulness in following the commandments of Christ.

How long will the ‘Church’ last?

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

- Humanity before Christ did not have this invitation – Christ had not acted as the propitiation of sin, and the Holy Spirit was not given to humanity.
 - o As noted in **Acts 2**, the ‘Church’ started on the Day of Pentecost.
 - o This is the beginning of the dispensation of GRACE.

John 3:15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

John 20:29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: *blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*

- The dispensation of GRACE will last as long as faith is required to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior
- Upon Christ’s return, this dispensation will end.

I Thessalonians 4:16-67 – Christ’s return and the collection of the ‘Church’

(16) For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

(17) Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

- ‘Church’ has an expiration – Christ will gather all that are His, and the invitation will expire.
- The ‘Church’ not only belongs to God, it is God, as humanity is graciously invited to become joint heirs.

Next Lesson: What is the Church to Man?

What Is The Church – Lesson 1: To God

Study Questions

1. According to Acts 1:5, who adds to the church?

2. According to Acts 2:2-3, what two physical events were observable when the Holy Spirit arrived?

1. _____ 2. _____

3. According to I Corinthians 12:13, what restrictions are there to becoming a church member?

4. According to I Thessalonians 4:17, when does the 'church age' end?

5. Complete the following scripture:

I Corinthians 12:27 Now ye are the body of _____, and _____ in particular.

True / False

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| T | F | The Church always existed because Christ always existed. |
| T | F | All Church members have responsibilities. |
| T | F | Some Church member positions are more important than others. |
| T | F | The Church is literally part of Christ. |