

It is called “the Pillar and Foundation of Truth” (1 Tim. 3:16). It is described as a “Bride”, a “Body”, and at other times a “Building”. The Church is a unique and special thing in the world today unlike anything ever before. It was unknown to anyone in the OT - including the prophets of God! In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said He would build His Church. Now, since the day of Pentecost over 2,000 years ago, He continues to build this new thing called the Church. So, we must ask the question:

### **Lesson 1: What is the Church?**

The Church is NOT: 1) a \_\_\_\_\_, 2) a social cause, 3) an activity, 4) an organization, 5) a continuation of Judaism, 6) \_\_\_\_\_ of Israel, or 7) the \_\_\_\_\_.

The question is better asked, “\_\_\_\_\_ *is the Church?*” The Church is everyone who has been \_\_\_\_\_ to Jesus Christ by saving faith in Him. At the point of salvation the Holy Spirit baptizes a person into the Body of Christ, “***For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body...***” -1 Cor 12:13).

The English word “church” comes from the Greek word “ekklesia”. Ekklesia means “\_\_\_\_\_”. The Church is made up of people from every race, nation and language who have been called out to faith in Jesus Christ:

- ***“He called you to this through our Gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*** -2 Thessalonians 2:14
- ***“...‘You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe, and language and people and nation.’*** -Rev. 5:9

The Bible describes the Church and its relationship to Christ in different ways:

a **Bridegroom and Bride** (Eph 5)

the **Head** and the Body (1 Cor. 12; Col 1:18; Eph 1)  
the **Shepherd** and **Sheep** (John 10)  
the **Vine** and the **Branches** (John 15)  
the **Cornerstone** and the  
**Living Stones** of the Building (Eph. 2:10-21)  
the **High Priest** and the kingdom of **Priests** (1 Pet 2)  
The Last Adam and the **New Creation** (Rom. 5)

## **Lesson 2: The Start of the Church**

In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, "***I will build my Church***". The \_\_\_\_\_ of the Church is Jesus Christ Himself. After completing His work of Redemption (death, burial, resurrection), He began His work of Building the Church. That work began on the Day of Pentecost and will continue all the way until the Rapture. Jesus gave His disciples the Great Commission (evangelize and disciple all people). This makes the Church the \_\_\_\_\_ through which Christ is building more of His Church.

The Church began at \_\_\_\_\_ **Why do we know this?**

1. First, the Church is only made up of people who are \_\_\_\_\_ in the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13) and have the Holy Spirit indwelling them, "***And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit***" -Eph. 1:13. This could not begin until after Jesus ascended to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit, "***Wait for the gift my Father promised...in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit***" -Acts 1:4-5.
2. Second, the Church was a \_\_\_\_\_ to everyone in the OT. People before Jesus Christ did not know about God's plan for something called "the Church". The Church was revealed through the apostles of the NT and not before. This was because it did not exist until Pentecost, "...***the***

*mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body...this mystery which for ages past was kept hidden in God..."*  
-Eph. 3:4b, 5, 6, 9

### **Lesson 3: The Universal Church**

Everyone around the world who believes in Jesus as their Savior is part of what is called "the \_\_\_\_\_ Church". This is the unique group of people Jesus spoke of when He said "***I will build My Church***" (Matth. 16:18). These are the people whom the Bible says are "***in Christ***". It is this whole tribe that Jesus will \_\_\_\_\_ from the earth before the Tribulation (1 Thess. 4:13-18). Unlike the nation of Israel, God's special covenant people, the Church is not restricted to one \_\_\_\_\_ group or nation. It's members join from all over the world (Revelation 5:9). The Universal Church also includes every believer going all the way back to the day of \_\_\_\_\_.

In the New Testament the Universal Church is also called the "Body of Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 1:22-23) and the "Bride" of Christ (Ephesians 5:25-32). This language conveys the unique relationship Jesus has with the Church. It is a relationship that is different than His relationship with \_\_\_\_\_ Testament believers, the nation of \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ believers.

### **Lesson 4: The Local Church**

The Local Church is a localized, visible \_\_\_\_\_ of the Universal Church. When a group of believers living within the same geographical area gather together for worship they form a local church. We see in the book of \_\_\_\_\_ local churches forming as people in each place would accept Christ and start fellowshiping with other believers nearby.

- \_\_\_\_\_ percent of the time the word “church” is used in the NT it is referring to a local church or local group of churches.
- Most books in the are letters written to local churches like these (Romans, Corinthians, Ephesians, Galatians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, etc.)

Establishing local churches is God’s \_\_\_\_\_. Believers located near each other are not supposed to \_\_\_\_\_ each other, but, gather together (Hebrews 10:25). Local churches are the context in which the \_\_\_\_\_ is carried on.

### **Lesson 5: Local Church Organization:**

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_ as Head/ Chief Shepherd (Eph. 1:22-23; 1 Peter 5:4)
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_/Overseer(s)/ Elder(s)/ Under-shepherd(s)
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*See Sermons on Titus 1:5-9

### **Lesson 6: Purpose of the Local Church**

\_\_\_\_\_ God

**Instruction from the Word** (2 Tim. 3:16-4:2)

**Fellowship** (Hebrews 10:25),

**Give** offerings (2 Cor. 8:7)

observe the \_\_\_\_\_ (Matthew 28:20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26),

\_\_\_\_\_ each other (Eph. 4:16),

**Evangelize** the lost (Eph. 6:19-20)

### **Lesson 7: Clarifying Some Confusion**

The purpose of the Church is not to “ \_\_\_\_\_ ” or “ \_\_\_\_\_ ” for Christ. As *called-out ones* we are to morally and spiritually come out of the world. This means separate ourselves from the world. This means separate ourselves to Christ. This is a group project that we all set out to do with each other so that we can develop into \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ. (See John 17:17; Col. 1:28; Eph. 3:19; 4:13, 16).

The only redemption we are concerned with is the redemption from sin and death which Christ accomplished for us on the cross. The culture that needs redeeming is the culture \_\_\_\_\_ the Church. Believers need to create an \_\_\_\_\_ of holiness, love and wisdom in the house of God (the Church).

The \_\_\_\_\_ will be established and implemented by Christ at His 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming, not by the Church \_\_\_\_\_ He returns. The Church’s \_\_\_\_\_ focus is to proclaim the Gospel to the lost. Its \_\_\_\_\_ focus is to build itself up – believer building believer. This is done by everyone using the gifts each has received by the Holy Spirit for the up-building of other believers into full maturity. Our focus is on each believer’s full maturity in Christ (again, see Eph. 3:19; 4:13; Col 1:28 also 1 Cor. 12:7; 14:12)

### **Lesson 8: Membership:**

- 1) Faith in Jesus Christ
- 2) Local Church requirements will \_\_\_\_\_,
- 3) Recommended commitments by those considering membership in local church:

be **baptized** or be **seeking** to be baptized (Mth. 28:19)  
**commitment** to **grow** & serve (Heb. 5:13-14; 6:11)  
**study** (2 Tim. 2:15), pray (1 Thess. 5:18),  
**attend** regularly (Heb. 10:25), **Give** (1 Cor. 8:7)

## Lesson 9: Judgment of the Church

***“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”*** (2 Cor. 5:10).

After the Church is \_\_\_\_\_ from the earth, she will be judged. The place will be at the Judgment seat of Christ where Jesus Himself will be the Judge. Only Christians will be at this judgment. This will be a time when every \_\_\_\_\_ will have his or her life examined by Jesus Christ.

Pastorally, this is very significant. I want that day to be the most wonderful experience for each person entrusted to me by Jesus. That motivates and focuses my ministry efforts. And it should yours too because you will stand up to the bar.

This judgment will not result in \_\_\_\_\_ for sins because the sins of the Church were paid for at the cross, ***“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”*** (Rom. 8:1)

It is a day of \_\_\_\_\_: getting them and losing them. As our earthly lives and works are evaluated by the Savior the rewards we get (or don't) will be determined. The believer's works that are acceptable will bring him rewards and greater benefits. His works that are unacceptable will be burned and mean the loss of rewards, ***“[The believer's] work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.”*** (1 Cor. 3:13-15).

\*\*\*Our \_\_\_\_\_ motivation for doing each work will be judged also, ***“Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord***

*comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts..." (1 Cor. 4:5).*

Every believer should be living with this day \_\_\_\_\_ in view.

**ANSWER KEY:**

Lesson 1: business, extension, the kingdom, who, joined, called out ones

Lesson 2: architect, agency, Pentecost, included, mystery

Lesson 3: Universal, rapture, ethnic, Pentecost, Old, Israel, Tribulation

Lesson 4: expression, Acts, 80, will, neglect, Great Comission

Lesson 5: Jesus Christ, pastors, deacons, congregation

Lesson 6: worship, ordinances, edify

Lesson 7: bring heaven to earth, redeem the culture, maturity, inside, atmosphere, kingdom, before, outward, inward

Lesson 8: vary

Lesson 9: Raptured, Christian, condemnation, rewards, heart, clearly