

January 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023

## Called by Christ, Called to the Church!

*Revelation 1:19-2:4*

### What is the Church?

- ❖ The Church was established supernaturally by Jesus.

*Matthew 16:17-19* “And Jesus answered him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.’”

- ❖ The Church is the followers of Christ who derive their identity and mission from Jesus.

*Matthew 28:16-20* “Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw Him they worshiped Him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’”

- ❖ “In the New Testament it is the translation of the Greek word *ecclesia*, which is synonymous with the Hebrew *kahal* of the Old Testament, both words meaning simply an assembly, the character of which can only be known from the connection in which the word is found. There is no clear instance of its being used for a place of meeting or of worship, although in post-apostolic times it early received this meaning.”<sup>1</sup>

*Acts 8:1-4* “And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.”

↳ A group of devout believers that were proclaiming Christ.

📖 Acts 9:26-31

↳ The church is a movement that is united through the teachings of Jesus Christ, the sacraments He established, and the promise of His return.

↳ The Church is the disciples of Christ regardless of geographical location.

*Hebrews 12:23* “and to the assembly [*ecclesia*] of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,”

↳ The whole body of believers that are redeemed for God and destined to go to heaven.

📖 Ephesians 3:7-11

↳ The Church establishes a supernatural kingdom through the gospel of Christ.

*Acts 14:27 “And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.”*

↳ The church was established through the Jewish community but was prophesied to become an organism that received and accepted the gentiles.

*Hebrews 10:19, 24-25 “Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus...let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”*

↳ The church is the assembly of believers that have been redeemed, sanctified, and accepted before a Holy God by the blood of Christ.

↳ The church is a united body of believers that are actively involved in each member's internal growth.

*Matthew 5:13-16 “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. ‘You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.’”*

↳ The church is a public entity that has the responsibility to affect the world and glorify God.

*1 Peter 2:9-10 “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”*

↳ “God has commanded His people to organize themselves into distinct visible ecclesiastical communities... for the great purpose of giving visibility to His kingdom, of making known the gospel of that kingdom, and of gathering in all its elect subjects.”<sup>1</sup>

*Ephesians 2:19 “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,”*

↳ The church becomes a family and temple of God, where the Holy Spirit dwells.

## **Have You Been Called to the Church?**

*Revelation 2:1-4 “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: ‘The words of Him who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands. ‘I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.’”*

❖ When we are called into a relationship with Christ, we are called to the church.

*Jeremiah 31:31 “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah,”*

❖ A covenant based on relationship rather than religion.

*Jeremiah 31:32 “not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord.”*

*Luke 10:25-28 “And behold, a lawyer stood up to put Him to the test, saying, ‘Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ He said to him, ‘What is written in the Law? How do you read it?’ And he answered, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.’ And He said to him, ‘You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.’”*

*1 John 5:1-4 “Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.”*

❖ A covenant based on the indwelling of the Spirit of God in our hearts.

*Jeremiah 31:33 “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put My law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”*

*John 3:3-8 “Jesus answered him, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ Nicodemus said to Him, ‘How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?’ Jesus answered, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, “You must be born again.” The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.’”*

*Ephesians 2:18-22 “For through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In Him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”*

❖ A covenant based on the provision of Christ’s forgiveness.

*Jeremiah 31:34 “And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”*

- From sinful nature to radical transformation
- The experience of repentance and forgiveness
- Freedom to serve the Lord
- Grace to love His commandments
- Unity in the body of Christ

Endnotes:

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<sup>1</sup> Easton, M. G. (1893). In *Illustrated Bible Dictionary and Treasury of Biblical History, Biography, Geography, Doctrine, and Literature*. Harper & Brothers.



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