

Pastor L. A. Radtke

DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

Meaning of the word Church.

It comes from the Greek word (Ekklesia) which means that which is called out.

Def. "A people segregated or called out from the mass into that which is a distinct group in itself, an assembly."

The word is used in the New Testament in connection with:

1. The assembly of Israel. Acts 7:38
2. An assembly of heathen. Acts 19:25, 29, 32
3. The church local assembly. Acts 12:12, I Cor 1:2, 16:19, Rom 16:5, Col. 4:15
Phil. 1:2
4. The church universal. Mt. 16:18, Eph. 1:22, 3:14, 15, 5:30, Col 1:18
I Cor 12:13

The first use of the word Church (Mt. 16:16-18)

In verse 16 Peter says to the Lord Jesus Christ "There art the Christ, the Son of the Living God."

In verse 18 Jesus Said "And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Thou art (Peter, petros) literally a small stone and upon this rock (petra) I will build my church. He does not promise to build his church upon Peter, but upon himself as Peter tells us in I Peter 2:4-9.

Jehovah of the Old Testament is given the title "Rock" in that Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus Christ of the New Testament, he to is given the title of the "Rock".

If one denies to acknowledge Jesus Christ as the "Rock", he denies the diety of Jesus Christ.

Some O. T. references. Check concordance for more.

II Cam. 22:2, 32, 47

Psalms 18:2, 18, 31; 27:5; 28:1; 31:2, 3; 62:2, 6, 7

Ex. 17:6 and Num. 20 Moses smote the rock.

Isa. 28:16

New Testament references.

Mt. 7:24-27

I Cor 10:4

I Pet 2:4-8

1. Christ crucified is the Rock. Smitten once that the spirit of life may flow from Him to all who will drink. Ex. 17:6, I Cor. 10:4, John 4:13, 14; 7:37-39, Rev 22:17
2. To the Church, the foundation and chief corner stone. Eph 2:20.
3. To the Jews of His first coming, a stumbling stone. Rom 9:32-33, I Cor 1:23.
4. To Israël of His second coming, the head stone of the corner. Sec. 4:7
5. To the Gentile world power, the smiting stone cut out without hands. Dan. 2:34
6. To the unbeliever the crushing stone of judgement. Mt. 21:44

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All believers are considered living stones.

I will build my church - Matt: 16:18

If the phrase is repeated five times emphasizing a different word each time, the contribution each word makes to the whole will be noted.

"I" indicates that the whole enterprise belongs to and is undertaken by Christ alone. Does not need help from visible organizations.

"WILL" prophetic aspect - church is not in existence at this time - Christ must die first. Holy Spirit must descend. Acts 2

"BUILD" the manner - long drawn out process. Eph 2:20-21

"MY" this company is the property of God. He purchased it with his own blood.

"CHURCH" a distinction is set up at once between this called out heavenly company and other human beings.

FOUR THINGS THAT MUST BE DONE BEFORE THE CHURCH COULD BEGIN

1. There could be no church in the world until Christ died, for her relationship to that death is based wholly on that finished work. Eph 5:25
2. There could be no church until Christ arose from the dead to provide her with resurrected life. Rom. 8:11
3. There could be no church until He ascended upon high to become the head, for she is a new creation with a new federal headship in the resurrected Christ. He is to her what the head is to the body. Nor could the church survive for a moment were it not for His intercession and advocacy in heaven. Rom. 8:34
4. There could be no church on earth until the advent of the Holy Spirit for the most basic and fundamental reality respecting the church is that she is a temple for the habitation of God through the Spirit. She is regenerated, baptized, and sealed by the Spirit.

Acts 1:5 says the baptism of the Holy Spirit would happen on the day of Pentecost. Jn 14:20, Acts 11:15 says that the baptism of the Holy Spirit happened on the day of Pentecost, Acts ch 2 which was the birthday of the church.

WHAT IS THE CHURCH AND IT'S PURPOSE ?

There are two usages of the Greek noun, Ekklesia (church) in the New Testament. It is used in a universal sense and it is used in a local sense.

The word CHURCH as used in a universal sense, includes all those who, in this age of grace, have by faith, accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour, at which time one is born again, indwelt by the Spirit, and is also baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ, and Christ becomes his head. Eph. 1:22-23, 1 Cor. 12:13.

Only the Lord can perform this baptism of the Spirit, Acts 1:5, which is not a ritual or an experience, but rather, a position in Christ which also makes one a member of the true church of Christ.

Thus, the true church of Christ is not a product of man's efforts, but of God's. Remember what Christ said in answer to Peter's pronouncement that "Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God." The Lord's reply was, "And upon this rock (foundation) I will build my church." Thus one must believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, Mic. 5:2, who voluntarily stepped down from his exalted position of being equal with God, Phil. 2:6, was born of a virgin, so He could identify Himself with the human race, and die for the sins of the world. 1Cor. 15:3 John 1:29, Heb. 2:9, 1 John 2:2. The third day He arose again, the Victor over sin, death, hell and the grave, and as a living, exalted Saviour, He offers to all His life, for Christ is life. And He offers a righteousness which is compatible to God's own righteousness. I must believe that this Jesus, who came to seek and to save that which was lost, is indeed the true Messiah. Today, God does not reside in buildings, but in the hearts of those who believe in Christ.

The word CHURCH is used in a local sense.

The local church should be built upon the same foundation, as that of the universal church, Christ. It's fellowship should be made up of those who are already born again and are already a part of the universal church through personal faith in Jesus Christ.

Thus before external bonds can exist between Christians in a living fellowship, the soul must be linked to Christ first. Then and only then, can one become a part of a fellowship which is honored by the presence of the Lord. Jesus said in Matt. 18:24, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them." This is the simplest definition of a local church.

As various organizations, groups, leagues, clubs, and circles gather together to encourage and help each other in their sphere of common interests, so a believer is commanded not to "forsake the assembling of themselves together," Heb. 11:25, but rather to come together "to provoke one another to love and good works," and to encourage one another in the things of Christ. A believer should also "desire the sincere milk of the Word, so they can grow hereby." 1 Peter 2:2. The Pastor is to teach the Word of God to better equip the saints for the ministry. Eph.4:11-12. Every believer is a minister in full time Christian service. We might sum it up with Acts 2:42-47. The early church in Jerusalem, "continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers and were of one heart and of one accord." God's power was manifested throughout the Book of Acts because this formula was followed.

It is the Pastor's desire to better acquaint you with the Word of God, and we trust

that your desire in coming is to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 3:18.

The local church is the pillar and ground of the truth. 1 Tim. 3:15. The best way for a believer to serve the church at large is to serve the church with which he has fellowship.

We encourage every believer to follow the scriptural method of giving as stated in 2 Cor. 9:7, "Every man according as he purposeth in his (own) heart; so let him give; not grudgingly, (reluctantly) or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver." If you desire to give for the support of this ministry, there is an offering box in the foyer for your gifts and offerings. If you desire the Pastor to call at your home, put your name and address in the offering box, and this message will be referred to him.