

Lesson Three

The Church

In the space provided, draw a picture of a church.

Agree or Disagree: "You can be committed to Church but not committed to Christ, but you cannot be committed to Christ and not be committed to church." - Joel Olsteen

I. What is the Church?

A. Meaning of the Word "Church"

1. "Ecclesia" - _____
2. The church is composed of those who have been "called out" of the world and into Christ for the purpose of transacting business with God..

"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." - I Peter 2:9 (NIV)

B. The word, Ecclesia, has both a _____ and _____ significance throughout the New Testament.

1. Local significance:

"I recommend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a helper in the church in Cenchrea." - Romans 16:1 (NIV)

(Reference: Romans 16:5)

2. General significance:

"The church everywhere in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had a time of peace and became stronger." - Acts 9:31 (NIV)

(Reference: I Corinthians 10:32, I Timothy 3:15)

3. Groups of Christians may be separated by geography but still be one in Christ and His church. - e.g. Ernesto

2. The Beginning of the Church

A. Predictions of the Coming Church.

"(Jesus) And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it." - Matthew 16:18 (NIV)

B. Another term for the church in the New Testament is _____.

"From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." - Matthew 4:17 (NIV)

"And he said to them, "Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see that the kingdom of God has come with power." - Mark 9:1 (NIV)

3. The Establishment of the Church or Kingdom

A. Jesus did not establish the church during His earthly ministry.

"Then they (disciples) gathered around him (Jesus) and asked him, 'Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?' ⁷ He said to them: 'It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'" - Acts 1:6-8 (NIV)

B. The fulfillment of these promises and the establishment of the kingdom/church took place on the _____ as recorded in Acts 2.

(Reference: Acts 11:15)

C. Every reference to the church after the Day of Pentecost indicates that it is already in existence.

3. The Founder of the Church

A. The church is a divine _____ with a divine _____.

"(Jesus) I will build *my* church." - Matthew 16:18 b (NIV)

"And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way." - Ephesians 1:22-23 (NIV)

B. The church belongs to Christ because He purchased it with His own blood.

"(Paul to the Elders at Ephesus) Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he (Jesus) bought with his own blood." - Acts 20:28 (NIV)

4. The Government of the Church

A. When the church is considered *universally*, its form of government is an absolute _____

1. Jesus Christ is the _____ and Absolute Authority of the Church.

"And God placed all things under his (Jesus) feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church." - Ephesians 1:22 (NIV)

"And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy." - Colossians 1:18 (NIV)

(Reference: Ephesians 4:15, Ephesians 5:23, Colossians 2:10)

2. As head of the universal church, Christ has all _____ power.

- a. Prerequisites of citizenship (Reference: John 14:6, Mark 16:16)

- b. Prerequisites of leadership (Reference: I Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9)

- c. Duties of its members (Reference: Matthew 5:3-7:27, I Peter 2:21)

- d. Duties of leadership (Reference: II Timothy 4:2, I Peter 5:2, Acts 1:1-6)

- e. Laws of finances (Reference: I Corinthians 9:1-13, 16:1-2, I Timothy 5:17-18)

- f. Laws of discipline (Reference: I Corinthians 5:1-13, I Thessalonians 5:12, I Timothy 5:20)

B. When the church is considered locally, it is to be _____ .

1. The _____ of the church are the overseers, providing oversight and instruction for the church body.

(Reference: Titus 1:9, 2:1-15, Hebrews 13:17; I Corinthians 5:11-13)

"Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you." - Hebrews 13:17 (NIV)

Why I should be committed to the church:

Discuss: Is it necessary to go to church to be a Christian?

1. The local church is a central part of God's strategic plan for your _____ .

"And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it." - Matthew 16:18 (NIV)

A. The church is Jesus' idea, not mans.

B. To say, "I don't need to go to church to be a Christian" is a _____ from God's spiritual growth plan.

*"You don't need to go to church to be a Christian. If you go to Taco Bell, that doesn't make you a taco."
- Justin Bieber*

2. We are basically a _____ of the five people with whom we spend the most time.

A. It's trite but true, birds of a feather flock together.

"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; ²⁴ and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵ not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near." - Hebrews 10:23-25 (NASB)

B. We need to expose ourselves as much as possible to other followers of Jesus who will draw us nearer to God.

C. We must strive for the _____ of being *in* the world without being *of* it.

"I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified." - John 17:14-19 (NIV)

Discuss: What does it mean for one to be *in* the world without being *of* it?

3. We need the voice of the church to _____ the voice of the world, which gets crammed in our minds throughout the week.

"Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ." - Colossians 2:8 (NKJV)

A. "cheat" means: _____

B. "tradition of men" means: _____

Discuss: We live in the era of the internet. What are some of the sources of ungodly teachers that we face each day?

With so many messages streaming into our lives each week that can kidnap us away from God, it is extremely crucial to spend as much time in church as possible to fill our minds with godly wisdom and discernment.

4. Weekly ministry opportunities in the church helps to _____ our spiritual strength.

"So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming." - Ephesians 4:11-14 (NIV)