

What Is The Church?

1 PETER 2:9

1 Peter 2:9

⁹ But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light;

Resources

1. The Holy Bible
2. The Expository files, Called Out, 8.9; September 2001, Jon W. Quinn

Understanding Called Out

- ▶ Called out means, set apart for a purpose
- ▶ This purpose is for God's work
- ▶ The Church is the called out and set apart for God's work
- ▶ The Church is not to be confused with a building
- ▶ The Church is a body of believers, called out, set apart for God's work, His Purpose
- ▶ The Church is more than the local address of your church

Two Greek Words Help To Form Our Study Of The Church

- ▶ “ek” = out
- ▶ “Kalesantos” = called out

The Greeks would put them together to form another word, “ekklesia” which means “called out” and refer to an assembly or gathering of people that has been called together.

The Ekklesia – The called out

Holy Nation Of People

We believe are a group of baptized believers who are part of this Holy Nation. Quinn says that these are “people for God’s own possession” who are “the people of God” and have now “received mercy” when once we were “without mercy.”

We have answered the call from God to be believers and to be called out.

Assembly vs. Church

- ▶ It is fitting to use the two words interchangeably
- ▶ One must understand that the Church is a body of baptized believers
- ▶ Church refers to “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, for the following reasons.

That you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

Key Point

If more people knew what the word “church” referred to, there would be much less talk being pleasing and acceptable to God apart from being a member of the church. It cannot be done. “The church is designed to be pleasing and acceptable to God and to do His work and not the individual who might be seeking accolades for him/herself. The Church, the assembly of people or members are one body in Christ and not separate personal seekers of glory.” Pastor, Todd S. McCrary

Mindset Change

Once we get beyond thinking of the church in human terms, such as it being a building or a denomination, then we come closer to understanding its meaning and significance.

“Church” In The Old Testament

When the Hebrew Old Testament Scriptures were translated into Greek about 250 B.C., the Greek word “ekklesia” was used 40 or 50 times. It, again, means “assembly” and can be used for either a religious assembly or an assembly called for another purpose. It is used for examples, in Deuteronomy 4:10 (verb) and in 910 (noun). It refers to the people of Israel.

“Church” In The New Testament

Again, sometimes “ekklesia” is used in a purely secular sense. A man named Demetrius called an “assembly” for purposed of inciting people into persecuting Paul. (Acts 19:29, 32)

Also, later the word is used to refer to an assembly for a legal proceeding (Acts 19:38-39).

But even in these secular uses, the word always refers to people. This assembly, or “church” is a gathering of people, not a building.

Church A Religious Gathering

- ▶ The “church of Christ” – refers to an assembly of people gathered out of darkness into the light of Jesus Christ.
- ▶ The word Church is what we call a collective noun. Meaning a collection of smaller units.
- ▶ Examples of collective nouns: herd, flock, etc.
- ▶ The “church” is a gathering of certain people, namely, those that fit the description of our text (I Peter 2:9, 10). One disciple is not the church any more than one cow is not the herd.

The Lord's Church

Made up of those who are saved by the Mercy of God

Other Terms Used To Describe The Church

- ▶ The church is the body of Christ, and He is the head of the church (Ephesians 1:21-23).
- ▶ Christ is the head of those who are in His body, or church (see also I Corinthians 12:12-14; 26-27).
- ▶ The church is the temple of God, meaning that God dwells in His people. We are warned not to destroy the temple by harming or discouraging its people. (I Corinthians 3:16,17).
- ▶ The church is the kingdom of Christ, meaning that Christ rules over His people as their spiritual king (John 19:36; Matthew 16:16-18; Colossians 1:13)

One Final Point

- ▶ Jesus is the savior of the church (Ephesians 5:23-27). If that does not drive the message home, then nothing will. Are you a part of God's "ekklesia" or "called out assembly"?

Additions To The Lesson

- ▶ We will continue to review this information to better understand the calling upon us.
- ▶ What are we doing as the “church” to add to the body of Christ?
- ▶ Why is it important to add and not to subtract from the body of Christ?
- ▶ What limits have we set-up in our religion and/or our rules to prohibit the growth of the body of Christ?
- ▶ What actions make you look like a builder of the body of Christ?
- ▶ What actions cause you to look like a hinderance of the body of Christ?