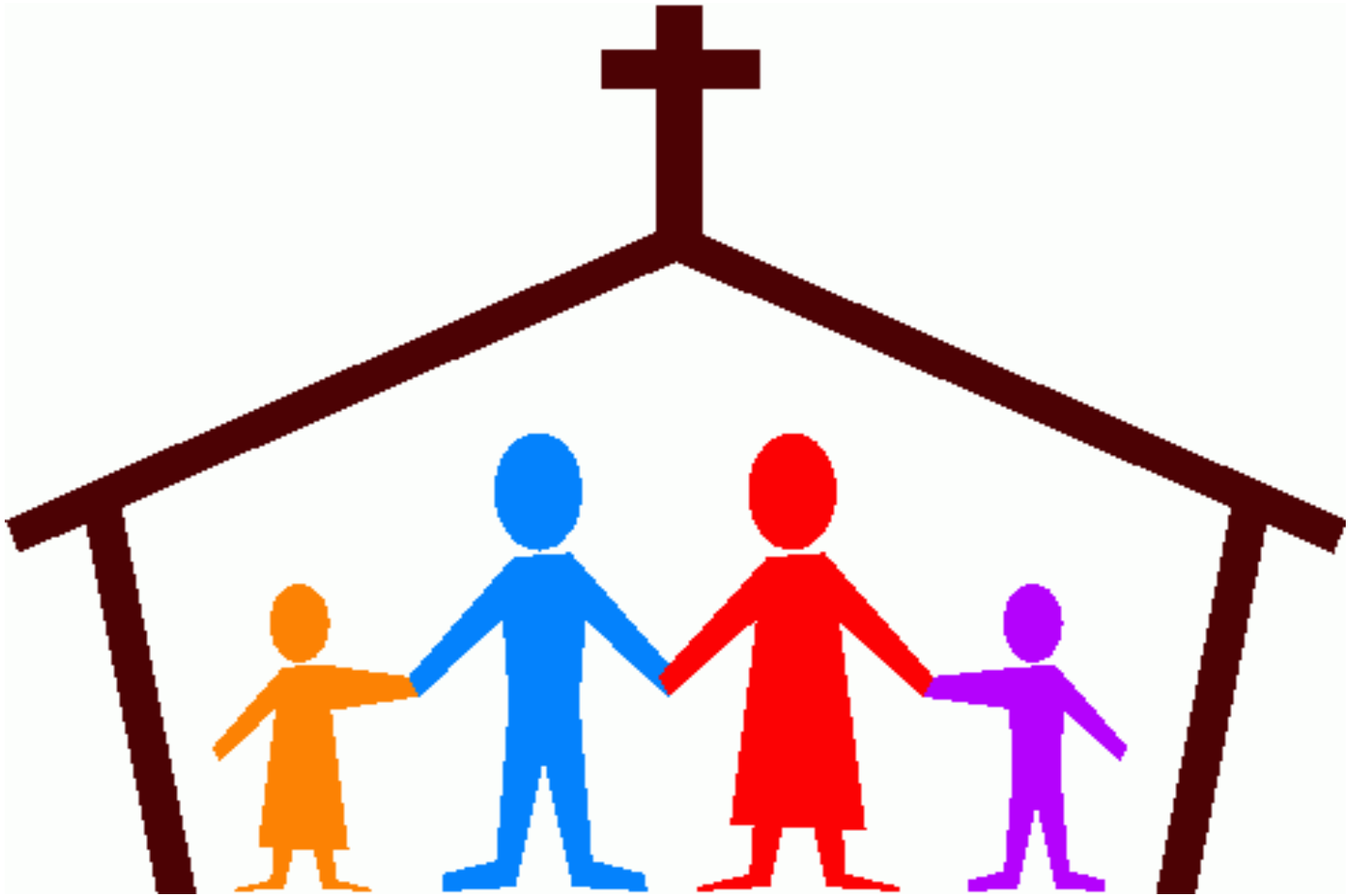


# The Church Of Christ

Lesson 3:

The Names And Descriptions Of The Church



Discovering God's Word

Bible Study Series

The Church Of Christ  
**Lesson 3: The Names And Descriptions Of The Church**

Learn the importance of a name and how God identifies His church in the New Testament

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**Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series**

**Study Number:** DGW62

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**About the author:** My name is Eric Krieg. I am a disciple of Jesus, a Bible student, a truth seeker, and an evangelist. My interest is in using the Bible as my only guide in my faith. My desire is to help others understand the message of the Bible and pursue true, New Testament Christianity.

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**My plea:** It is my hope and prayer that you are searching for the truth that is contained in God's word, the Bible. My desire is to help you understand and obey these truths God has revealed in the pages of His word. It is to that end that I write this material. Please observe all of the Scripture references and evaluate whether the conclusions I have drawn are in harmony with God's word. If they are, I ask that you make honest application of those truths to your life and obey God's instructions.

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The Church Of Christ

# Lesson 3: The Names And Descriptions Of The Church

There are thousands of different religious organizations today – with thousands of different names. Each of these different names serve to differentiate one group from the others. There are churches which call themselves “Catholic,” “Baptist,” “Methodist,” “Presbyterian,” “Lutheran,” “Pentecostal,” “Apostolic,” “Nazarene,” and many, many other titles.

Perhaps there is not much thought as to the Bible authority involved in how we designate a church in today’s society. However, a name actually says a lot about the congregation! Each of the names I just listed identifies those churches with particular doctrinal beliefs and religious practices. And, each one of those names suggest that those religious organizations are unconcerned with selecting a name that can be found in the pages of the New Testament.

However, if we are interested in being part of the church you can read about in the pages of the New Testament (Jesus’ one true church), shouldn’t we be interested in being called by a name God approves? Consider the following example of restoration from the Old Testament, in Genesis 26:17-18: “Then Isaac departed from there and

pitched his tent in the Valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. And Isaac dug again the wells of water which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father, for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham. He called them by the names which his father had called them.”

Now, Isaac could have dug different wells in different places and called them by different names. However, he was interested in digging “again the wells of water which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father.” He wanted to restore those wells. And, in order to truly restore the original wells, he needed to call “them by the names which his father had called them.”

The same thing is true concerning the church today. If we are interested in being part of the church you can read about in the Bible, we should be interested in doing all things according to the authority of Jesus Christ! Colossians 3:17 says, “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” And, if we are interested in doing *everything* by the authority of Jesus Christ, this must include calling the church only by names which are used for the church in the Bible!

Therefore, the purpose of this lesson is to consider the value of a name and to consider the names and descriptions used in the Bible to identify God’s one true church!

## ***Is There Anything In A Name?***

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Does it matter how a church identifies itself? Isn’t it “just a name”? Many people consider the name of a church as a matter to be decided by its members and as being largely unimportant to God. Many would borrow a line from the pen of William Shakespeare and argue that a rose would smell just as sweet if it were called by any other name, arguing that there is nothing in a name.

So, as we observe that this indifferent mindset toward the name of God’s church is prevalent in our culture, let’s meet this challenge head-on by considering whether or not there is

anything in a name – both from physical and spiritual perspectives?

## **The name of a child**

Is there anything in a name? Whenever you consider a name for your soon-to-be-born child, do you carelessly select a name at random? Or, do you attempt to pick out just the “right” one? Are you indifferent about how your son or daughter will be identified throughout his/her earthly life?

Perhaps you select the name of a beloved relative, a faithful Bible character, a famous individual, or just a name that you like. Consider this: Would you name your child after your greatest enemy? Would you name your child after a wicked individual (i.e. Adolf, Jezebel, Saddam, Osama, etc.)? Would you name your male child Susan or your female child Greg? If not, why not?

There is something in a name! Every reasonable person who cares about how his/her children will be identified throughout his/her life will give consideration to the name he/she gives his/her children!

## **The name of a business**

Is there anything in a name? Whenever a business owner prepares to open a business, the name is very carefully selected. The business owner recognizes the significance of the name – because this will be the way his/her business is identified as long as the business is operational! In addition, not only do business recognize the importance of choosing the right name; but, they also recognize the importance of maintaining a good name. Many large companies even hire individuals to work in the field of public relations in order to manage the name/brand of the company and keep the right things associated with its name!

As an illustration, on October 3, 2014, the *New York Post* had an article entitled, “‘Isis’ businesses fighting bad image, unlucky name association” [Press, A. (n.d.). ‘Isis’ businesses fighting bad image, unlucky name association. Retrieved March 25, 2015, from <http://nypost.com/2014/10/03/isis-businesses-fighting-bad-image-unlucky-name-association/>].

“ISIS” is the now popular identification of the terrorist group (also called the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), known for its brutal beheadings and persecutions of those who refuse to follow Islam. However, whenever ISIS rose to a place of influence and became a known organization to people in the United States, there were already several businesses using the name “ISIS.” For instance, the story details an Isis Bridal and Formal shop, Isis Collections, Inc., and Isis Wallet. For these business owners, the unfortunate and coincidental connection between their names and the terrorist group has caused major headaches and damage to their brand images.

There is something in a name! This is just one specific example of the value of a name in business. Many other examples could be provided. Still, every reasonable business owner accepts the fact that there is something in the name of his/her company!

## **The name of your spouse**

Is there anything in a name? Whenever a man marries a woman, does he care what name she chooses to wear? After they marry and she files the necessary paperwork involved to change her last name, does he care what name she chooses?

If there is truly nothing in a name, then it does not matter what last name a man’s wife chooses to wear. She could choose to wear the last name of her favorite movie actor. She could choose the last name of an ex-boyfriend. Or, she could simply choose a name at random or choose to keep her maiden name. Would a husband be happy with any of these decisions? If not, why not?

There is something in a name! Whenever a wife takes on her husband’s name, she demonstrates that she has been united with her husband – that she is *his* wife (and no one else’s wife)!

## **Name is important!**

Clearly, these examples demonstrate that there is something important in a name *physically*! Now, as we focus on the names and descriptions God has used in the New Testament regarding His church, it is important to understand that this discussion is *more* than just a discussion about what appears on the sign! This is a discussion about how a church

identifies itself – and is identified by others! Consider some important factors in the name of the church (and local churches).

**(1) It is important to speak as the oracles of God.** If the Bible calls the church one thing, and we call it something different, we are not speaking as God speaks! Consider 1 Peter 4:11 concerning the importance of speaking as God speaks: “If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

We must be careful (as we seek to do everything by the authority of Jesus Christ, Colossians 3:17) that we are calling Bible things by Bible names. There are many who are guilty (as we discussed in lesson 1) of using Bible terms in ways the Bible does not use them (i.e. “Christian,” “baptism,” “church”). In the same way, we should desire to identify the one true church that belongs to Jesus Christ in the way God identifies the church in the pages of the New Testament! If not, why not?

**(2) It is important because it denotes ownership.** As we will discuss momentarily, the church is identified in the New Testament as being the church of God and the church of Christ. These terms denote ownership. You could just as easily call the church God’s church and Christ’s church. The Scriptures plainly demonstrate that Christ owns the church because He purchased it with His own blood!

So, if the terms used in the Bible to identify the church denote Christ as the owner of it – why should we use terms that are foreign to the Bible or that designate the church as belonging to someone else?

**(3) It is important because it identifies.** One of the fundamental facts about a name is that it identifies. My name is Eric Michael Krieg. Everything I am is identified by that name. That is how I am known to others. Now, some things are identified by common names and some things are identified by proper names. Eric Michael Krieg is a proper name. However, many things are also identified by common names. For instance, the natural satellite God placed in the Earth’s orbit to

reflect the light from the sun and provide light for the earth at night is identified as the “moon.”

Furthermore, in Genesis 2:18-20 we are told that God gave Adam the responsibility of naming all of the animals God had just created. “And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name.” Now, he surely did not give them each a proper name (i.e. John, Betty, Donald, Sarah, etc.). Instead, he gave them common names (i.e. cow, fox, lion, etc.). These animals would be identified by these common names!

In the same way, God identifies His church in certain ways. Now, as we will see, He did not give just one proper name for the church to always be identified by. Instead, He identified the church by several different common names. Yet, even still, the specific terms God has selected for His church identifies what it is and what it stands for! For instance, the name “church of Christ” *should* indicate that the church holds to the pattern of sound words contained within the Holy Scriptures (see 2 Timothy 1:13). This is just as true as the name “Baptist Church” identifies some things that church believes and practices (i.e. baptism *after* salvation, baptism by immersion in water, etc.).

**(4) It is important because it distinguishes.** Since the name of the church identifies, it also distinguishes. Now, in Bible times, God’s church was the only church in existence. Still, the individuals who were part of “the Way” were distinguished as being separate from other things. They were separate from the world, they were separate from idolaters, they were separate from Judaism, etc. They were truly the people God had called out of darkness and into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9-10)! Therefore, those individuals who identified themselves as “Christians,” as following “the Way,” as members of the “household of God,” and part of the “church of Christ” would be identified as being different from all others (and would often be persecuted accordingly, see Acts 9:1-2).

In the same way, using Biblical designations for the church not only identifies certain things about a church’s beliefs and practices; but, it also distinguishes a church from the others in existence today! Therefore, it helps those who are looking to

practice New Testament Christianity find other churches of Christ to worship and work with – instead of joining a Baptist church, Lutheran church, Pentecostal church, Catholic church, etc.!

## **Name is not the only important factor**

While we can observe these facts about the importance of the terms used to identify the church, I also want to emphasize that the name is *not* the only important factor! As we continue to go through this study, then, please recognize that this is only one part of restoring the church of the New Testament. If a church wants to please God, it will identify itself in a Biblically-approved way. However, there are many churches today that wear Biblically-approved names, but stray from the Bible pattern in other areas (i.e. the God-given work of the church)! These churches are not acceptable to God just because of their Biblical names!

In addition, let me make it clear that we are not just discussing what name a church chooses to place outside of its meeting location. We are talking about how a church identifies itself! Again, if a church wants to do all things by the authority of Jesus Christ, it will desire to use a Biblical name; but, it will not *just* be focused on using a Biblical name!

## ***Names Used In Scripture***

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Now that we have seen the importance of using the proper terms to identify God’s one true church, let’s consider how the church is identified in the Bible. As we consider these things, please realize that the church is not just given one proper name; but, there are actually many different terms used in Scripture to identify Christ’s church. Let’s begin to consider them here – and then we will consider some other terms used interchangeably for the church later.

### **The church**

There are many general references that are made in the Scriptures to groups of Christians by simply identifying them as “the church” or the “church” in/at/of.... Consider the following references to see this point.

(1) Acts 8:1-3: “Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.” Here is a reference to the “church which was at Jerusalem.”

(2) Acts 11:22: “Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch.” Here is another reference to the “church in Jerusalem.”

(3) 1 Corinthians 16:19: “The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.” Here is a reference to multiple local churches. These were identified as the “churches of Asia.”

(4) Galatians 1:2: “and all the brethren who are with me, To the churches of Galatia.” This is another reference to multiple local churches in a specific geographic area. This time, the reference is to the “churches of Galatia.”

(5) Colossians 4:16: “Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.” This passage instructs the church in Colossae to share epistles with the “church of the Laodiceans.”

(6) 1 Thessalonians 1:1: “Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Paul addresses this letter to the “church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

(7) Romans 16:4: “who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.” Paul gives thanks for Aquila and Priscilla (two Christians) in this text, also stating that the “churches of the Gentiles” give thanks for them as well.

(8) Hebrews 12:23: “to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect.” This passage references the church as the “church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven.”

Now, consider all of these references. Each one of these references tell us something about those who composed the church. Many times, they told us about their whereabouts (i.e. Laodicea, Asia, Galatia, Thessalonica, etc.). Romans 16:4 informed us about their nationality (the “churches of the Gentiles”). 1 Thessalonians 1:1 identified the church in Thessalonica as being composed of individuals who were in God and Jesus. Then, Hebrews 12:23 identifies God’s church as being composed of individuals who have a favored status in God’s sight (like firstborn children), who are registered in Heaven.

Therefore, all of these passages demonstrate the common use of identifying a church by who composes the church. This was commonplace in the New Testament and is fully authorized today. While the passages we’ve just considered say something about those who were in the churches, they all were churches of God/Christ! The churches we’ve just considered were *not* separate denominations. They would not have rejected the name of Jesus Christ or claimed another as the owner/builder of the church (as long as they were faithful congregations)! They would have embraced the same doctrines and religious practices that are enumerated throughout the pages of the New Testament (although some churches fell out of favor with God, i.e. the churches of Galatia).

## **The church of God/Christ**

Within the New Testament, you can also clearly see the use of the names “church of God” and “church of Christ” in reference to this one true church. While the passages in the previous point focused on who composed those churches, the passages we are now about to consider focus on the Owner of the church! Now, again, these are not different denominations. Instead, these terms are used interchangeably with reference to those who are Christians.

**(1) The church of God.** Consider 1 Corinthians 1:2: “To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.” As the apostle Paul introduces his letter to this congregation of Christians in the city of Corinth, he identifies them as “the church of God which is at Corinth.” Notice also that this designation as the “church of God” is applicable to any group of people who are “sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints” and “call on the name of Jesus Christ,” the Lord!

Now, what does it mean to call a group of Christians the “church of God”? Consider Acts 20:28: “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” In this passage, Paul was speaking with the elders of the Ephesian congregation, encouraging them to be good shepherds/elders of God’s church! He tells them to shepherd the “church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” So, to be the “church of God” refers to the fact that Jesus Christ shed His blood in order to redeem those who would obey Him from their sins. Therefore, this identification/name of the church designates ownership! No one else has purchased the church with their blood and redeemed it from sin. Only Jesus has done this!

Do not become confused by the name “church of God” as it is used in these two passages – and then by the name “church of Christ” (as we’ll see momentarily). The two are equal. Remember, Jesus Christ is God. John 1:1 says that Jesus Christ (the Word) “is God.” He is the one who shed His blood to redeem mankind from His sin (compare 1 Peter 1:18-19 and Acts 20:28). So, these are not two different churches, but simply both references to Jesus’ church!

**(2) The church of Christ.** Romans 16:16 says, “Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you.” As Paul concludes his letter to the Romans, he includes a number of specific greetings to the Christians in Rome. Now, in verse 16, Paul extends greetings to the Romans from other “churches of Christ.”

Now, consider that if multiple churches could be identified as “churches of Christ,” then a single church would have been a “church of Christ.” If not, why not? Again, as we discussed regarding the church of God, Jesus Christ is the owner/possessor of the church. Remember that it was Jesus Christ who said: “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18).

It would be Jesus’ church because He would build/establish it. He would do this through His death, burial, and resurrection from the dead. He would fulfill all of the Old Testament prophecies and usher in His kingdom/church by offering the forgiveness of sins through obedience to God’s commandments!

## Summary

In both of these references, we see the identification of the Owner of these churches as Jesus Christ/God! Therefore, just as we saw in 1 Thessalonians 1:1, even general references in the previous section would also be references to churches of God/Christ. Again, 1 Thessalonians 1:1 identified the “church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Again, I want to state that the terms “church of God” and “church of Christ” are *not* given as exclusive proper names of the church. However, they are clearly among the ways in which the New Testament identifies God’s church. In addition, they are clearly important identification terms that designate the ownership of those congregations as belonging to Jesus Christ!

## ***Descriptions Of The Church***

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In addition to the names of the church that we have just been studying, the church is also identified by many other terms. This point is really an extension of the previous one. These are also not proper names used to exclusively identify the church. Instead, they work together with the others we have considered to properly identify God’s one true church. Each one of

these terms identifies some additional aspect about the church you can read about in the Bible.

## **The kingdom of God/Christ**

The church is identified as a kingdom (as a group of ruled people). Specifically, the church is identified as being a people who are ruled by God and by Jesus Christ! The Old Testament foretold the coming of God’s eternal kingdom in passages such as Daniel 2:44: “And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.”

The church is the fulfillment of such prophecies as this. Specifically, the passage in Daniel prophesied that God’s eternal kingdom would be established during the reign of the Roman Empire (as seen in the vision of the statue). Indeed, during the days of the Roman Empire, the kingdom of God was announced to have been “at hand” (Matthew 3:1-2). Furthermore, during these days, Jesus said that the kingdom would be established during the lives of many who lived on earth at that time. Mark 9:1 says, “And He said to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.’”

That the church is this kingdom can plainly be seen from a study of the Scriptures. The kingdom of God is not an earthly kingdom yet to be established. Instead, it is a spiritual kingdom composed of Christians. Notice how Jesus uses the terms “church” and “kingdom” interchangeably in Matthew 16:18-19: “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Furthermore, notice Colossians 1:13 and observe that, by the time this passage was written, the kingdom was in existence: “He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.” It makes perfect sense for the “kingdom” to be



identified as being in existence in this passage – because Christ’s church was already in existence!

Now, as you consider the designation of the church as the kingdom of God/Christ in the Scriptures, this should help you understand that Jesus Christ is King. He has all authority. Furthermore, this is a spiritual (not a physical) kingdom which is composed of all those who are Christians. To be part of this kingdom, then, necessitates that you submit your life to Jesus as King – and you will receive all of the spiritual blessings that come from being part of His kingdom!

## **The body of Christ**

Another common way the church is identified in the Bible is as the “body of Christ.” Consider a few passages.

Colossians 1:18: “And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.”

Ephesians 1:22-23: “And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

1 Corinthians 12:27: “Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.”

All of these passages demonstrate that those who are Christians and part of the one true church of Christ are part of the body of Christ! No one individual Christian is the body; but, each Christian is a member of the body (just as you have only one body, but many members of your body). Each member of the body, then, contributes to the body in a unique and special way. However, each Christian and the church (collectively) must submit to the one true Head of the body, which is Jesus Christ!

So, the identification of the church as the body of Christ helps us to understand the place of each Christian – in reference to the church and to Christ. In reference to the church, each Christian is an important contributor and must supply his/her own share (see Ephesians 4:11-16). In reference to Christ, each Christian and the church (collectively) must submit to His leadership and authority (just as

the members of your physical body submit to the leadership of your head). Furthermore, the Bible is clear that there is only “one body” (see Ephesians 4:4).

## **The household of God**

Next, the term “household of God” is used in Scripture to identify God’s church. Consider the following passages.

1 Timothy 3:15: “but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

Ephesians 2:19: “Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.”

Both of these passages emphasize the fact that those who compose God’s church are part of the family of God. Each Christian is a child of God and a joint heir of God with Jesus Christ (see Romans 8:14-17). Therefore, the Lord Jesus is “not ashamed” to call them His “brethren” (Hebrews 2:11). In addition, this way of identifying the church helps us to understand how and why members of the church are commonly referred to as being brothers and sisters.

## **The temple of God**

Those who are in the body of Jesus Christ and are purposefully dedicated to honoring Christ Jesus as King are also identified as being the “temple of God.” Consider the following verses.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17: “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.”

Ephesians 2:19-22: “Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a

holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”

These dedicated followers of Jesus Christ compose a spiritual house made of living stones and a royal priesthood (see 1 Peter 2:4-10) to be used in the service and worship of God (like the temple was in the Old Testament). Actually, the Scriptures present both the church (collectively) and Christians (individually) as being the temple of God. 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 appears to have the church (collectively) as its subject, while 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 appears to have individual Christians as its subject. However, the point is the same for both.

Those who are Christians (both individually and collectively) constitute a “dwelling place of God in the Spirit” as God directs His people through the word which the Spirit revealed! In addition, just as the temple was to be a holy place because of the presence of God, the church must also be holy (see 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 and 1 Peter 1:15-16).

## **The bride of Christ**

Finally, we can find that the Scriptures identify the church as being the bride of Jesus Christ. Consider the following.

2 Corinthians 11:2: “For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”

Romans 7:4: “Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another — to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.”

Revelation 19:6-9: “And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunders, saying, ‘Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.’ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, ‘Write: “Blessed are those who

are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’” And he said to me, ‘These are the true sayings of God.’”

Ephesians 5:22-33 goes on to explain the responsibilities that husbands and wives have toward one another – and explains these responsibilities by referencing this relationship between Christ and His church. Paul says that the “husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything” (Ephesians 5:23-24).

This identification of Christ’s church, then, helps us to understand the church’s submissive role to Christ – as well as Christ’s great love for us. Christ has loved His church so much that He gave His life for her – so that she could be saved from her sins. Furthermore, the church must recognize Christ as being its Head and be fully submissive to Christ’s teachings. He expects His bride to be faithful to Him throughout their lives (Revelation 2:10) – just as a husband expects his wife to be faithful throughout their lives!

## **Other descriptive terms**

There are other terms used in the Scriptures in addition to these in reference to God’s people. For instance, those who were followers of Jesus were identified as being of “the Way” (see Acts 9:1-2; Acts 19:9; Acts 24:22). This reference ties into Jesus’ claim to be the Way (John 14:6).

1 Peter 2:9-10 is also full of descriptive terms for those who are Christians: “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.” While this reference is to Christians and is not being directly written to a specific church, you can still gain some great insight about how God references His people.

You are encouraged to make a diligent search of the Scriptures to discover all of the terms that are used with reference to God’s people (both individually and collectively). Then, you must make certain that you are accurately handling God’s word

and making the proper applications of the passages (see 2 Timothy 2:15) so that you can call Bible things by Bible names and speak as the oracles of God!

## Conclusion

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Christ's church wears His name! They are His. They have been purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ! It is His kingdom, His body, His family, His temple, and His bride! We should never be ashamed of wearing His name! Acts 4:12 says that there is salvation in none other besides through the name of Jesus Christ!

Throughout this religious world, denominations and religious organizations call themselves by many different names (including by the names of the men who helped establish them – i.e. Luther, Wesley) and they describe themselves in many different ways. However, congregations in the first century were identified in the ways we have considered in this lesson.

Let us always determine to do all things by Jesus' authority and cast off the divisive names of men and become united in both name and doctrine – the name and the doctrine of Jesus Christ, the one who died for us! Let us be unashamed for the bride of Christ to wear the name of Christ!

Finally, as we close this lesson and prepare for the other lessons in this course, please be reminded that name is only one important factor in being part of Christ's one true church. It is not the only important factor. So, let us strive diligently to be part of the one true church we can read about in the Bible - in all areas!

## Study Questions

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Should the church be interested in wearing a Scriptural name? Why or why not?

### 1. Is There Anything In A Name?

Does it matter what a church calls itself? Explain your answer.

Is there anything important regarding the name of a child?

Is there anything important regarding the name of a business?

Is there anything important regarding the name of your spouse?

Why is a name important?

Is name the *only* important factor? Explain.

### 2. Names Used In Scripture

Discuss the general references to the "church."

Discuss the specific references to the church of God/Christ.

### 3. Descriptions Of The Church

Discuss the designation of the church as the kingdom of God/Christ.

Discuss the designation of the church as the body of Christ.

Discuss the designation of the church as the household of God.

Discuss the designation of the church as the temple of God.

Discuss the designation of the church as the bride of Christ.

Identify any other designation of the church here:

**\*Is the name of the church important? Is it the only important thing? Explain.**