

ORIGIN AND PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

Exploring Theology by Benson & Morgan / Book 2: Biblical Faith / Ch. 6 / Notes

1. The English word *church* is translated from the Greek word *ecclesia* which means “the called-out”.

2. **2 Corinthians 5:16-20**

So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. [TNIV]

Because of this decision we don't evaluate people by what they have or how they look. We looked at the Messiah that way once and got it all wrong, as you know. We certainly don't look at him that way anymore. Now we look inside, and what we see is that anyone united with the Messiah gets a fresh start, is created new. The old life is gone; a new life burgeons! Look at it! All this comes from the God who settled the relationship between us and him, and then called us to settle our relationships with each other. God put the world square with himself through the Messiah, giving the world a fresh start by offering forgiveness of sins. God has given us the task of telling everyone what he is doing. We're Christ's representatives. God uses us to persuade men and women to drop their differences and enter into God's work of making things right between them. We're speaking for Christ himself now: Become friends with God; he's already a friend with you. [The Message]

3. Members of the Church are *in* the world but not *of* the world. The Father has given them to the Son out of the world.

John 17 (Jesus Prays for His Disciples) verse:

(6) I have revealed you [a] to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. [TNIV]

I spelled out your character in detail, To the men and women you gave me. They were yours in the first place; Then you gave them to me, And they have now done what you said. [The Message]

(11) I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of [b] your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. [TNIV]

They'll continue in the world, While I return to you. Holy Father, guard them as they pursue this life, That you conferred as a gift through me, So they can be one heart and mind, As we are one heart and mind. [The Message]

(14) 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. [TNIV]

I gave them your word; The godless world hated them because of it, Because they didn't join the world's ways, Just as I didn't join the world's ways. [The Message]

(16) They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. [TNIV]

They are no more defined by the world, Than I am defined by the world. [The Message]

Footnotes:

[a] 17:6 Greek *your name*; also in verse 26

[b] Or *Father, keep them faithful to*

4. Who are the believers?
5. The church is more than an organization - it is an organism. An organization is a body of persons enlisted together for united action. An organism is a body having life within itself, with mutually dependent parts, all functioning toward a common purpose.
6. What is the church's purpose?
7. The church is responsible for the founding of many benevolent services including orphanages, homes for senior citizens, and youth programs. The education of the masses began with the church. Not all of these movements have retained their original Christian standards, but they were started by men of God and have been used by God for good.
8. What is the origin of the Church?
9. When did it begin?

10. Ephesians 1:4

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. [TNIV]

Long before he laid down earth's foundations, he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love. [The Message]

11. There is no room for chance or uncertainty, God's plans are complete and His purposes definite.
12. God the Father is the author of the salvation that the church proclaims. Christians nor anyone else, can do nothing to earn God's grace. Christian's possession of "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places" is not because of what they have done. God Himself chose the members of His church and predestined them to be conformed to the image of His Son, and accepted them in Christ.
13. (**Ephesians 1:3-6**) Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he [a] predestined us for adoption to sonship [b] through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. [TNIV] Footnotes: [a] Or *sign in love* [b] Greek word for *adoption to sonship* is a legal term referring to the full legal standing of an adopted male heir in Roman culture.

How blessed is God! And what a blessing he is! He's the Father of our Master, Jesus Christ, and takes us to the high places of blessing in him. Long before he laid down earth's foundations, he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love. Long, long ago he decided to adopt us into his family through Jesus Christ. (What pleasure he took in planning this!) He wanted us to enter into the celebration of his lavish gift-giving by the hand of his beloved Son. [The Message]

14. God honors the faith of the members of the church by sealing them with His Holy Spirit

15. Ephesians 1:13-14

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory. [TNIV]

It's in Christ that you, once you heard the truth and believed it (this Message of your salvation), found yourselves home free—signed, sealed, and delivered by the Holy Spirit. This signet from God is the first installment on what's coming, a reminder that we'll get everything God has planned for us, a praising and glorious life. [The Message]

16. Matthew 16:16-19

Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, [a] and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of death [b] will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be [c] bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be [d] loosed in heaven." [TNIV]

Simon Peter said, "You're the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus came back, "God bless you, Simon, son of Jonah! You didn't get that answer out of books or from teachers. My Father in heaven, God himself, let you in on this secret of who I really am. And now I'm going to tell you who you are, really are. You are Peter, a rock. This is the rock on which I will put together my church, a church so expansive with energy that not even the gates of hell will be able to keep it out. "And that's not all. You will have complete and free access to God's kingdom, keys to open any and every door: no more barriers between heaven and earth, earth and heaven. A yes on earth is yes in heaven. A no on earth is no in heaven." [The Message]

Footnotes:

[a] The Greek for *Peter* means *rock*.

[b] Greek *Hades*

[c] [d] Or *will have been*

17. Matthew 16:16-19 is the first mention of the church in the NT, but no supremacy was here given to Peter, (compare Matt. 18:15-20; John 20:19-23) clearly revealing that the same privilege of binding and loosing was give to other disciples, and to the whole church.

18. The rock upon which the church is to be built was Jesus.

19. Ephesians 2:20

..built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. [TNIV]

He used the apostles and prophets for the foundation. Now he's using you, fitting you in brick by brick, stone by stone, with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone that holds all the parts together. [The Message]

20. There is only one true church.

21.1 Corinthians 3:11

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. [TNIV]

22.1 Corinthians 3:9-15 (emphasizing)

Or, to put it another way, you are God's house. Using the gift God gave me as a good architect, I designed blueprints; Apollos is putting up the walls. Let each carpenter who comes on the job take care to build on the foundation! Remember, there is only one foundation, the one already laid: Jesus Christ. Take particular care in picking out your building materials. Eventually there is going to be an inspection. If you use cheap or inferior materials, you'll be found out. The inspection will be thorough and rigorous. You won't get by with a thing. If your work passes inspection, fine; if it doesn't, your part of the building will be torn out and started over. But you won't be torn out; you'll survive—but just barely. [The Message]

23. Practically the first missionaries of the church were those who attended Pentecost, as representatives from foreign lands. They were commissioned to preach the Gospel “unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8)

24.1 Corinthians 10:32

Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God— [TNIV]

25. God divides people into 3 great groups: Jews, Greeks and the church.

26. Israel had 3 main purposes in God's redemptive plan. Israel was to be entrusted with the Scriptures (God's Word), a channel to introduce the world's Redeemer, a witness to the world. The study of the OT reveals that while Israel realized the first 2 purposes for which the nation was set apart, she failed in the third. The NT introduces the church, whose members were commissioned as witnesses of God's plan of salvation to both Jews and Gentiles. But that is not the only mission with which the church has been entrusted.

27. The Greek word often translated as “mystery” in the NT (27x, half referring to the church), means a revealed secret or a divine truth once hidden but now disclosed. “..according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest” (Romans 16:25-26)

28. The church was “hid in God” (Eph. 3:9) from the beginning of the world. Not even the angels or the prophets knew of the church or its vital part in God's plan.

29. **Romans 12:4-5**

For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. [TNIV]

In this way we are like the various parts of a human body. Each part gets its meaning from the body as a whole, not the other way around. The body we're talking about is Christ's body of chosen people. Each of us finds our meaning and function as a part of his body. [The Message]

30. Also, see 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

31. We have been called to the fellowship of God's Son. (Eph. 3:14-19; Col. 1:12-18)

32. The relationship between Christ and the church is not only that of King and subject but bride and groom, a relationship of perfect intimacy and spiritual union.

33. The body of Christ has work to do on earth. Certain officers are to be chosen by the church (Eph. 4:12). The general ministry of every member is to increase its membership (Eph. 4:15-16)

34. Membership of the church must be completed before the Son of Man can come in His glory (Rev. 19:7; 2 Cor. 11:2)

