

## What is the Church

I understand that as times change, many terms change in meaning, but for the sake of biblical orthodoxy of my pet peeves has GOT to be when believers call a building or a place on a map a “church.”

The “Church” specifically, the ekklesia, is defined in the bible as a people, more specifically the Church Jesus is building is his own literal body. Every believer in Christ is part of Christ’s church, and you will NEVER see in the bible where the Church was ever referred to as a building or a place on a map... NEVER.

The church Jesus is building is a living breathing organism where Christ is literally and prominently the head. The stones which make this temple are lively stones... you and me! If you are in Christ, you are the temple of God.

There are **local gatherings** of the ekklesia. The book of Revelation describes different gatherings of the ekklesia or “churches” **in** those cities in Asia Minor. Many epistles are named after the cities where the church **in** those cities is being addressed. There is also the **universal ekklesia**, consisting of all believers around the world and every believer who has ever lived.

**“Oh but you KNOW what we mean when we say we’re ‘going’ to church!”**

Oh certainly we know what you mean... indeed... you might mean that you are going to a building where you get your religion done every week. You might be referring to the ritualistic custom and tradition of going to a building made with a steeple on top to worship. It may mean a lot of things today of which I can’t seem to find in the scriptures.... Yes WE get it... we KNOW what you mean.

That doesn’t make it right...

If you asked your average Christian – seven out of ten of them for argument’s sake, “what is the church?” you would probably be pointed to a place of worship. They might even invite you to their “church.” There is a paradigm here that MUST shift. Many give lip service to the real definition of the Church yet in their actions deny that truth by calling the building they worship in “the church.” God has many promises, warnings, rebukes, encouragement etc. for his Church through his word, and if you are referring to bricks and mortar instead of the temple not made

by hands, then you are NOT talking about the church Christ is building, but the “church” man has built.

Let’s take the example of Paul (Saul)

### **Acts 8:3**

**But Saul was ravaging the church**, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.

### **Acts 9:1-6**

**But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord**, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, **so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem**. Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, **“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?”** And he said, **“Who are you, Lord?”** And he said, **“I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting**. But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.”

Jesus make it really clear here who Saul was persecuting, it was HIM, his LITERAL body. Saul was persecuting HIS PEOPLE.

### **Temple Identity Crisis**

Confusing a locale on a map with the church Jesus is building takes away the biblical significance of the purpose of the ekklesia. I find now that our focus has shifted from the people of God who make up God’s church, and becomes more focused on supporting and maintaining a “house of worship.”

The body of Christ is stuck today in an Old Testament mindset concerning the temple of God, which ultimately results in a works oriented system of bondage over the people of God. The Jews went to offer sacrifices in their physical temple in Jerusalem, but do we forget, that Jesus has wiped that system and that priesthood out of existence with his sacrifice on the cross? We treat the church building as a literal temple, as a place where God “dwells” and is “invited” in an invocation, where there is an “altar” for Christians to pray, and a pulpit where only the select caste of “high priests” who mediate on our behalf sit exalted over the body.

There is even a popular false “prophetess” named Juanita Bynum who declares she is an Levitical Priest and takes in with her a gold box that she declares is the ark of the covenant. Why they are trying to “resurrect” a temple God will no longer dwell in is beyond me.

**Another note:** I know many believe that a literal “temple” must be rebuilt in Jerusalem for end time events to occur, because the coming Antichrist must desecrate the temple. How silly is that? This temple they are attempting to build will never be inhabited by God, so no one can desecrate anything that will never be holy again... but I digress.

### **Being The Church**

Christ would have us **be his church**, and abide in him. If we do that as a body, we are dangerous to the enemy. We will go into all the world and preach his gospel, we will go feed the hungry, visit the sick, take care of orphans, maybe even raise some from the dead. 😊 The church in the book of Acts was a vibrant church who was constantly in action, rarely stagnant, never tied down to a location, and always growing, letting the the “acts” of the Holy Spirit be manifest before men. As a result, God added to his church daily. This is how people will know that God was with us... it is through the power of the Gospel, and the affect the gospel has on the lives of those who believe and have been changed by it. We can no longer be stagnant as a body and leave all of our godly gifts inside of a building.

What causes people to hold on to extra-biblical ideas and promote them as truth? Who knows, but it all comes down to this at the end of the day: Whose report will you believe?

<http://setfreefromtheic.wordpress.com/2010/06/18/the-church/>