

Ephesians Series

Lesson #065

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Dean Bible Ministries

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EPHESIANS

THE WEALTH, WALK
& WARFARE
OF THE BELIEVER

What IS the CHURCH?
Ephesians 2:11

Eph. 2:10, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

Eph. 2:11, “Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—

Eph. 2:12, “that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

Eph. 2:13, “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”

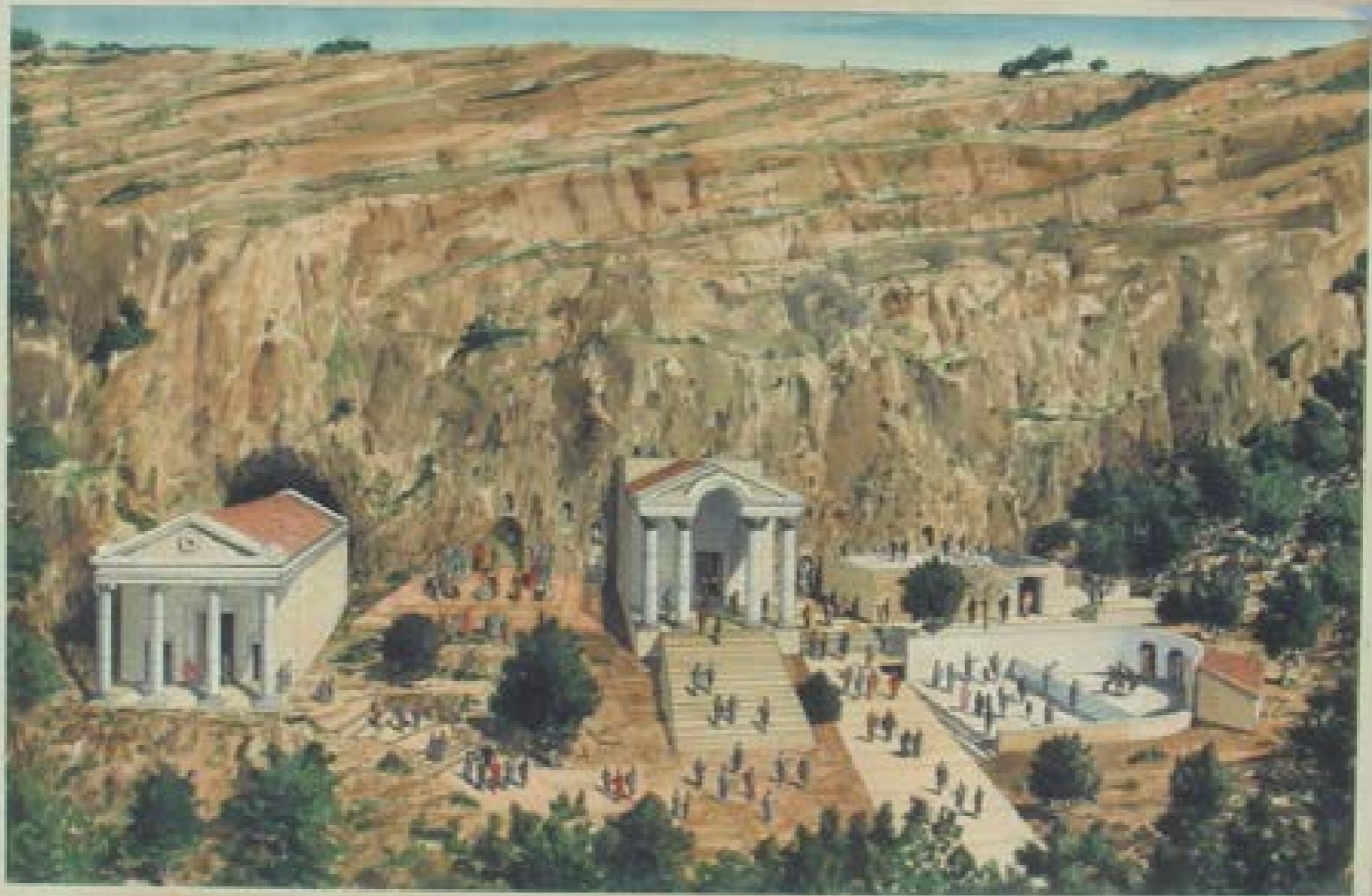
What the Bible Teaches About

**The Church,
the Body of Christ
(Matthew 16:18)**



1. The distinctiveness of the Church is brought out in Christ's first use of the term in Matt. 16:18.

Matt. 16:18, “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.”



“I will build My church”
οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν
oikodomēso mou ten ekklesian

οἰκοδομέω *oikodomēsō* 1 sing fut act indic
“to build, to construct a building; to construct something in an abstract sense” ~BDAG

“I will build My CHURCH”

A new, distinctive people of God, a new assembly comprised of all believers since Pentecost AD 33, alive or already with the Lord.

2. The Greek word translated church is:

**ἐκκλησία *ekklesia* “congregation,
assembly, meeting, church;”
114 times in the New Testament (NT);
100 times in the Septuagint (LXX).**

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LEH Dictionary: assembly (in political sense) Jdt 6,16; assembly of people Sir 26,5; alternating with συναγωγή, stereotypical rendition of להק: assembly of the Israelites Dt 4,10 (verb form) “assemble the people, gather the people.”

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Deut. 23:2, “One of illegitimate birth shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the LORD.”

The Old Testament never used the term *ekklesia* as a reference to the future New Testament Church. The closest it comes to anything remotely resembling the Church is the prediction of God's future blessing to Gentiles.

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The NT also uses the word in a non-technical sense:

Assembly (synagogue), Matt. 18:17

Old Testament Israel, Acts 7:38

A mob, Acts 19:32

a. ἑκκλησία *ekklesia* refers to non-specific local church assembly (cf. 1 Cor. 11:18; 14:4, 5, 12, 19, 23, 28, 35)

1 Cor. 11:18, “For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it.”

1 Cor. 14:4, “He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.”

b. Christians meeting in a house for worship (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Philem. 2).

Philem. 2, “to the beloved Apphia, Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:”

Col. 4:15, “Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church that is in his house.”

c. Paul used the word *church* to describe Christians that met for worship in a particular city or geographical region. (1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1; Rom. 16:1; Col. 4:16).

1 Thess. 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.”

Rom. 16:1, “I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea,”

d. Paul used the plural word “churches” to refer to a group of churches in a particular region (Gal. 1:2, 22; 1 Thess. 2:14; 2 Thess. 1:4; 1 Cor. 7:17; 11:16; 14:33, 34; 16:1; 2 Cor. 8:1, 18, 19, 23, 24; 11:8, 28; 12:13; Rom. 16:4, 16).

Gal. 1:2, “and all the brethren who are with me, To the churches of Galatia:

Gal. 1:22, “And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which were in Christ.”

1 Thess. 2:14, “For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. ...”

e. Paul used the expression “church of God” (Gal. 1:13; 1 Cor. 1:2; 10:32; 11:22; 15:9; 2 Cor. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:5, 15).

Gal. 1:13, “For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it.”

Three observations:

- 1. “Church” refers to the universal body of Christ including all believers, with the Lord or alive on the earth.**
- 2. “Church” refers to local assemblies, which include some unbelievers.**
- 3. “Church” is never used of a building.**

3. The church began on the Day of Pentecost in AD 33; Acts 2; The church will be concluded at the time of the Rapture, 1 Thess. 4:13–18

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It is used twice in early Acts to describe an already existing church.

Acts 5:11, “So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.”

Acts 8:1, “Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; ...”

4. The universal church is composed of all believers during this period from Pentecost, Acts 2:4, until the Rapture of the church, 1 Thess. 4:16–17.

5. In Ephesians, Paul always uses the word to refer only to the universal church, the body of Christ. Another word for universal church is the “catholic church.”

6. Acts 15 at the Council of Jerusalem we see the recognition of Jew and Gentile in the body of Christ.

Acts 15:5, “But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, ‘It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.’ ”

Acts 15:15, “And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:

Acts 15:16, “ ‘After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up;

Acts 15:17, “ ‘So that the rest of mankind may seek the LORD, even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, says the LORD who does all these things.’ ” [Amos 9:11, 12]