

## The Church

What is the first thing you think of when some one says something about religion and “the church”? To some, it’s “organized religion.” I don’t know how many people have said to me, “I believe in God, I just don’t believe in organized religion.” The fact of the matter is, God organized religion. So, a person who believes in God, but does not believe in organized religion, doesn’t believe God. There’s a difference in believing in God and believing what God says. The remainder of this article will attempt to open the scriptures that we can know what God says about the organization (organism) called “the church.” When the apostle Paul revealed that “God hath set some in the church” (1 Corinthians 12:28), it can only be concluded that the church has to be organized for God to “set some” in it. So, what do the scriptures have to say?

The term church refers to a “called out body” (from the Greek EKKLESIA). The church is not a building where people meet. It consists of people that may meet in a building, or anywhere else for that matter, because of the relationship they sustain to one another through Christ. The church consists of people whom the Father has delivered “out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love” (Colossians 1:13).

There are all types of names used to describe the various churches in our society, generic and specific. The church in the New Testament was referred to as “church of God” (1 Corinthians 1:2), “the church” in some specific city (Revelation 2:1), or the “churches of Christ” (Romans 16:16). All of these terms are descriptive of ownership, i.e., the church that belongs to Christ. In addition, the church was also known as Christ’s body (Ephesians 1:22-23).

The church is also a part of the eternal purpose of God. Some teach that the church was an afterthought because the Jews rejected Christ. The scriptures tell us: “to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly *places* might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Ephesians 3:10-11). When God created the heavens and the earth, He did so with such great planning that everything operates with mathematical precision. The same God created the plan of salvation “before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4). Everything God created was for His glory (Isaiah 43:7). God did not leave the church in such a condition that it required man to improve on God’s workmanship. Ross Triplett, Sr.