

CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH

WILLIAM
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Developed as a study course by Emmaus Correspondence School, founded in 1942.

Christ Loved the Church

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Published by:

Emmaus Correspondence School
(A division of ECS Ministries)
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website: www.ecsministries.org

First Printed 1956 (AK '56), 1 UNIT

Revised 1971 (AK '71), 1 UNIT

Revised 1989 (AK '89), 1 UNIT

Revised 2005 (AK '05), 1 UNIT

Reprinted 2007 (AK '05), 1 UNIT

Revised 2010 (AK '10), 2 UNITS

ISBN 978-0-940293-07-6

Code: CLC

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Printed in the United States of America

STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

When people think of the church, they tend to think of the vast organized system of religion that began to develop a century after the apostolic era. Under Emperor Constantine, Christianity flourished throughout the Roman Empire as a state religion (starting AD 312). Today, the church is represented by a wide range of religious bodies throughout the world. But is this what is meant by “the church” in the New Testament? What is God’s view of the church? How was it originally structured and organized? How should it function in today’s society?

To some, the ideas and concepts discussed here will be new, even revolutionary. Others will recognize a pattern with which they have long been familiar. All will be challenged to comply with God’s Word on this vital topic.

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Course Components

This course has two parts: this study course and the exam booklet.

How To Study

This study has twelve chapters, and each chapter has its own exam. Begin by asking God to help you understand the material. Read the chapter through at least twice, once to get a general idea of its contents and then again, slowly, looking up any Bible references given.

Begin studying immediately, or if you are in a group, as soon as the group begins. We suggest that you keep a regular schedule by trying to complete at least one chapter per week.

Exams

In the exam booklet there is one exam for each chapter (exam 1 covers chapter 1 of the course). Do not answer the questions by what you think or have always believed. The questions are designed to find out if you understand the material given in the course.

After you have completed each chapter, review the related exam and see how well you know the answers. If you find that you are having difficulty answering the questions, review the material until you think you can answer the questions.

How Your Exams Are Graded

Your instructor will mark any incorrectly answered questions. You will be referred back to the place in the course where the correct answer is to be found. After finishing this course with a passing average, you will be awarded a certificate.

If you enrolled in a class, submit your exam papers to the leader or secretary of the class who will send them for the entire group to the Correspondence School.

See the back of the exam booklet for more information on returning the exams for grading.

1

THE CHURCH IS CHRIST'S BODY

“Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her” (Eph. 5:25). We, too, should love the church and, in a sense, should give ourselves for it. We should give ourselves sacrificially and devotedly in loving, glad service, in order that the church on earth might progress and prosper and triumph.

The object of this study is to examine some of the important principles of the New Testament governing the character and conduct of the church. The general approach will be to review the great, unchangeable truths concerning the church universal, and then to show how each local church (assembly) is responsible to witness to these truths in life and practice.

At the outset, it should be emphasized that correctness of church position must never be divorced from correctness of condition. The Christians who comprise a local church must always be a living testimony to the truth. This emphasis will continue throughout these studies.

Turning to the church universal, we will begin by defining and describing it.

Definition of the Church

In the New Testament, the word *church* is a translation of the Greek word *ekklesia*, which means “a called-out company,” “a gathering” or an “assembly.” Stephen used the word to describe Israel as “the congregation (assembly) in the wilderness” (Acts 7:38). It is also used in the book of Acts to describe a heathen mob at Ephesus (Acts 19:32, 39-41). But the most

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 to the truth.**
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common use of the word in the New Testament is to describe a group of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus Paul speaks of “the *church* of God which He purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28). In his first letter to the Corinthian Christians, the great apostle divides the whole world into Jews, Gentiles, and the *church* of God (1 Cor. 10:32). Again, he identifies the *church* of God as including the group of Christian believers whom he persecuted before his conversion (1 Cor. 15:9).

It has often been said that the church is not an organization but an organism. By this is meant that it is not a lifeless institution but a living unit. It is a fellowship of all those who share the life of Christ and who are linked together in living union by the Holy Spirit. It has been well called “a pure communion of persons without institutional character.”

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Many descriptive titles are given to the church in the New Testament, and one of the best ways of arriving at an understanding of the church is to consider the significance of each title. The following are the prominent descriptions of the church:

1. A Flock (John 10:16)

The Jewish nation was a fold. The church is a flock. In John 10:16 the Lord Jesus said, “Other sheep I have which are not of this fold (Israel): them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one Shepherd.” The idea of a *flock* brings before our minds a group of Christians living together under the loving, tender care of the Good Shepherd—hearing His voice and following Him (John 10:3-4).

2. God’s Field (1 Cor. 3:9)

The church is God’s garden plot in which He purposes to raise fruit for His glory. The thought of fruit bearing is thus brought before us here.

3. God’s Building (1 Cor. 3:9)

This expression pictures God as carrying on a building program. He is adding living stones to the church (1 Peter 2:5). How important it is that our lives should be devoted to the construction project in which He is so vitally interested!

4. The Temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16)

The Word “temple” immediately brings before us the thought of worship, and reminds us that the only worship God gets today is from those who are members of the church.

5. The Body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23)

The body is the vehicle by which a person expresses himself. Thus the body of Christ is the unit through which the Lord chooses to express Himself to the world today. Once this great truth is grasped, a believer will never again think of the church as of minor importance, but will devote himself unreservedly to the best interests of the body of Christ.

6. A New Man (Eph. 2:15)

Here the idea of a new creation is prominent. The greatest of all differences among men, that of Jew and Gentile, has been abolished in the church, and God makes of these two peoples one new man.

7. A Dwelling Place of God (Eph. 2:22)

This expression conveys the truth that God now dwells in the church, rather than in a material tabernacle or temple, as in the Old Testament.

8. The Bride of Christ (Eph. 5:25-27; 2 Cor. 11:2)

This view of the church gives prominence to the idea of affection. “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.” If Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it, then obviously the church should be filled with bridal affection for Him.

9. The House of God (1 Tim. 3:15)

A house (or household) speaks to us of order and discipline. The thought of order is suggested in 1 Timothy 3:15: “That you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God.” Discipline is suggested in 1 Peter 4:17: “For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God.”

10. The Pillar and Ground of the Truth (1 Tim. 3:15)

In addition to being a support for a building, a pillar was often used in early days for posting public notices. It was a means of proclamation. The word “ground” means a foundation or a support. Thus the church of God is the unit that He has ordained for proclaiming, supporting, and defending His truth. We may safely say, therefore, that if Christians are to be in the current of God’s will and purposes, they should devote their finest efforts to the expansion and spiritual welfare of the church.

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The Mission of the Church

Many boast today that their mission is to preach the gospel, and they take a detached view of anything to do with the church. They should notice that the apostle Paul’s ministry was twofold: (1) to “preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph. 3:8), and (2) “To make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery” (Eph. 3:9), that is, to ground them in the great truths of the church.

The Origin of the Church

Great and godly men have differed widely as to the time of the beginning of the church. Many believe that the assembly is a continuation or outgrowth of Israel in the Old Testament. Others maintain stoutly that the church did not exist in the Old Testament, but that it began in the new dispensation.¹ (A dispensation is a period in God’s divine program for the ages in which He deals with mankind or a portion of mankind in respect of man’s sin and man’s responsibility.) In favor of the latter viewpoint are three considerations.

- In Ephesians 3:4-5, Paul speaks of the church as a mystery “which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets.” Again in verse 9, he states that the church is a “mystery, which

¹ For a further discussion of dispensations, see the ECS Ministries course *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*.

from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God.” (See also Col. 1:26; Rom. 16:25-26.) Thus the church was a secret, kept by God throughout the Old Testament times, and not revealed until the New Testament apostles and prophets appeared.

- In Matthew 16:18, the Lord Jesus said, “on this rock I *will build* my church.” In other words, the church was still future at the time He spoke.
- Again in Ephesians 4:8-11, Paul emphasizes that it was the risen, ascended Christ who gave gifts to the church. This argues strongly that if the church existed before His ascension, it must have lacked gifts for its edification (building up of believers).

We believe it is not only possible to show that the church began in the new dispensation, but, more specifically, that it was brought into being on the day of Pentecost.

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**The church was
 brought into being
 on the day of
 Pentecost.**
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The body of Christ is said to have been formed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13). Can we determine then when the baptism of the Holy Spirit took place? In Acts 1:5, immediately prior to the Lord's ascension, He promised the apostles, “You shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” On the day of Pentecost, “they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4). By the time we reach Acts 5:11; the church has definitely come into being, because we read “great fear came upon all the church.”

This certainly seems to pinpoint the birthday of the church as occurring at Pentecost.

CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH

EXAM BOOKLET AK '10 (2 UNITS) CLC

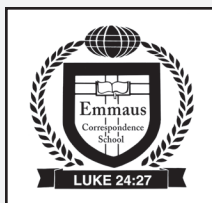
STUDENT NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS

CITY, STATE, ZIP

COURSE GRADE: _____

INSTRUCTOR



Exam developed by Emmaus Correspondence School, founded in 1942.

A NOTE ON THE EXAMS

The exams are designed to check your knowledge of the course material and the Scriptures. After you have studied a chapter, review the exam questions for that lesson. If you have difficulty in answering the questions, re-read the material. If questions contain a Scripture reference, you may use your Bible to help you answer them. If your instructor has provided a single page Answer Sheet, record your answer on that sheet. This exam contains the following types of questions:

MULTIPLE CHOICE

You will be asked to write in the letter of the correct answer at the space on the right. Here is an example:

The color of grass is

- A. blue C. yellow
B. green D. orange

 B

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Questions headed this way are designed to help you express your ideas and feelings. You may freely state your own opinions in answer to such questions.

RETURNING THE EXAM

See the back of this exam booklet for instructions on returning your exam for grading.

First Printed 1956 (AK '56), 1 UNIT

Revised 1971 (AK '71), 1 UNIT

Revised 1989 (AK '89), 1 UNIT

Revised 2005 (AK '05), 1 UNIT

Reprinted 2007 (AK '05), 1 UNIT

Revised 2010 (AK '10), 2 UNITS

ISBN 978-0-940293-07-6

Code: CLC

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Printed in the United States of America

CHAPTER 1 EXAM

THE CHURCH IS CHRIST'S BODY

EXAM GRADE

Before starting this exam, write your name and address on the front of this Exam Booklet.

Directions: Read each question carefully and write the letter of the correct answer in the blank space on the right. Use the separate answer sheet if provided.

1. The title of this course is taken from

A. Acts 2:41	C. Ephesians 5:25	
B. Matthew 18:15-17	D. Galatians 2:20	_____

2. The word *ekklesia*

A. is the word for “a church building”	
B. is used exclusively in the New Testament in reference to the church	
C. is used to define the local, not universal, church	
D. means “an assembly” or “a called-out company”	_____

3. The church may best be described as

A. the kingdom of God	C. God’s vineyard	
B. a living organism	D. the heavenly tabernacle	_____

4. Which descriptive name of the church brings before our minds a group of Christians living together under the loving, tender care of the Good Shepherd—hearing His voice and following Him?

A. A fold	C. The body of Christ	
B. The bride of Christ	D. A flock	_____

5. The unit through which the Lord chooses to express Himself to the world today is:

A. the body of Christ	C. the temple of God	
B. the bride of Christ	D. God’s building	_____

6. Which descriptive name of the church speaks to us of order and discipline?

A. the pillar and ground of the truth	
B. the temple of God	
C. an habitation of God	
D. the house of God	_____

7. Based on what you have learned in this lesson, which verse would be best to share with a Christian who has little or no contact with the church to show him he should consider the church important?

- A. Romans 15:20
- B. Ephesians 3:8-10
- C. Romans 10:1
- D. Romans 1:5

8. What does the apostle Paul speak of as being a mystery throughout the Old Testament times?

- A. the church
- B. Israel
- C. the Spirit
- D. the new birth

9. The Lord Jesus spoke of the church

- A. on many occasions
- B. as being something yet future when He was on earth
- C. as being dependent for its edification upon the gifts He would bestow upon it after His ascension
- D. as being a major Old Testament topic

10. Which set of verses lists in order the four steps given in the lesson which would pin-point the church's birthday as being the day of Pentecost?

- A. 1 Cor. 12:13; Acts 2:4; Acts 1:5; Acts 5:11
- B. Acts 2:43-44; 1 Cor. 12:13; Acts 1:5; Acts 2:4
- C. 1 Cor. 12:13; Acts 1:5; Acts 2:4; Acts 5:11
- D. Acts 1:5; Acts 2:4; Acts 2:43-44; Acts 5:11

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

What do you have *in common* with *all* other believers in Christ? What does this mean to you?
