

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

DO NOT THINK CATHOLICISM, PROTESTANTISM, NOR DENOMINATIONALISM. The church that the Lord Jesus Christ promised to build (cf. Matthew 16:18) and did build was not protesting the doctrines of a different church, nor was subdividing into some different interpretation and practice. There had been no previous called-out group of people claiming to be under the preeminent leadership of Christ the Son.

The word *church* is a religious word in our English language, but the actual Greek word *ekklesia*, which is often translated as *church*, was a common term that literally meant *a calling out of*. In the first century it was used to describe any gathering summoned for a definite purpose – such as a company of citizens, a congregation of believers, an assembly for a spiritual purpose. Jesus divinely chose this term to refer to the establishment of His spiritual gathering of disciples for His defined purpose and will – “... *I will build My church*;...” The Anointed One’s church has been called, and now she is to conduct herself worthy of her calling (cf. Ephesians 4:1).

This called-out gathering and assembly of disciples belongs to the Son of God. Believers’ complete allegiance and adherence are to be given to Jesus because He is Lord and Christ. Not only must the individual disciple submit totally to the authority of the reigning King Jesus, but also, the ordained congregation of followers must obey the One who has called them into His assembly. Why? He is the church’s Builder. But He is so much more than that. He laid down her foundation (1 Cor. 3:11); He is the precious Cornerstone (Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet. 2:6). With His own blood He paid for this called-out, spiritual company (Acts 20:28). Therefore, Christ is the sole Head and Savior of His church (Eph. 5:23).

The Lord Jesus built one church, one assembly of saved believers. Just as there is one Father, one Lord and one Holy Spirit, there is one body of Christ (cf. Eph. 4:4-6). The body of Christ is the church of Christ (1:22, 23). He is not divided. Thus He did not build different kinds of churches.