Church in the New Testament

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Taken from [The Time of the End BOOK](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-in-revelation.php#The%20Time%20of%20the%20End) by Arlen L. Chitwood, Chapter 6

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The word “church” is a translation of the Greek word *ekklesia*, a compound word that means “called out” [*ek*, meaning “out”; and *klesis*, meaning “to call”]. The word is used 115 times in the New Testament, and in all except five instances it is used of Christians. It is used of the nation of Israel or those in Israel three times [[Matthew 18:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+18.17&t=NKJV); [Acts 7:38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+7.38&t=NKJV)], and it is used of a gathering of mainly unsaved Gentiles twice [some Jews present ([Acts 19:32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+19.32&t=NKJV), [39](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+19.39&t=NKJV))]. And in the five instances where the word is not used of Christians it could be better translated “assembly,” understanding that “the assembly” was *a called out group* [Israel *called out* of the nations ([Acts 7:38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+7.38&t=NKJV)), or individuals *called out* of this nation ([Matthew 18:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+18.17&t=NKJV)), or individuals *called out* from a Gentile nation ([Acts 19:32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+19.32&t=NKJV), [39](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+19.39&t=NKJV))].

The Hebrew text of the Old Testament uses a corresponding word, *qehal*, which the Septuagint [Greek version of the Old Testament] usually translates by using *ekklesia*. *Qehal* is found 112 times in the Old Testament, almost an equal number of times that the corresponding word, *ekklesia*, is found in the New Testament. *Qehal* is usually translated in the English text as “*assembly*” [[Deuteronomy 9:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deuteronomy+9.10&t=NKJV); [18:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deuteronomy+18.16&t=NKJV)] or “*congregation*” [[Deuteronomy 23:1-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deuteronomy+23.1-3&t=NKJV); [1 Kings 8:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Kings+8.14&t=NKJV)], and sometimes as “*company*” [[1 Samuel 19:20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Samuel+19.20&t=NKJV)]. The word is used mainly of Israel or those in Israel, though a few times it is used of groups from among Gentile nations [[Genesis 35:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+35.11&t=NKJV); [Ezekiel 23:46-47](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+23.46-47&t=NKJV); [26:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+26.7&t=NKJV); [38:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+38.4&t=NKJV), [7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+38.7&t=NKJV), [13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+38.13&t=NKJV), [15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+38.15&t=NKJV)].

Thus, when the Greek text of the New Testament uses the word *ekklesia*, where Christians are involved [110 of the 115 times that the word appears], it is dealing with *the saved alone* [the saved of the present dispensation, those comprising *the one new man “in Christ”*]. The word “church” [*ekklesia*] is never used in the New Testament referring to an assembly of both Christians and Jews [including saved Jews comprising the nation during the time of the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel (from 33 AD to about 62 AD)] or to an assembly of both Christians and Gentiles. Rather, the word is always used *only* as a reference to those forming *the one new man “in Christ,”* which is neither Jew nor Gentile [[Galatians 3:26-29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+3.26-29&t=NKJV); [Colossians 3:10-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+3.10-11&t=NKJV)].

In this respect, the Church [the *ekklesia*] of the New Testament, having to do with Christians alone, is one thing; and the usage of a corresponding word in the Old Testament [*qehal* (usually translated *ekklesia* in the Septuagint)], and the usage of *ekklesia* having to do with Israel or those in Israel three times in the New Testament, is another thing entirely. The word Church in the New Testament, when referring to the saved who are taken from among both the Jews and the Gentiles during the present dispensation [110 of the 115 times the word is used], began on the day of Pentecost in 33 AD and will be removed at the end of the dispensation.

And any type of teaching to the contrary is no more or no less than man’s flawed ideology brought over into his understanding of Scripture, seeking to interpret, through natural means, that which is spiritually discerned. Scripture though is to be interpreted *solely* from the spiritual side of matters, *never* from the natural. Scripture is to be interpreted *in the light of Scripture*, *comparing that which is spiritual with that which is spiritual* [[1 Corinthians 2:10-13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+2.10-13&t=NKJV)], with man’s thoughts and ideas on the matter of *no moment whatsoever.*

However, contrariwise, within the New Testament usage of the word “church,” as it is used relating to *the one new man “in Christ,”* there is no such thing as a church comprised of both saved and unsaved individuals. A person is either within or without the Church, depending on his saved or unsaved state. He is either a Jew, a Gentile (both without the Church), or a Christian (within the Church [[1 Corinthians 10:32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+10.32&t=NKJV)]).

Nor can unsaved individuals be thought of as *professors* instead of *possessors* and find themselves within the Church after the manner in which the word “church” is used in the New Testament. Scripture knows nothing about *professors* as opposed to *possessors*. Scripture knows only *possessors* (the saved) and *non-possessors* (the unsaved).

Note: Within almost all articles published in [Bible One](http://www.bibleone.net/) the word “church” is capitalized (*e.g*., Church) when it refers to all believers in Christ (Christians) worldwide, but is not capitalized (*e.g.*, church) when referring to a local assembly of believers.