

What Exactly is “the Church”?

Introduction:

- A. The word *church* means different things to different people.
- B. Due to common misunderstandings, it is wise to examine how the Bible uses the word *church*.

I. *Ekklesia* (Greek) in the Bible

- A. Use of *ekklesia* to refer to gathered people had substantial background in the Septuagint—the Greek translation of the Old Testament (*Deut 9:10; 31:30; 1 Sam 17:47; 1 Kings 8:14*).
- B. *Ekklesia* is used 114 times in the New Testament.
 - 1. It is translated *assembly* four times (*Acts 19:32,39,41; Heb 12:23*).
 - 2. It is translated *congregation* twice (*Acts 7:38; Heb 2:12*).
- C. *Ekklesia* is a compound Greek word—**ek** (out of) + **klesis** (a calling).
- D. It is used throughout the New Testament to refer to people who have been “called out.”
 - 1. A _____ sense = all of the saved (*Matt 16:18; Eph 1:22-23; Col 1:18*).
 - 2. A _____ sense = saints in a specific location (*1 Cor 1:2; 1 Thes 1:1; Rom 16:23; Acts 14:23; 1 Cor 4:17; Matt 18:17*).
 - 3. A _____ sense = assembled saints (*1 Cor 11:17-18; 14:4-5,19,23,33-35*).
 - 4. A _____ sense = members of a group (*Acts 5:11; 8:1-3; 9:31; 12:5*).

II. Taking Care in Our Concept of the “Universal Church”

- A. Is it composed of all the local churches or all the saved individuals throughout the world?

SINGULAR

PLURAL

COLLECTIVE

- B. Does it have a name?

- C. Are you a part of it?