

Many And One - Local And Universal

Recently looked at mission of church

Also considered Ekklesia

Which is used most frequently in New Testament in two senses:

Local - Christians in a geographical area that work and worship together as a congregation of God's people

Universal - that company of souls redeemed by the blood of Christ

Noting difference can help us better understand just as considering various descriptive terms reveal different aspects.

"Household", "Temple" of God; "Body", "Kingdom", "Bride" of Christ

Many Local Churches

Composed of Christians in one location - **Romans 16:16; Galatians 1:2; 1Corinthians 1:2; 1Thessalonians 1:1**

Begins when those in a particular area agree to work together as one - **Acts 11:21,26**

One Universal Church

Composed of all Christians everywhere/when - **Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 4:4; 1:22-23; Hebrews 12:23**

Began on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem - **Acts 2; 11:15**

Join A Local Church

When one wishes to become an accepted member of the local church, they must "join themselves" to that church - **Acts 9:26**

Whether we are accepted into a local church is a decision made by the leaders or members of that church - **Acts 9:27; Revelation 2:14**

Includes both saved and lost - **1Corinthians 5:1; 3John 9-10**

When we die, our membership in a local congregation ends - **Acts 8:2**

Added To The Universal Church

One cannot "join" the church by their own volition - **Acts 2:41,47**

Lord determines membership - **Hebrews 12:23; 2Timothy 2:19**

Evil men may succeed in kicking one out of a local church, but only the Lord determines who stays in the universal church!

Contains only the saved - **Ephesians 5:27; John 15:2,6; Romans 11:22; Revelation 3:16**

Death doesn't affect membership - **Hebrews 12:22-24; Philippians 1:21-23; 1Thessalonians 5:10**

Locally Organized

Philippians 1:1; Acts 14:23; Acts 20:17,28

Can be divided - **1Corinthians 1:11-12; 3:3-4**

Heavenly Organization

What organization exists is spiritual in nature - **1Peter 2:5; Ephesians 2:19-22; Acts 12:2**

Cannot be divided - **Ephesians 4:4**

Those who would seek to divide the church through doctrine, conduct, etc., are simply cut off by the Lord Himself!

Local Church Cannot Save

Acts 8:39; 9:26

Universal Church Is The Saved

Ephesians 5:23

Since the Lord adds one to His church when they are saved, one cannot be saved and not be in the church "universal"!

Church Local, The Church

When we are aware of the differences, we are also better able to identify the New Testament church today!

One could say that a key difference between the two is this...

Church "universal" concerns relationship with Christ

Church "local" basically concerns relationship with one another

Our service in latter can certainly affect our standing in former!

Is our relationship with Christ and each other what it should be?

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