

Universal Local Matthew 16:13-20

Church

Greek "ekklesia" - "an assembly"

New Testament makes distinction between church "universal" & "local"

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

"Local" - Christians in a geographical area that work and worship together as a congregation

Failing to make this distinction ourselves can lead to false views & concepts

The Church

Universal

Pentecost following DBR of Christ - **Acts 2:1-47; 11:15**

Only One - **Ephesians 1:22-23; 1Peter 5:4**

Local

Christians in locality agree to work together - **Acts 11:19-26**

Many (unlimited?) - **Romans 16:16; Galatians 1:2**

Organization

Universal

Christ - cornerstone, apostles, prophets - foundation, all Christians - "living stones" - **1Peter 2:4-8**

There is no earthly headquarters for church; (for He is in heaven!) - **Ephesians 2:19-22**

Only earthly position over universal church was apostle, not replaced when they died - **Acts 12:2**

Local

Has "earthly" organization - **Philippians 1:1; Acts 14:23; 20:17,28**

Division

Universal

No earthly organization to divide!

Organization can have division, Lord's church "universal" can't!

Those who divide church through doctrine, conduct, etc., simply cut off by Lord!

There is and always will be, "one body"! - **Ephesians 4:4-6**

Local

Can be divided - **1Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:3-4**

Membership

Universal

All Christians Everywhere/Everywhen - **Matthew 16:18; Hebrews 12:22-24; Ephesians 3:14-21; 5:25-27**

"added" by the Lord - **Acts 2:41,47**

Lord knows those who are truly His - **Hebrews 12:23; 2Timothy 2:19**

"cut off", "cast out", "spewed out" - **John 15:2,6; Romans 11:19-22; Revelation 3:16**

Local

Christians Local area (Geographical) - **1Corinthians 1:2; 1Thessalonians 1:1**

"joining" the church - **Acts 9:26-28**

Acceptance into a local church is decision made by leaders/members of that church - **3John 5-10**

Consists of both saved and lost - **Revelation 3:1-4**

Required

Universal

Must be in this church to be 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"! - **Acts 2:47**

Local

One can be saved, and not belong to any local church (should be temporary) - **Acts 8:39; 9:26**

Death

Universal

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

Local

Death affects membership - **Acts 8:1-2**

Greater Understanding

Why note the difference between the church "universal" and the church "local"?

To better understand how word "church" used in New Testament

To avoid confusion in our thinking when we use word "church"

When aware of difference, better able to identify the New Testament church today!

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

Church "universal" in essence 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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