

## **“Introduction” To The Seven Aspects Of The Church, As Seen In Ephesians**

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Any biblical understanding of the church will first focus on the person of Christ. In “church history” there is far too little dealing with the living Christ and far too much focus on the church today as a cultural and worldly institution. Concepts of the church today bear little or no resemblance to her original beauty. In the Bible, the *church* is what comes out of *Christ* both doctrinally and experientially. In this introduction, then, let us consider Christ and the church.

### **Christ**

(John 14:9-10; II Peter 1:3-4; Colossians 3:1-4; Ephesians 3:16-17)

Up until the incarnation of Christ, God was strictly mysterious and invisible. Philosophers asked the hard questions for millennia about what God was like, if He existed at all. Once Jesus came, He made it evident that if you wondered what God was like you need wonder no more. If you could only meet and know Jesus, then you would have seen the Father.

When Jesus came, the living Word opened, and a God-Man walked among us. When He spoke, the earth heard and saw God. When He lived, the Father was pleased, for this was the completed humanity of His original intention and design. God intended for this divine life to be multiplied on the earth through the church, a new humanity that would believe and live by Him.

It follows, then, that when a person first believes in Christ, there is a mysterious, spontaneous and real union of the Spirit of Christ within him. A seed of the divine life and the nature of Christ has been implanted in his heart to make a dwelling place for Christ.

### **The church**

(Matthew. 16:16-18; Romans 12; I Corinthians 6:17; 12; John 17)

It is in a personal union with Christ that a believer may live, feed and spiritually mature. From this loving union issues light and experience that changes the believer from within. When reaction in the believer to the Word of God and to the Spirit of God is experienced by the believer, that overflow becomes the genuine and living content of the church. All the believers together are a church that has come out of Christ. This is the glory and the spreading of Christ.

Tragically, there is a problem which undermines this crucial revelation. From the first century, deviations have progressively compromised divine life and truths in practicing the church life. The biblical church is a redeemed humanity, not just something to do or a place to go. In her life, nature and practice she is a glorious anti-testimony; that is, she is a separated, powerful, heavenly lifestyle dwelling in the midst of a corrupted worldly culture.

Today, it seems “the church” has become a physical building. Some may even ask which church you attend. Such things indicate that many don’t realize who Christ is, and what the church is. The world has defined much of what passes for the church, and her leadership has cooperated. Her typical believers have little enlightenment, power or distinction from the world around them. Why? Because she has worldly recognition, but she has lost biblical authority.

### **Seven aspects of the church, as seen in Ephesians**

(Ephesians 1-6)

As genuine believers, we have a deep desire to go on with the Lord in a genuine way. In this case, the best way to go on is by going back. If we go back to the Bible we may discover the divine revelation and apostolic thought of what is the church, and from that, move forward.

In the book of Ephesians, the aspects revealed may enable us to see where we are and where we ought to be. With the help of the Lord, we will see how to experience Christ and each of these marvelous applications of Christ in His body, which is the church. Then we will know

something fresh, rich and powerful. Then we can become a people in love with a personal Christ and glorify a living God in our daily lives individually, and in our church life corporately.

**For prayer, study and fellowship:**

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1. In ancient times, the question to be asked was “What do you think about God?” In the days of Jesus the question was “What do you think about the Christ?” Since the time of Jesus, the question must also be asked “What do you think about the church?” So then...when you hear the word “church”, what comes to your mind? Compare your thoughts to the biblical useage of the word.
2. Consider the following and write down other uses of “church”. Are they biblical? Does it matter today?
  - Does your church have money yet to build a church?
  - I'll meet you after church.
  - I go to church three times a week.
  - What church do you go to?
  - Let's get dressed for church.
  - A sign I saw which read, “Church For Sale With Five Acres”

Others:

**From references in the “Introduction”:**

**Regarding Christ:**

3. Who was Christ, just a man? (John 14:9-10)
4. Whose life and nature does a person receive when he first believes? (II Peter 1:3-4)
5. Who is the source of believers, and by whom does a normal believer live? (Col. 3:1-4)
6. Where does Christ live today? (Ephesians 3:16-17; Romans 8:34)

**Regarding the church:**

7. What did Jesus say He would do and how important is it? (Matt. 16:16-18; Eph. 3:9-11)
8. What and who is the church? (Romans 12; I Corinthians 12)
9. Is “believing” a mental decision only; is there more, and for what? (I Cor. 6:17; Rom. 12:2a)
10. What is the goal of the Lord's praying before His crucifixion? (John 17)

**Notes:**

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