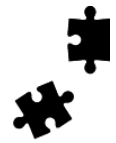


# WHAT IT MEANS TO BE THE CHURCH



## Lesson 1: The Church and Her Two Phases

- I. **The definition of “church”:** The word church comes from the Greek word *ekklesia*, which means an assembly or group of people called out or called together for some purpose, whether political or spiritual.
  - a. The word was used for an assembly of people in a town—**Acts 19:39, 41.**
  - b. *Ekklesia* was also used of Israel as the congregation in the wilderness—**Acts 7:38.**
  - c. Paul uses the word to describe the body of Christ—**Ephesians 1:22–23.**
  
- II. **The church universal:** This phase of the church includes all believers from the day of Pentecost until and including the current day.
  - a. Christ promised to build His church and not even the powers of the Satan will prevail against it—**Matthew 16:18.**
  - b. Since the day of Pentecost, every person who believes in Christ as Savior is placed into Christ through the baptism of the Holy Spirit and thus becomes a part of His Body—**Ephesians 1:22–23; 1 Corinthians 12:13, Colossians 1:18.**
  - c. The church universal includes all who have believed in Christ as Savior, whether here on the earth or those who have already gone to heaven—**Hebrews 12:22–23.**
  - d. The church universal is “that spiritual organism of which Christ is the Head, and is composed of all regenerated people from Pentecost to the Rapture” (Charles Ryrie).
  
- III. **The church local:** This phase of the church focuses on a group of believers who come together in a local place for several purposes.
  - a. The word for church is used of a group of churches in a particular area—**Acts 9:31.**
  - b. *Ekklesia* came to be used of a local assembly of believers—**1 Thessalonians 1:1; Romans 16:5; Philemon 2.**
  - c. A local church exists when believers in Christ intentionally regularly assemble in a common location under the headship of Christ and direction of church leaders in order to observe the ordinances (water baptism and the Lord’s Supper), to further Christ’s purposes of edification, ministry and evangelism in order to glorify Him—**Acts 2:41–42.**