

## The Church(es)<sup>1</sup>

This article will attempt to show that the word Church is generic and can apply to the *Church in the Wilderness* under Moses, the *Kingdom Church* under the Twelve Apostles, or the *Church the Body of Christ* under the Apostle Paul.

The English word, church, is only found in the New Testament of our Bibles. It is translated from the Greek noun, *ekklesia*: a calling out, assembly, church. The Greek word is translated *assembly* 3 times, *church* 77 times, and *churches* 37 times. There has been much confusion, over the centuries, about when the current church began and therefore which church is being referred to at any particular time.

To demonstrate that the use of the Greek word *ekklesia* is generic can be shown from the three translations into our English word, assembly. This occurs in Acts 19:32,39,41 and refers to an unruly and unlawful assembly. Further proof can be shown in Acts 7:38 where our word church refers to the church in the wilderness under Moses.

**“This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:”** (Acts 7:38)

## The Kingdom Church

The *Kingdom church* was a continuation of the church of the Old Testament before Christ and the church in the New Testament after Christ. This is evidenced by the reference in Acts 2:47 on the Day of Pentecost where we read:

**“Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”** (Acts 2:47)

It is a common misconception that the current church began on the Day of Pentecost, but those converts were “added” to the existing church at that time. In fact, the first offer of the long-awaited kingdom was to come in the Apostle Peter’s second Pentecostal address in Acts 3:

**“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”** (Acts 3:19-21)

After all, in Matthew 3:2 John the Baptist began to preach: **“...Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”** Christ also sent the twelve forth in Matthew 10:7 to preach: **“...The kingdom of heaven is at hand.”** We can see from the parable in Luke 19:12ff that this kingdom was to be given to Christ, in heaven, by God and brought back to earth to be set up. The promise of the kingdom, however, was a conditional one as we remember from Exodus 19:

**“Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And**

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**ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.”** (Exodus 19:5,6)

To this day Christ has not returned to set that kingdom because the majority of Israel, especially her leaders, rejected the gospel of the kingdom. This brings us to the next church in the Bible which is the one we are under today.

### **The Church the Body of Christ**

As we approach the mid-part of the book of Acts, we find that the earthly, prophetic, kingdom program of God was interrupted by His heavenly, mystery, Body of Christ program through the Apostle Paul. Beginning in the mid-part of the book of Acts and extending from the book of Romans through the book of Philemon most of the uses of the word church are for the Church, which is His body. This marks the true beginning of the current church which was between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> chapters of the book of Acts. After the rapture of the present church, the book of Hebrews is a transition back to the kingdom program and kingdom church where you ultimately see all Israel being saved and Christ returning in the second coming with the promised kingdom. (For a complete treatment of the foregoing, see this author’s article titled: [A Mid-Acts Dispensational Trip through the Bible](#)).

**“And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”** (Ephesians 1:22,23)

To avoid confusion during this present age, until the Lord returns, it is best to properly identify the church being referred to by adding either *kingdom* or *Body of Christ* with its reference.