

# LIVE FOR CHRIST

## The Church

July 28, 2021 .....	Christian Living
August 4 2021 .....	Prayer
August 11, 2021 .....	Worship
August 18, 2021 .....	The Church
August 25, 2021 .....	Stewardship
September 1, 2021 .....	Family
September 8, 2021 .....	The World
September 15, 2021 .....	Evangelism

### Goal: to define the word “Church”

Read Ephesians 2:11-18.

1. Circumcision was a minor physical difference between Jews and Gentiles in Paul’s time. What does Paul consider to be the *biggest* difference between the Jews and the Gentiles?
2. Paul calls the Gentiles “foreigners to the covenants of the promise.” What covenant promise is Paul referring to?
3. In what ways has Christ united all people, Jews and Gentiles?

#### Bible notes

In your Bible, in Ephesians 2:12, underline “foreigners to the covenants of the promise.” In the margin, write “See Genesis 12:1-3, Isaiah 54:10, and Ephesians 3:6.”

Read Ephesians 2:19-22.

1. Paul tells us we are now “fellow citizens with God’s people” and “members of God’s household.” Those two phrases stress two relationships that are now possible through Christ’s death. What are those two relationships?
2. In what sense are those relationships “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets”?
3. What is a cornerstone? How is Jesus the cornerstone of our relationship with God and our relationship with other Christians?
4. Look at the last part of verse 18 and the last part of verse 22. Who is responsible for creating the bond between God’s children?
5. Complete the following statement: “The Church is \_\_\_\_\_.”

#### Bible notes

In your Bible, in Ephesians 2:19, underline the phrase “no longer foreigners and aliens.” Put a double underline under “no longer.”

# “The Church” Addendum #1

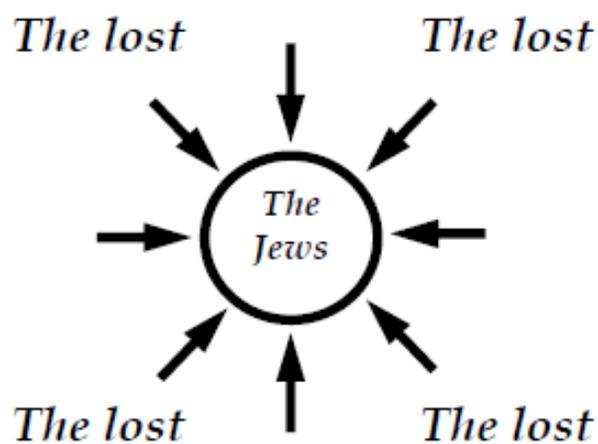
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## The two ways of reaching the lost

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### The Old Testament Church

A centripetal force



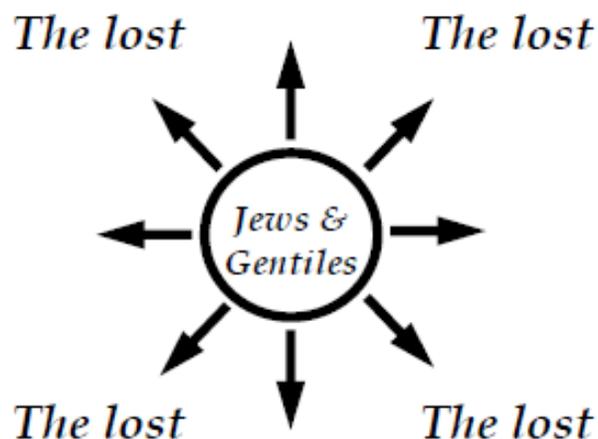
Observe [God's decrees and Laws] carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to him? And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?

– Deuteronomy 4:6-8

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### The New Testament Church

A centrifugal force



Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

– Matthew 28:19,20

**Goal: to see that the Holy Spirit gives each member of the Church spiritual gifts**

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-11.

1. Why do we have faith that Jesus is Lord?
2. Why do we serve the Lord?
3. In verse 11, what does the phrase “each one” tell us about who is responsible for serving in the Church?
4. What does the phrase “just as he determines” tell us about the way the Holy Spirit gives out spiritual gifts?

Bible notes

In your Bible, in 1 Corinthians 12:11, underline the phrase “each one.” Double-underline the phrase “just as he determines.”

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-31.

1. What does Paul cite as evidence that we are all members of one body?
2. Can a body function without a left arm? Without functioning ears? Without big toes? Does it function *as well* without those items? What, therefore, is Paul’s point in comparing the Church to a body?
3. What can we expect to happen when someone doesn’t make use of their spiritual gifts?
4. What can we expect to happen when all use their gifts faithfully?
5. Imagine the following two people belong to your church. Karen is very knowledgeable about the Bible. She has no problem sharing her faith with friends and even strangers. In fact, about a dozen people have joined the church as a result of Karen’s witnessing. Bob is terrified talking about the Bible because he doesn’t feel he knows enough about it. He volunteers his time regularly at church, doing things like cutting the lawn and raking leaves. But he feels bad that he can’t do as much as people like Karen.

Bible notes

In your Bible, underline 1 Corinthians 12:26.

What does this lesson have to say to Karen?

What does it have to say to Bob?

**Goal: to understand the difference between the Church and visible churches**

Read Matthew 13:47-50.

1. A parable makes a comparison between an earthly story and a heavenly truth. In this parable, Jesus is comparing people with fish caught in a net. What is the point of comparison?
2. Is it possible that some members of Christian churches would be among the “bad fish”?

Bible notes  
 In your Bible, in Matthew 13:48, underline the phrase “good fish” and in the margin write “true believers.” Also underline “bad” and in the margin write “unbelievers and hypocrites.”

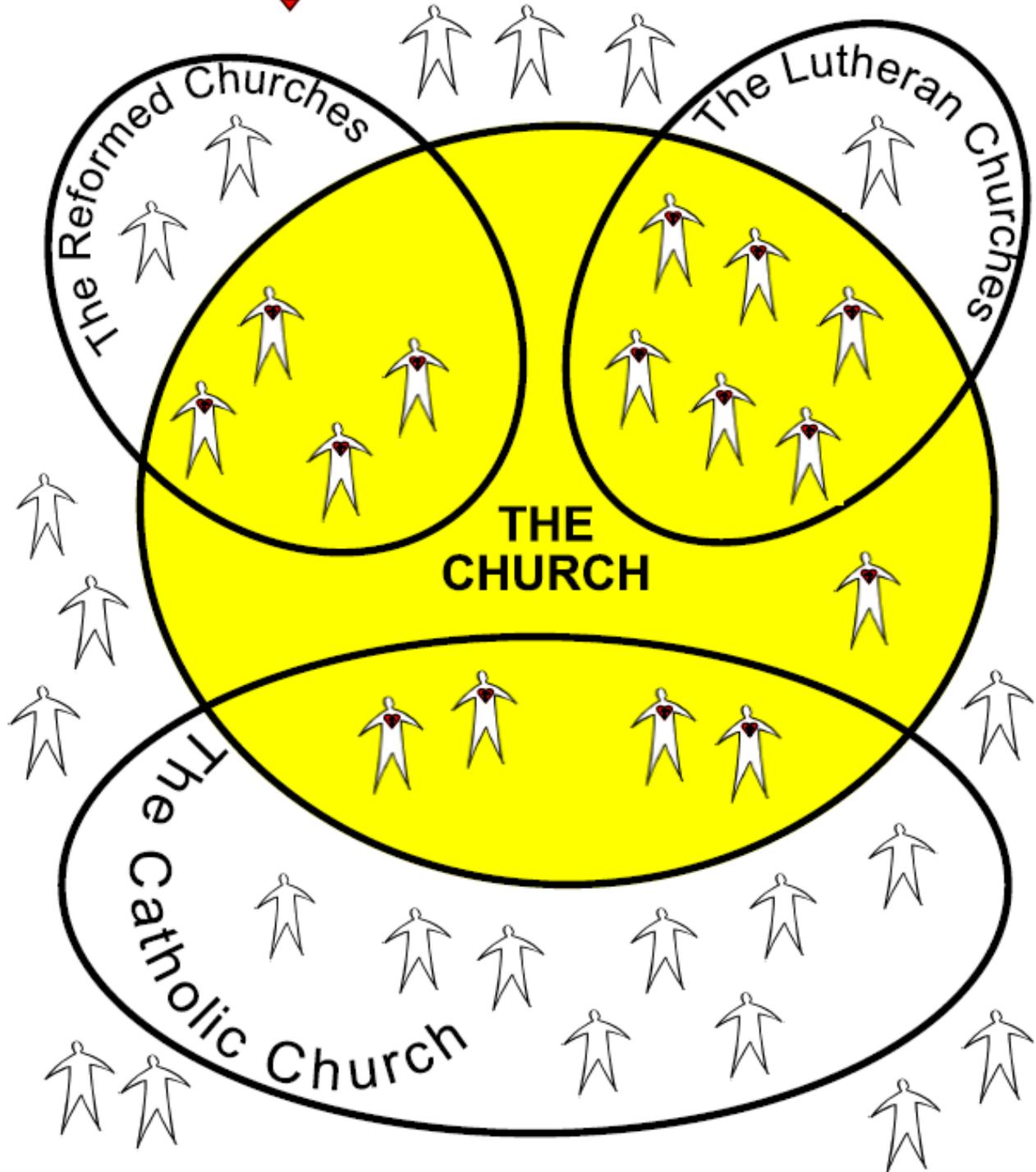
3. What does the term “hypocrite” mean?
4. Compare this lesson with Ephesians 5:25-27. Is any member of the Church going to go to hell? What, therefore, is the biggest difference between the Church and visible churches (i.e. congregations, synods, etc.)?
5. Look up 1 Samuel 16:7. Can we see faith? Why or why not?
6. In the Apostles’ Creed we confess that we believe in “the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints.” Are we talking about the Church or visible churches? Why?
7. On the basis of what we’ve learned in this lesson, please fill out the following chart.

	The Church	visible churches
How does one become a member?		
How do we know who’s a member?		

# The Church Addendum #2

The Church vs. visible churches

 = *saving faith in Jesus*



## Goal: to learn the mission of the Church

Read Matthew 28:18-20.

1. Why can and does Jesus direct the work of the church? (verse 18)
2. How do Colossians 2:9,10 and Matthew 28:18 relate to each other?
3. What does the word “go” in verse 18 tell us about the mission of the church?
4. Do you think it’s possible to build a congregation by using other tools than God’s Word and Sacraments?
5. Do you think it’s possible to build up the Church by using other tools than God’s Word and Sacraments?
6. How does the last sentence of verse 20 assure us that this is our mission, and not just the mission of the apostles?
7. How does the last sentence of verse 20 encourage us to carry out the mission of the Church?
8. At a congregational open forum, one of the members gets up and says, “We don’t do enough for the needy in our church! Every year we send so much money off to synod to do missions. Why don’t we cut back a little and use some of that money to open a food pantry? After all, if we aren’t caring for the needy, we really aren’t acting like a church, are we?  
Does this person have a point? What might you say to him/her?

### Bible notes

In your Bible, in Matthew 28:18, put an asterisk next to that verse and in the margin write “See Colossians 2:9,10.”

In verse 19. double-underline the phrase “make disciples of all nations” and in the margin write “This is our mission.” Then underline the words “baptizing” and “teaching” and write “These are the only tools that can accomplish that mission.”

## Goal: to see why there are so many different visible churches

Read 2 Peter 2:1-3.

1. What is heresy?
  
2. Is there such a thing as non-destructive heresy? Why or why not? (Look up 2 Timothy 2:16,17 if you need help.)
  
3. What does the word “secretly” tell us about heresy? Is it possible that sometimes even the false teacher doesn’t know he’s teaching heresy?
  
4. What happens if we allow heresy to remain in the church?
  
5. Since heresy is so destructive, the Bible gives us very clear instructions about how to deal with it. Look up each of the following passages and write down what it adds to our understanding of our lesson. (These passages are printed on page 8 of this study guide.)
  - a. Romans 16:17
  
  - b. 1 John 4:1-3
  
  - c. 2 John 10,11
  
6. A friend says to you, “There are so many problems in society today: drugs, pornography, violence! The only way we’re going to stop this is if churches forget about little doctrinal differences and get on to dealing with what’s truly important!” Is your friend right? What would you say to him/her?
  
7. Agree or Disagree? Christians should not judge each other’s faith.
  
8. Agree or Disagree? It is impossible for someone to be saved if they belong to a church that teaches false doctrine. (Look up Isaiah 55:11 for help.)

# The Church Addendum #3

## Romans 16:17

I urge you, brothers, to **watch out** for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. **Keep away** from them.

- ➔ God warns us to watch out for anyone who divides Christians by persistently holding to any false teaching.
- ➔ God asks us to not express or celebrate Christian unity with these people.

## 1 John 4:1-3

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but **test the spirits to see whether they are from God**, because **many false prophets** have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the **antichrist**, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

- ➔ God commands us to examine the message (confession) of others, especially teachers.
- ➔ God warns us that these false teachers will not be a rare occurrence, but that there will be “many” of them.
- ➔ God teaches us that false doctrine is never minor. It is anti-Christian in nature. Ultimately, any attack on God’s Word is an attack on Christ, whom the Word reveals.

## 2 John 10,11

If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, **do not take him into your house or welcome him**. Anyone who welcomes him **shares in his wicked work**.

- ➔ God commands us not to support a false teacher.
- ➔ God warns us that if we do, we share in the sin of the false teacher.