

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. – Matthew 16:18

“church” – *ekklesia* - an assembly, congregation. **Usage** - a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place; an assembly (legislative assembly). **Origin** – *ek* (out) + *kaleo* (to call). The word is used in this sense in **Acts 19:32** - the assembly was in confusion, **39** - it shall be settled in the lawful assembly. **41** - he dismissed the assembly.

The translators of the KJV did not translate this work literally, but instead borrowed a word then in use (church), thus imposing on the word, the current cultural, ecclesiastical context of the then existent church of England whose head was the king of England. In fact, Rule 3 of the "Rules to be observed in the Translation of the Bible" specifically says: "The old Ecclesiastical words [were] to be kept, viz. the word **church** not to be translated **congregation**, etc."

When applied to believers, the idea would be of that of an assembly or congregation of people who have been called out of the world and gathered together unto and into Christ. Jesus describes this very thing when he says, "For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst." – **Matthew 18:20**

This word is used to describe both the church at large, all believers in a given locality, and individual gatherings of believers

- **Acts 11:22** the church at Jerusalem
- **Acts 13:1** Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers
- **Romans 16:1** I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea
- **Romans 16:5** Greet also the church in their house
- **1 Corinthians 1:2** To the church of God which is at Corinth (note “church of God”)
- **1 Thessalonians 2:14** For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea
- **Galatians 1:22** I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ;

The Church is Described as Christ’s Body

Ephesians 1:23 - And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Ephesians 5:32 “...because we are members of his body. ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

The church then is a living organism (as opposed to being merely an organization). As such, it is both nourished, supported and sustained by its head; as well as being ruled, governed and directed by its head.

This vital union that exists between Christ and his body is brought about and maintained by the Holy Spirit. On the day of Pentecost, the church was brought into being and given life (born) by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. From that point forward she owes her very existence (the ongoing impartation of life), to the Holy Spirit.

Therefore...

- The Church is entirely dependent on Christ as its head in every respect (Apart from me you can do nothing – **John 15:5**).
 - o **Colossians 2:19** and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.
- In that it is the Holy Spirit that facilitates and maintains this union between Christ and his body, the Church is reliant upon the Holy Spirit for direction, enlargement, support and sustenance.
- No one can become part of Christ's church except by being joined to it supernaturally through the new birth.
 - o In the new birth we are supernaturally joined to Christ - by His doing you are **in Christ Jesus** – **Colossians 1:30**
 - o Having been joined to Christ, we are joined together with one another - "so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another." - **Romans 12:5**