

THE CHRIST COMMUNITY, PART 1
THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
Matthew 16:13-20; 18:15-20

*The church of Jesus Christ is a community of believers
rescued from sin and released for service.*

Consider the word CHURCH as used in the Old Testament.

The Hebrew word *qahal* denotes the assembly of Israelites, especially as gathered before the Lord.

- Israel was an assembly of people in covenant with God and supernaturally rescued by him from bondage.
- Israel was an assembly of people set free to know God personally and to worship him passionately.
- Israel was an assembly of people called out of the world to learn God's ways and walk in those ways.
- Israel was an assembly of people charged to be a witness to the world for this amazing God.

The Greek OT translates *qahal* as *ekklesia*, which means a group, assembly, community, or congregation.

The NT word *ekklesia* comes into English as "church," which refers to a covenant people, not a building.

Jesus uses the word "church" (*ekklesia*) two times, and his usage helps us better understand who we are.

Consider the word CHURCH as used by Jesus Christ.

The Church Universal (Matthew 16:13-20)

The church universal is the community of all true believers in every age and in every place.

- The church universal is one church.
- The church universal is owned by Jesus.
- The church universal is being built by Jesus.
- The church universal is entered by a genuine profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.
- The church universal is established by a revelation of God's grace to believers.
- The church universal is authoritatively engaged in heaven's "good news" work on earth.
- The church universal is ultimately victorious over the powers of death and hell.
- The church universal is eternally alive because of the risen, ascended Christ.

The Church Local (Matthew 18:15-20)

The church local is a community of professing believers at a certain time and in a certain place.

- The church local is a group of specific believers in a specific assembly or congregation.
- The church local involves a group of specific believers who will sometimes struggle to get along.
- The church local will have processes in place to promote the health and holiness of the group.
- The church local is authoritatively engaged in heaven's "good news" work in their own town.
- The church local experiences the presence of Christ by the Holy Spirit through word and sacrament.