

## What is the Church?

### 1. It belongs to and was founded by Jesus Christ.

Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock **I will build My church**, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:15-18)

### 2. The children and heirs of God.

- The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs -- heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ... (Romans 8:16).
- I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty. (2 Corinthians 6:18)

### 3. The family of God and of other believers

For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole **family** in heaven and earth is named. (Ephesians 3:15)

### 4. The body of Christ

And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. (Ephesians 1:22-23)

### 5. The saved

And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:47)

### **How do I become a member?**

As we see in #5 above, the Lord (and no one else) adds us to His church when we are saved. So the question then becomes...

### **What must I do to be saved?** (Acts 16:30)

- ♦ He who **believes** and is **baptized** will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. (Mark 16:16).
- ♦ Therefore whoever **confesses** Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 10:32, see # 1 above)
- ♦ Now when they **heard** this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said to them, "**Repent**, and let every one of you **be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins**; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call. (Acts 2:37-39)
- ♦ Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in **newness** of life. (Romans 6:4)
- ♦ This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if **we walk in the light** as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:5-7)

We must **hear** and **believe** the word of God, we must **repent**, that is, change our hearts and minds from their old ways of sin, we must **confess** our belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and we must be **baptized**, that is, immersed in water in order that our sins might be forgiven. This baptism is our way of partaking in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. When we repent, we die to our old sinful ways (Romans 6:2). The immersion in water is our burial, and coming up out of the water is our resurrection into a new life. From that point we must **walk in the light**, having been set free from sin and continuing to live our lives according to God's will.

### **What awaits me as a saved person when I die or the Lord returns (whichever happens first)?**

- ♦ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)
- ♦ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the **dead in Christ** will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words. (1 Thessalonians 4:14-18).