

Chapter 2



What is Ekklesia?

What is ekklesia? There is a lot of confusion about this word and what it means. If you did an online search, you would find that there are 2, 910,000 pages on the subject of Ekklesia. There is a lot of talk about it and this is why there is a lot of confusion, because the websites that clearly define the word are somewhat limited. There are 174 books on Amazon on the subject of Ekklesia. There is a music group called Ekklesia. There are national and international youth ministries that bear that name as well. There's a radio station called Radio Ekklesia. There are many prayer groups called Ekklesia as well. There is a large ministry that is trying to start Ekklesia in every church.



They're calling it Ekklesia everywhere. What they are really starting under this ministry are prayer and Bible study groups that are still connected to and under the authority of the local church. There are also Pentecostal and Charismatic churches that are called Ekklesia.

There is even one Five miles from where I live. One of the most troubling facts about some of these ministries is that they are still in the 501C3 system. This is a traditional man made system and they are still in the church building and connected to national government authority. Many of the groups and churches that I have mentioned mis spell the word. In Europe and in England, they spell it Ekklesia. They spell it differently, and they pronounce it differently. They spell the word the way it sounds to them. In this nation, it is pronounced like ecclesia as we say it, but it is even spelled differently than that. Hopefully this clears up some of the confusion that surrounds this very important word, but we are not done defining it. If you were to ask someone outside of this class, they probably have never heard the word Ekklesia, so they don't have a context or a definition or an understanding of what Ekklesia is and what it means. It is important we give you a clear understanding of the word so that you can talk to others and tell them what it means.

I hope you can see by now that Ekklesia is not the same as church. The Ekklesia is a local called out congregation. Ekklesia is a governmental word, a governing spiritual counsel. These ideas have to do with government, not religion. It is important to get these truths into our minds. The Ekklesia serves as the ruling body or ruling council of the government of the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. This is a very good definition. As God's Ekklesia, we are to be representing the Kingdom and the King with our lifestyle. The way we live is to be rep-

resenting that King and his Kingdom here on Earth. That's why he said to us that we should pray, "Let your Kingdom come and your will be done on Earth just as it is in heaven." When we are born again by the spirit of God we are

What Is Church?



Is this Ekklesia?

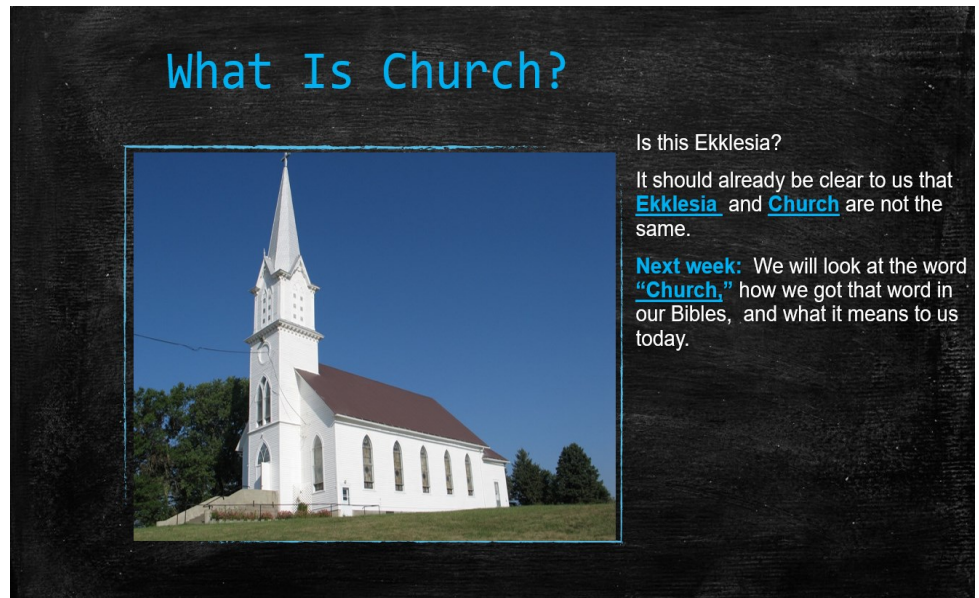
It should already be clear to us that [Ekklesia](#) and [Church](#) are not the same.

Next week: We will look at the word "[Church](#)," how we got that word in our Bibles, and what it means to us today.

born into that Kingdom. We leave the Kingdom of darkness and we are born into the Kingdom of Light or the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus said that the Kingdom of God is within us. Everywhere we go we are representing that Kingdom of God. Everywhere we go, we are to be letting the Kingdom of God go forth out of us. Righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit is to flow out of us everywhere we go. We bring light into a dark room because we are part of the Kingdom of light. We are also to be implementing the policies and the culture of the king. In the Bible we are called ambassadors of the King. That means that every time two or three ambassadors gather together, they form an embassy. We are ambassadors and gathered together in a small group. Ambassadors form an Embassy of Heaven on Earth. Isn't that wonderful? Isn't that great to realize who you are and what you were sent here to do? We're on a mission?

We are to be colonizing earth with heaven. We are to be representing the king and bringing his lifestyle, his policies, his culture here to Earth. What a Wonderful, exciting life we have. What a wonderful, exciting mission we have. We are ambassadors of Christ. We are the Ekklesia of Christ, the governing, ruling council of the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. Now that you know what Ekklesia is, it's a fair question to ask what is church?

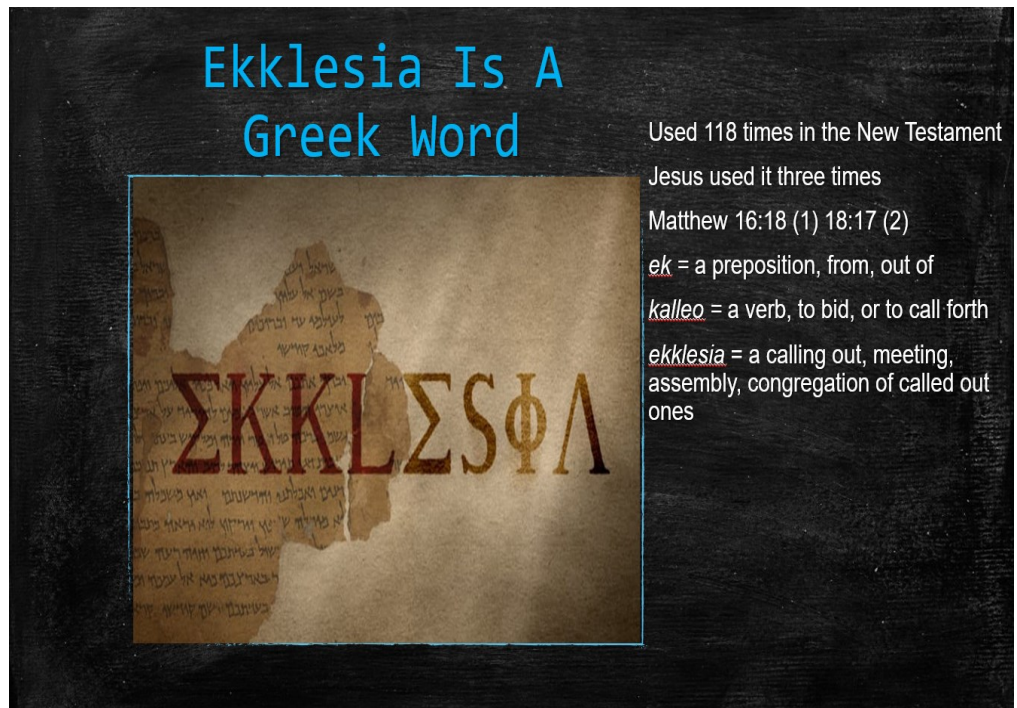
Probably for most of you, the picture on this page represents church in your mind. What is church? Does this picture represent Ekklesia? It seems like we went into all the world and built buildings. You would have thought that the Great Commission said go into all the world and build buildings everywhere because that's what we've done. But



that's not Ekklesia. It should be very clear. That the words Ekklesia and church are not the same thing. Church primarily means a building, but primarily it means the system that men have built. That's why when you read the Bible, you see a lot of things that the church is not doing. When you look at the church, you see it is doing a whole lot of things that you can't find in the Bible. That's because church and Ekklesia are not the same thing. Jesus said he built the Ekklesia. Man has built the church. Church is the man plan. Ekklesia is the Jesus plant. You need to get that. Thank the Lord that in our day, He is building his Ekklesia and we all get to be a part of it? In the next chapter, we are going to take a deeper look at the word church, how we got that word in our Bibles. We will look at the history of the word and how it came into being. We will look at how it got written into our Bibles and will even look at a dictionary definition of the word church.

The word Ekklesia is used 118 times in the New Testament. 115 times it's translated church. Three times it is translated either council or assembly, depending on what translation of the Bible you have. Jesus used the word three times, once in Matthew 16:18 and twice in Matthew 18, verse 17. We're going to look at all of those in our study.

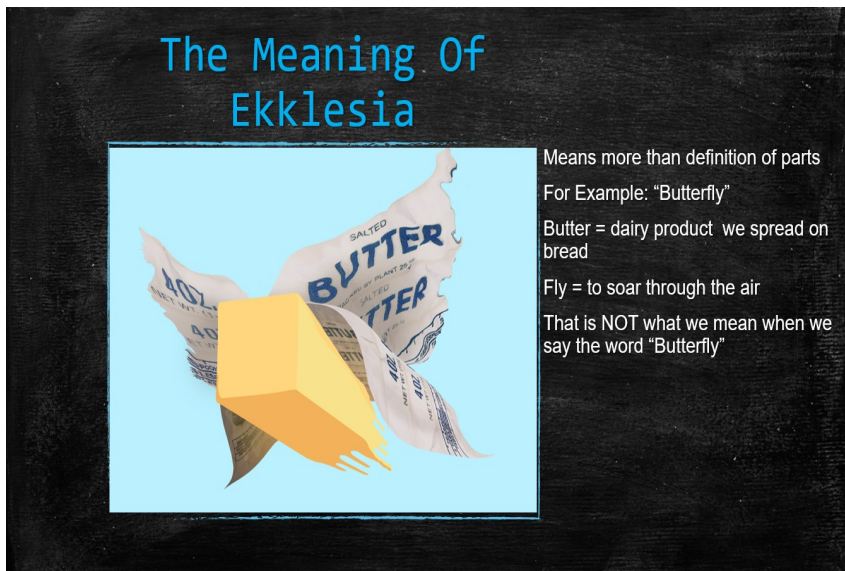
The word Ekklesia is made up of two words, it's a compound word. The first part is Ek. Ek is a preposition that means from or out of. The second part comes from Kalleo, and that's a verb, and it means to bear or to call



Used 118 times in the New Testament
Jesus used it three times
Matthew 16:18 (1) 18:17 (2)
ek = a preposition, from, out of
kalleo = a verb, to bid, or to call forth
ekklesia = a calling out, meeting, assembly, congregation of called out ones

forth. If you took the two parts of the word and put them together, You would have a definition that would be something like a calling out a meeting and assembly, or a congregation of the called out ones. Now, if you've been in church system. And you heard pastors preach about the word. You probably heard them say that it means called out ones. This definition is not wrong but it is an inadequate definition. The word congregation is a good translation of the word Ekklesia. This is the word that William Tyndale used when he translated the Bible Greek into English. I believe that his translation was the first English translation. There may be either the Bishops Bible or the Geneva Bible before that, but the Tyndale Bible became one of the popular. When King James translated the Bible, he used much of Tyndale's translation, except when it came to Tyndale's use of the word Congregation to define Ekklesia.

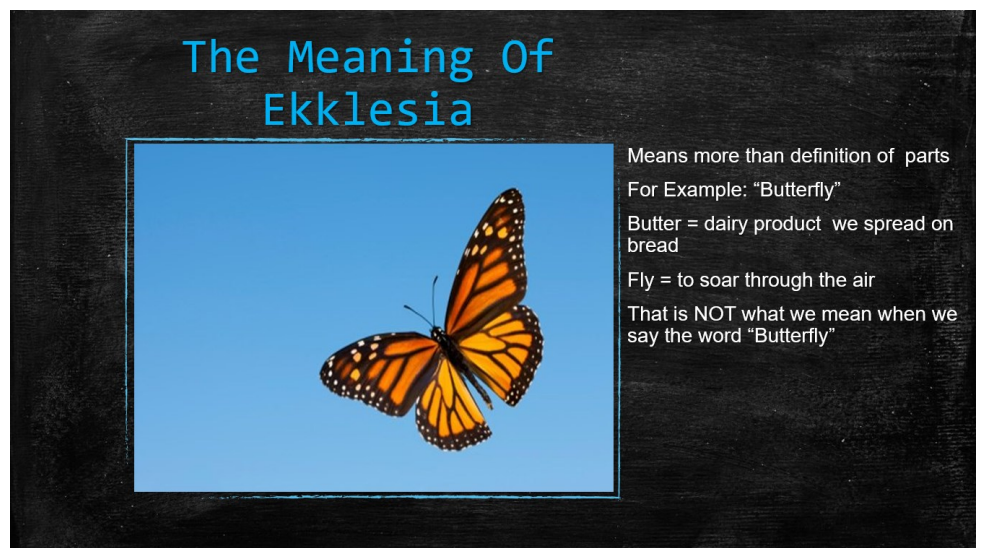
A word meaning is a lot more than just the definition of two parts. We have compound words in our English language. For example, the word butterfly. The



word butterfly is 2 words brought together to make one word. If we use the same methodology that we used to define the two parts of the word Ekklesia, we come up with a definition for the whole word. If we use that same methodology for butterfly, we would see that butter is a dairy product that we spread

on our bread. And we know what fly means. That means the soar through the

air. So if we took the two parts of the word butterfly and came up with the definition of butterfly, we get an inadequate definition that does not what we mean when we talk about a butterfly. That definition would fall far short, because we



know that butterfly is a beautiful, intricate creation. A Divinely created work of art. We can see that when we define a word by its two parts, that definition is going to fall short. Like Butterfly means a lot more than flying dairy products, Ekklesia means a lot more than the called out ones. It is a lot more beautiful. The word Ekklesia is also like a piece of art. It's a lot more intricate and it has a whole lot more meaning. It is so very important that we know what the word meant when Jesus spoke it.

Used By Roman Government 400BC



"*ekklesia*" was a Governmental word

"*ekklesia*" was a city council that represented the culture, policy, statutes, laws, lifestyle of the King in their city.

The "*ekklesia*" functioned with all the authority of the King Himself.

When the "*ekklesia*" made a local decision that was in line with the principles and policy of the government of Rome, all the authority of the King and the entire Roman Empire stood behind that decision.

It is also important that we know the context of the word Ekklesia. That word was used for 400 years in their culture before Jesus spoke it. When Jesus said, the word Ekklesia with his mouth, he didn't just pull some word out of the air or make up some new word. It was a word that had been used for a

very long time and people of Jesus' day understood what it meant. Ekklesia a governmental word, not a religious word. Jesus could have used a religious word. He could have said on this rock I built my synagogue, or on this rock I will build my temple. Those were two words that were religious words in his day. He didn't use those words. He used a governmental word that was commonly used in everyday life in Jesus' culture. When Jesus spoke that word, no one raised their hand and said, "Wait a minute, I don't understand." Ekklesia was the City Council that represented the culture, the policy, the statutes, the laws and the lifestyle of the king in their city. The king would make decrees and would send them by a courier down to the local leadership. It was the responsibility of the Ekklesia to adjudicate what the king had said and to put it into place and to make it active in the city or in the region. Ekklesia was a word that was used in every region, every city, every province of the entire Roman Empire. That's why they knew what it meant when Jesus said he

would build his the Ekklesia with all the authority of the Kingdom. When a decision was made and ruled on the local Ekklesia and it was in line with the policies and the principles of the Emperor of Rome all the authority of the king and the entire Roman Empire stood behind that decision. There was no debate. It was a judicial decision, there was no second trial, there were no mistrials. The word of the Ekklesia was final. There was no discussion. It came from the king and it was the word of the king.

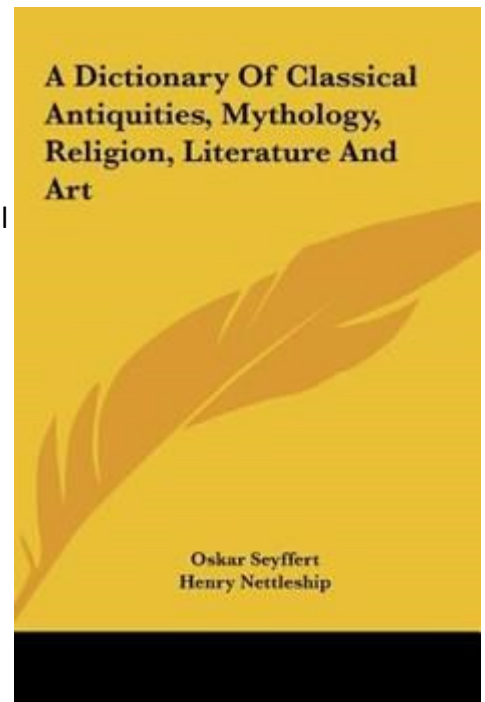
Tremendous Authority



A Dictionary of Classical Antiquities:
"*Aristotle's Constitution of Athens*"

"In legal co-operation with the senate, the Ekklesia had the final decision in all matters affecting the supreme interests of the state, as war, peace, alliances, treaties, the regulation of army and navy, finances, loans, tributes, duties, prohibition of exports or imports, the introduction of new religious rites and festivals, the awarding of honors, and the conferring of the citizenship." Oskar Seyffert pg. 202

Another source that helps to explain the authority of the word Ekklesia is the *Dictionary of Classical Antiquities* by Oskar Seyffert. In this book Oskar Seyffert talks about how the Ekklesia in legal cooperation with the Senate had the final decision in all matters affecting the supreme interests of the state. This description indicates how Ekklesia is a governmental word that carries governmental authority. They had filed a decision in all matters affecting the supreme interest of the state, such as war, peace, alliances, treaties, the regulation of Army and Navy finances, loans, students duties, prohibition of exports or imports, the introduction of new religious rights and festivals. The awarding of honor and the conferring of citizenship. We see by this that they could confer and deny citizenship. This ruling council met at the gates of the city. The elders of the city would meet there as the Ekklesia. If someone wanted to come into the city, they would decide whether to open the gate and let them in, or to deny them entry. This was part of their duty. They had tremendous authority in their city and in their region.



In the first book that you're reading by Dean Briggs, called *Ekklesia Rising* on Page 111, Dean summarizes the authority and the power that the Ekklesia was able to exercise in a region. The Ekklesia would actively participate in legislation in cooperation with the Senate. If needed they would write new laws for their city. The Senate would write out the law and bring it to the emperor. The emperor would make the

Let's Summarize



Ekklesia Rising, Dean Briggs, pg 111

Actively participate in legislation

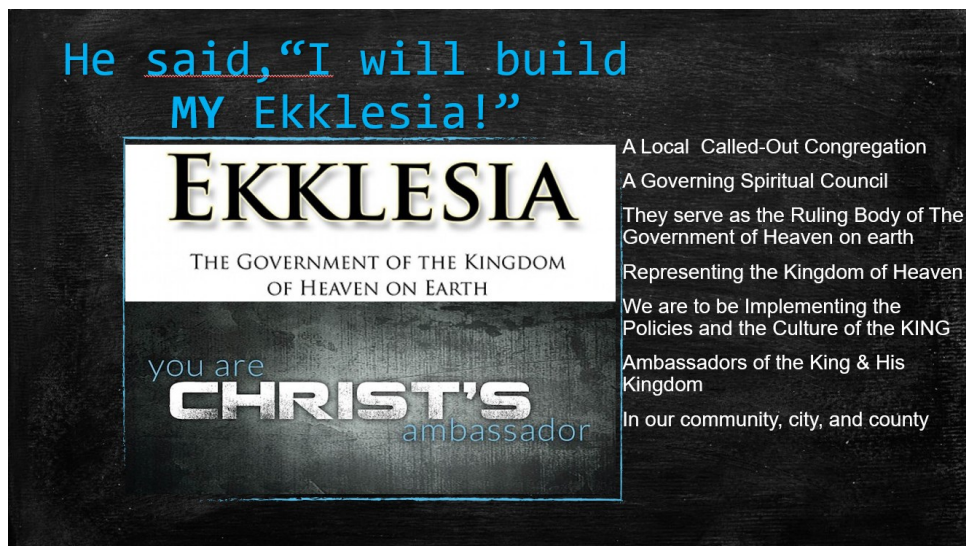
Election of Officials including Military Generals and Chief Magistrates.

The banishment of citizens.

Judicial Decisions.

adjustments or give his approval or denial of the law. If approved, he would put his seal of approval upon the law. It would then come to the Ekklesia to implement that law in their region or in their city. The Ekklesia was involved in the election of officials, including military generals and chief magistrates. Now we're probably not going to bump into military gen-

erals or chief magistrates in our culture. But we do have people who function in those roles in the same capacity as the military generals and the chief magistrates did in their culture. In our culture today, the chief magistrates of the city would be someone like a mayor or the City Council, or maybe even the governor of a state. What they considered military generals in their day would be like either the State Highway Patrol or the local Sheriff's Department in our day. These are the people who enforced the law when there was a violation of it. The chief magistrates were those who would rule and tell the people what they needed to do and what they could not do.



The Ekklesia would rule and put into office, the city council, mayor, sheriff's department. The military generals and the chief magistrate's answered to the Ekklesia. The Ekklesia also had authority to banish citizens. The Ekklesia could say to a malcontent or a an evil person,

a lawbreaker, or lawless person who wanted to come into the city, "No! Not Here! Not in my town! You don't get to live here in my city", and they would banish him, and he'd have to move on down the road to the next city. The Ekklesia would also rule in judicial decisions. The Apostle Paul was an example of this. Paul came up against the Roman Ekklesia in acts Chapter 19, the three times that the word Ekklesia is translated council or assembly rather than churches is in acts chapter 19. Paul stood before the Council or assembly, that is actually the Ekklesia, and they were determining his guilt or innocence. They voted with a thumbs up or down in regard to his guilt or innocence, and this vote usually meant the death penalty if he was found to be guilty. It was a final decision. There was no second trial involved in it at all. This is how they would deal with these matters of guilt or innocence of people in their society

Another thing that the council did was to determine if things would be permitted or forbidden in their society. Matters would arise where these things needed to be determined. The question would be dealt with, "Is that behavior permitted or forbidden?" The council or Ekklesia would rule on the matter. Permitted or forbidden are two very, very important words, and in a later chapter, we are going to deal with them a little bit more in depth. Instead of permitting or forbidding, we use the terms binding and loosing. Does The Ekklesia have authority to determine what is forbidden and what is allowed in their city? What kind of behavior is forbidden and allowed in the city? Jesus said I will build my Ekklesia. He made an emphasis of that. In contrast to the Ekklesia of Rome, Jesus said I will build my Ekklesia upon this rock.

Application & Activation



Do you have friends, neighbors, or relatives that love God, but don't go to Church?

Before next week, reach out to them, ask why they no longer go to Church.

Tell them you are doing research for a study on: "Why People No Longer Attend Church."

Encourage them to be completely honest and open with you.... No judgment please!

Write down their answers and bring them to class next week to share.

Once again we have an application and activation for you. I'm sure that all of you have friends that love God and maybe even read their Bible and pray, but they don't go to church anywhere. We call it D-churched. They left church, for one reason or another. Maybe they were offended. Maybe they didn't feel it was relevant anymore. Maybe they were looking for more and they got less. But they left church. I want you to find some people like that in your community. That have been in church in the past. I want you to ask them why they no longer go to church. If you need to tell them your doing a study on online study course, and that part of your homework is to do some research on the subject of why people don't go to church any longer. You are going to get some negative and critical answers. Do not argue with them. Let them be honest. They will tell you things like, "It just didn't make sense to me anymore." "The pastor had an affair with somebody". They will tell you the down and dirty of why they left church. A lot of them are hurt, they are offended and they are still carrying woundedness. Be willing to let them talk about it. Ask them the question and let them be completely honest and open with you. Don't judge them and don't try to argue with them. Don't try to tell him to go back to church. They made a good move when they left church. They just didn't find Ekklesia yet. You have the opportunity to help them find Ekklesia. Record their answers for future sharing and discussion. It's very interesting to find all the reasons why people left church.