

When Did the Church Begin ?

The meaning of 'church' is a gathering or assembly of believers called out to worship in a place for religious meetings.

The last time we see events concerning the church in the Bible is at the final destruction of Babylon:

Rev 18:1 And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.
2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, **Babylon** the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.
3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.
4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, **Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.**
5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.
6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

The ruins of Babylon are about 55 miles south of Bagdad in Iraq.

It is thought to have been destroyed around 275 B.C.

In 1983, Saddam started rebuilding the city on top of the old ruins.

He inscribed his name on many of the bricks in imitation of Nebuchadnezzar with many of them reading like, 'This was built by Saddam, son of Nebuchadnezzar, to glorify Iraq.' He installed a huge portrait of himself and Nebuchadnezzar at the entrance, with a large boulevard of ancient stones, and the Lion of Babylon, a black rock sculpture about 2,600 years old.

In the future, Babylon will be rebuilt as a world-power-city:

In the context of Christ's return Peter prophesied:

1 Peter 5:4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

1 Peter 5:13 The **church** that is at **Babylon**, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son.

Christ will destroy Babylon at the end:

Rev 18:10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

Now, let's back up a bit more to see that John wrote to 7 churches on the continent of Asia. So, prophetically, there will be churches that function during the 70th week of Daniel, which will be the end-time:

Rev 1:4 John to the **seven churches which are in Asia**: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

Rev 1:11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

John's 3rd epistle mentions the church in 3 John 1:6,9,and 10.

James also writes of the church:

James 5:14,15 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the **church**; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

The writer to the Hebrews indicates the church is a general assembly:

Heb 12:22-24 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

23 To the **general assembly and church** of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Hebrews also quotes a passage from the Psalms that shows the church is a congregation of brothers of Israel that fear God:

Heb 2:12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto **my brethren**, in the midst of the **church** will I sing praise unto thee.

Psa 22:22,23 I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the **congregation** will I praise thee.

23 **Ye that fear the LORD**, praise him; **all ye the seed of Jacob**, glorify him; and fear him, **all ye the seed of Israel**.

Psa 111:1 Praise ye the LORD. I will praise the LORD with my whole heart, in the **assembly of the upright**, and in the **congregation**.

Paul writes about the church in all of his 13 epistles, except 2 Timothy and Titus. Paul detailed to Timothy about what the church is:

1 Tim 3:15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in **the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth**.

In Paul's epistles we see that the church is the 'body' of Christ:

Col 1:18 And he is the head of **the body, the church**: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.

Eph 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as **Christ is the head of the church**: and he is the saviour of the body.

Before Paul was saved we know that he persecuted the church:

Phil 3:6 Concerning zeal, **persecuting the church**; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

1 Tim 1:12-16 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;

13 Who was before **a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious**: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

Continuing on in this passage Christ made an example of Paul

to show everyone --- that if the 'main' sinner could be saved --- surely, they would not be excluded:

15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that **Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.**

16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in **me first** Jesus Christ might **shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern** to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

Paul confessed to his pervious torture of the church:

Gal 1:13 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that **beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:**

Just before Paul (then called Saul) was saved he was the ring-leader of the torment against believers in Christ:

Acts 8:1-3 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a **great persecution against the church** which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.

3 **As for Saul, he made havock of the church**, entering into every house, and **haling men and women committed them to prison.**

When Paul and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about whether to require the Gentiles to be circumcised to be saved, they went to the church --- which existed before Paul was saved:

Acts 15:3,4 And being brought on their way by the **church**, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.

4 And **when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church**, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.

Paul acknowledged people who were 'in Christ' before he was:

Ro 16:7 Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were **in Christ before me**.

Now, let's go back to Acts chapter 2 which some commentators call the 'birthday' of the church. But there was already a church there in existence because the Lord 'added' to it:

Ac 2:47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord **added to the church** daily such as should be saved.

Going back into the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, He talked about the church:

Matt 18:17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the **church**, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

Jesus told Peter He would build His church upon Peter's confession that

He was the Messiah, the Son of God:

Matt 16:13-18 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, **Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.**

17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and **upon this rock I will build my church;** and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Finally, the scriptures record the church all the way back to Israel

after God brought them out of 400 years of slavery in Egypt:

Acts 7:38 This is he, that was in **the church in the wilderness** with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:

So, if we're trying to figure out when the church began let's look at

the Bible verses and we can see the church **all the way through God's**

programs in all ages:

Eph 3:21 Unto him be glory in the **church** by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

This is David Dowell, saying, "Think about it!"