

1. What is the “Church”?

- Multiple choice
 - A. A religious group of people that believe in God
 - B. A building where Christians meet.
 - C. All of the Christian denominations
 - D. All of the above
 - E. None of the above

- The Church is:
 - “Ekklesia” is the Greek word for church and it means: “A called out group of **people**”.
 - Biblically, the “Church” is a specific group of people who have embraced the **Gospel** and are trusting in Christ alone for salvation.
 - Paul wrote to the believers in Ephesus about the church being a group of believers, not a building or denomination.
 - **Ephesians 2:14-22**
 - Together, **we** are his house.
 - Together, **we** are becoming a holy temple for the Lord.
 - **Believers** in Christ are being made part of this dwelling where God lives by His Spirit.

- “Universal Church” versus “local church”:
 - Universal Church - All true believers in Jesus **worldwide**.
 - Local church - A group of true believers in Jesus who meet together regularly in a local **community**.
 - Here’s how the Apostle Paul referred to a local church... **Romans 16:3-5a**

2. Has the Church always existed?

- The Church began on the **Day of Pentecost** around 2,000 years ago and the history of the early Church is recorded in the Book of Acts.
- The Church will end when **Jesus** returns.

The Church is Born - Lesson 24

- The Church is part of the New Covenant Jesus announced to the disciples at the Last Supper.
- The New Covenant and the Church marked a huge **change** in the way God interacted with people.
 - From Abraham until Jesus' death, God primarily used Israelites/Jews as His representatives to the world, but since most of them rejected Jesus as the Messiah, God made a change and started using the **Church** as His representative to the world.
 - Before the Church began, the Holy Spirit would come **upon** believers, but God made a change and He began living **inside** believers permanently.
 - From the time of Moses/Mt. Sinai until Jesus' death on the cross, God gave the Law as the guide, but God changed that and the **Holy Spirit** became the guide for believers.
- God confirmed that this change regarding how He would interact with people was truly from Him by communicating the change and validating it with supernatural signs and wonders.

3. Day of Pentecost - The Church is born!

Acts 2:1-3

- Events of the Day of Pentecost 2,000 years ago:
 - "Pentecost" means "**50**". It's a Jewish festival marking the last day of the grain harvest season, and it was observed 50 days after the Passover meal.
 - 120 believers gathered together
 - Sound like roaring **wind** filled the house they were in.
 - Something that looked like **flames** or tongues of **fire** appeared and settled on each of the believers.
 - The symbol of flames no doubt reminded the believers of the Shekinah Glory of God in Moses' day which led the Israelites by a pillar of **fire**. But instead of dwelling in the Tabernacle or the Temple, it started dwelling in believers!

Acts 2:4-13

- The believers began speaking in other **languages** (tongues) as Holy Spirit enabled them.
- They spoke in foreign languages that visiting Jews from other nations **understood** and spoke.
- The believers told of the wonderful things God has done (the Gospel).

4. Conclusion on the Church

- The Church: a called out group of people who believe in Christ's work on the cross alone for salvation, and who are united together and empowered by the Spirit of God who lives within them.
- God's plan to establish the "Church" shows us:
 - His incredible love for us,
 - His desire for relationship with us,
 - His desire to use us to do His work in this world.

5. Application:

1. Are you a part of the "Church" as God's Word defines "Church"?
2. We as individual member of the Church are representatives of Jesus to the rest of the world. How are you doing at representing Him? Do you daily take following our guide, the Holy Spirit, seriously?
3. At Harvest Church Columbus, let's keep focusing on eternal things like loving each other, equipping and building each other up, and engaging in "the great commission", rather than over-focusing on temporal things like a building.