

01 The Meaning and the Name of the Church

The church is a field that needs to be constantly weeded, a tree that must be pruned at the proper time, a flock that must also be led and pastured, a house that requires constant renovation, a bride who must be prepared to be presented as a pure virgin to her husband. There are the sick, the dying, the tested, the grieving; those who are under attack, conflicted, in doubt, fallen, imprisoned, and so forth, who need teaching and instruction, admonition and consolation. And even apart from these things, the church must increase in the knowledge and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. _ Herman Bavinck

1. The meaning of the church

1) Etymological meaning

(1) Old Testament

① qahal

② edah

(2) New Testament

① ecclesia

② synagoga

2) Theological meaning

(1) The church is an assembly of ones who are chosen and called.

(2) The church is a gathering of ones who are called in Christ to worship the triune God.

(3) The church exists as the visible Kingdom of God on earth.

(4) The church is how Jesus manifests himself on earth.

(5) The church is the eschatological people of God.

(6) The church is a community of believers sent to specific locations.

3) The definition of the church

The church is an assembly of ones who are saved, a worship community who publicly proclaims and confesses its faith and the lordship of the triune God, a faith community that breaks bread and have fellowship, and a missionary community who spreads the truth to the ends of the earth.

2. The attributes of the church

1) The visible church and the invisible church

2) The militant church (Rev. 12:13-17) and the triumphant church (Rev. 7:9-12)

3) The church as organism and the church as organization

3. The names of the church

1) The body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12, Col. 2:19)

2) The bride of Christ (Isa. 54:5-6, Hos. 2:19, Rev. 19:7-8)

3) The church of God (1 Cor. 1:2)

4) New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:3-4)

5) The pillar and foundation of the truth

6) The temple of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2)

7) The house of God (1 Chr. 6:48, Exo. 25:8)

4. The history of the church

1) Altar – Abraham’s altar, Jacob’s altar in Bethel, etc.

b. Tent – the Tabernacle in Exodus

c. Temples built by human hand (Solomon, Zerubbabel, Herod)

d. The temple incarnate (John 2:19-21) – the body of Christ as the temple

e. The community temple (1 Cor. 3:16, Eph. 2:20-22)

The church is ultimately one, and is the assembly of the true people of God that includes all that who were, are, and will be under Christ. This covenant community has existed from the times of the Old Testament until now, and will continue until the end of all things. (Acts 7:38)

• Reference: 『Louis Berkhof’s Systematic Theology』 Rev. Sanghak Lee (Saemoonan church; lecture on ecclesiology)