

KNOW YOUR FAITH XIII
Temple – Synagogue – Church

Temple: (Hebrew:Hekel. Latin: Templum.) A palace or temple, a place cut off from other space for the purpose of worship. There were three temples in the history of Israel, all in Jerusalem. The first one built by Solomon (961-922 B.C. E.). This was destroyed in 586 B. C. E. when Judah's leadership were carried off to Babylon in the "captivity." The Ark of the Covenant probably disappeared at this time. The second temple built by Zerubbubel following "the return" after 536 B.C. E. This one had little recognition. The Third temple was built by King Herod just before the time of Jesus. This temple was splendid. It was destroyed in 70 C.E. by the Romans. The "wailing wall" is what is left to this day and visited by people from all over the world and brings high reverence from those who visit. Men and women pray in separate areas. A short distance away is the Temple Mount sacred to the Muslims. With the destruction of the temple the focus of the faith moved from People of the Building to *People of the Book*.

Synagogue: (Greek: A gathering together or congregation). In the centuries before Christ these places of learning, prayer and coming together developed for Jews far from Israel. They could be formed with a minimum of ten men (Minion) and they were headed by rabbis (Teachers of the Torah.) In time they were repositories of the sacred Jewish scriptures. It was to the synagogues that St. Paul and the Apostles went first to tell the story of Jesus.

Church: This is separate from *ecclesia* (Ecclesiastical) which means "called out." Christians are "called out" from the rest of society: in, but not of the world. The word church has many roots.

1. Circe: Daughter of the Sun God.
2. Kirche: German for church.
3. Kirk: Scottish for church.
4. Kuriekon: Greek for *belonging to the Lord*
5. Circulos: Greek for circle. Early churches worshiped in a circle with "the table" in the middle. Some churches worship with this architecture in mind.

Initially, people met wherever they could, especially in the homes of wealthy converts. In time those "called out," needed buildings and the focus became a building which contributed to the institutionalization of the movement (originally called those "in the way"). This "edifice complex" really began to grow after Emperor Constantine legalized the Christian faith with the Edict of Milan in 312 C.E.