

Lesson 4: The New Testament Church

INTRODUCTION

God established three institutions which are vital to mankind: the family, the civil government and the church. The church is a divine institution, established by the Lord Jesus Christ during His personal, earthly ministry, in order to fulfill His Great Commission.

The church is unique in design, purpose and destiny. It is important for Christians to discover the role of the church and our role in the church in order for us to growing and maturing believers.

OUTLINE

I. The Nature of the Church

- A. The basic meaning of the Greek word “ekklesia” which is translated “church”:
 - a called-out assembly
 - local and visible (Acts 8:1) – referred to in the Scriptures as always a tangible, visible congregation of people
 - composed of baptized believers who have covenanted together under the headship of Jesus Christ to carry out His teachings (Colossians 1:18)
- B. The church is not:
 - a universal, invisible organization (1 Cor 1:2)
 - composed of all the saved (1 Cor 16:19)
 - a denomination (Acts 9:31)

II. The Origin of the Church

- A. The church did not start:
 - in the Garden of Eden as some have said
 - in the wilderness when Israel was in wandering
 - on the first Pentecost after Christ’s resurrection
 - during the Reformation or some later date
- B. The church had its beginning during the personal, earthly ministry of Christ. This fact is necessary to it being Christ’s church (Matt 16:18).
- C. There are Biblical proofs that the church began during the earthly ministry of Christ:
 - The church was given rules of personal reconciliation and discipline during Jesus’ personal ministry (Matthew 18:16-18). He could not have said “tell it to the church” if there was no church in existence.
 - The apostles were placed in the church during His personal ministry (1 Corinthians 12:28; Luke 6:13-16)
 - The Lord’s Supper was given to the church during His personal ministry (1 Corinthians 11:23)
 - The Lord “added” to the church those who got saved and baptized which signifies that members were added to an “already existing” company of believers (Acts 2:41, 47)
 - The Great Commission was given to the church in corporate capacity, and not to individuals (Matthew 28:19-20).

Matt 16:18

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.

Acts 8:1

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.

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 preeminence.

1 Cor 1:2

Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

1 Cor 16:19

The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.

Acts 9:31

Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

Matt 18:16-18

16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

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.

18 Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

1 Cor 12:28

And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Luke 6:13-16

13 And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;

14 Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew,

15 Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes,

16 And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.

1 Cor 11:23

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

Acts 2:41

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

Acts 2:47

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

Matt 28:19-20

19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

III. The Purpose of the Church

- A. Her purpose is to do Christ's work in this world (Mark 13:34; I Timothy 3:15)
 - as Christ's sole representative in the world (II Corinthians 5:20)
 - as the executor of His kingdom work (Matthew 16:19)
- B. The church's ministry is three-fold (Matthew 28:18-20)
 - To make disciples through the preaching of the gospel.
 - To baptize disciples in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit
 - To teach disciples to observe all things whatsoever Christ as commanded

IV. The Perpetuity of the Church

- A. Christ promised that the gates of hell would never prevail against His church (Matthew 16:18)
- B. Christ promised to be with His churches until the end of this age (Matthew 28:20)
- C. Paul said that God would receive glory in the church by Christ Jesus in every age (Ephesians 3:21)
- D. The churches of Jesus Christ have an unbroken history from the ministry of Christ in every age to this very day.
- E. Christ's churches can be identified by their ordinances, offices, doctrinal practices and history

VI. The Leaders of the Church

- A. The Pastor provides the primary leadership in the church, especially chosen and sent out by God (I Timothy 3:1-5; Titus 1:6-9)
- B. Deacons are dedicated servants who take care of some responsibilities, allowing the pastor to labor in the study and teaching of the word of God (Acts 6:2-4)
- C. Teachers are people God calls to work along with a Pastor to train and mature believers in the church (Ephesians 4:11-12)

VII. The Autonomy of the Local Church

- A. The local church is an independent body accountable to the Lord Jesus Christ, the head of the church.
- B. "Autonomous" comes from two Greek words that mean "self" and "law" – which means self-governing or self-directing.
- C. In the New Testament, each of congregation of Christians was autonomous.
- D. In the New Testament, each of congregation of Christians was autonomous:
 - Each of the seven churches in Asia Minor existed as unique, separate entity and was under no authority except that of Jesus Christ (Revelation chapters 2 and 3)
 - The churches in the New Testament selected from their own membership persons to care for the physical need of members (Acts 6:3-6)
 - The churches in the New Testament determined what persons would be commissioned for specific ministries (Acts 13:2-3)

Mark 13:34

For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.

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.

2 Cor 5:20

Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

Matt 16:19

And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Eph 3:21

Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

1 Tim 3:1-5

- 1 *This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.*
- 2 *A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;*
- 3 *Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;*
- 4 *One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;*
- 5 *(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)*

Titus 1:6-9

- 6 *If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.*
- 7 *For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;*
- 8 *But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;*
- 9 *Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.*

Acts 6:2-4

- 2 *Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.*
- 3 *Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.*
- 4 *But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.*

Eph 4:11-12

- 11 *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*
- 12 *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

Acts 6:3-6

- 3 *Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.*
- 4 *But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.*
- 5 *And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:*
- 6 *Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.*

Acts 13:1-3

- 2 *As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.*
- 3 *And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.*

VIII. The Ordinances of the Church

- A. Ordinances is a word used to describe the two commands given by Christ relative to the believer’s relationship with Christ.
- B. An ordinance is a matter of obedience, and does not provide for or contribute to one’s salvation experience. It contains no sacramental grace.
- C. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are symbols (but not merely symbolic) and are not necessary for salvation but are a significant part of Baptist practice and worship.
- D. The Ordinance of Baptism:
 - Only for believers (Acts 2:41; 8:36-39; 16:30-33)
 - Only by immersion (Matthew 3:16-17; Acts 8:36-39; Romans 6:3-5)
 - Is symbolic not sacramental (Romans 6:3-5)
 - Proper Administration:
 - Administrator – authorized by the local church – those who have been called to preach
 - Place – when possible, a public place is preferred
 - Timing – to follow a person’s conversion
 - Result – church membership
- E. The Ordinance of the Lord’s Supper:
 - Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper at his last meal with his disciples as part of the Jewish Passover (Matt 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:14-20)
 - Part of the meal: unleavened bread and fruit of the vine
 - Unleavened Bread
 - Symbolic of His body
 - Symbolizes the purity of Christ for He was without sin (Hebrews 4:15)
 - His body was unblemished sacrifice for our sins
 - Fruit of the vine
 - Symbolic of His blood
 - The juice from crushed grapes symbolizes the blood of Christ shed for us
- F. In partaking of the bread and the cup, Christ’s disciples are to REMEMBER His sacrifice on the cross of Calvary as He gave His body and shed His blood for our sins.
- G. The element used in the Lord’s Supper are not literally the body and blood of Christ:
- H. The ordinances are an opportunity to obey a command of Christ and to recall His sacrifice for us, His presence with us and His sure return (I Corinthians 11:24-28)

CONCLUSION

The New Testament Church was not an afterthought with God. It was part of God’s eternal purpose and plan from eternity. It is vital to our growth, maturity and productivity in Christ.

Acts 8:36-39

36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?
 37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
 38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.
 39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

Acts 16:30-33

30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?
 31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.
 32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.
 33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

Matt 3:16-17

16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:
 17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Rom 6:3-5

3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?
 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.
 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

Matt 26:26-30

26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.
 27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;
 28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.
 29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.
 30 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

Heb 4:15

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

1 Cor 11:24-28

24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.
 25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.
 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.
 27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.
 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.