# THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

**(Ecclesiology)**

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# ECCLESIOLOGY
# Weekly Homework

**READING:** BASIC THEOLOGY by Charles C. Ryrie
THE LOCAL CHURCH: God's Plan for planet Earth by Jim Gent

**BIBLE MEMORY VERSES:**
(related to the Doctrine of the Church)
Note: All verses are to be memorized from the KJV or NKJV

| Date | Reading | Memory Verse |
|---|---|---|
| 9/18/00 | Ryrie, pp. 393-396 | Col. 1:18 |
| 9/25/00 | Ryrie, pp. 397-404 | I Cor. 12:13 |
| 10/2/00 | Ryrie, pp. 405-420 | Acts 2:41-42 |
| 10/9/00 | Ryrie, pp. 421-436 | Heb. 10:24-25 |
| 10/16/00 | Gent, pp. 1-14 | Eph. 4:11-12 |
| 10/23/00 | Gent, pp. 15-32 | Eph. 4:13-14 |
| 10/30/00 | Gent, pp. 33-44 | Eph. 4:15-16 |
| 11/6/00 | Gent, pp. 45-62 | Matt. 18:15-17 |
| 11/13/00 | *Three page paper due* | ----- |
| 11/20/00 | Gent, pp. 63-80 | I Tim. 3:15 |
| 11/27/00 | Gent, pp. 81-98 | I Tim. 2:12 |
| 12/4/00 | Gent, pp. 99-112 | I Pet. 5:2 |
| 12/11/00 | Final Exam Due | |

**PAPER TOPICS:**
1. The importance of church attendance
2. The Church as "Body" (study the unity and diversity of each member in the body of Christ)
3. The necessity of Church Discipline
4. The purpose and ministry of the Pastor
5. The purpose and ministry of the Deacon
6. The meaning and purpose of Baptism and The Lord's Supper

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# I. THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF THE CHURCH - The Church's Ontology

(Nature of existence)

## A. The Origin of the Word "Church"

1. The English word "church," taken from the Scottish word "kirk," and/or German word "kuriakos," which means "of the Lord" or "belonging to the Lord" (cp. Rev. 1:10 - "the Lord's day" or "the day belonging to the Lord").

2. NOTE: However, the New Testament word that is translated in our English Bibles as "church" was not the Greek word "kuriakos" but the Greek word "ekklesia," which means "assembly" or literally "called out ones."

## B. The Etymology of the Word "Ekklesia"

1. The Greek word "ekklesia" is basically made up of two words:

   "Ek" - the preposition "out"
   "Klesia" - from the word "klesis" meaning "a calling"

2. Hence, a definition of the word "ekklesia" based on the component parts of the word would be this: The Church refers to the people who have been "called out" (summoned) by God.

3. NOTE: The references to believers as "the called" (or those who have been called by God to salvation) - Rom. 8:28; I Cor. 1:26, 7:18-24; Eph. 4:4; Col. 3:15; II Tim. 1:9; Heb. 3:1, 9:15.

## C. The New Testament Usage of the Word "Ekklesia"

The word "ekklesia" is used in the New Testament in a general sense and in a specific sense.

**1. The general (basic) sense of the word:**

The word "ekklesia" is not limited to Christians. Originally to the Greeks it meant an assembly of people who have been summoned (called together) for the purpose of deliberating.
Liddell and Scott give this basic definition for an "ekklesia" in classical usage: "An assembly of the citizens summoned by the crier; the legislative assembly."

a. An assembled crowd of people (Acts 19:32, 41 - translated "assembly")

b. A body of citizens gathered to discuss public affairs (Acts 19:39)

c. The assembly of Israelites that were called out of Egypt to follow Moses in the wilderness (Acts 7:38) [NOTE: The phrase "church in the wilderness" should be translated the "assembly" or "congregation" in the wilderness (cp. Ex. 12:3, 6; 16:2, 9; 35:1) so as not to confuse Old Testament Israel with the New Testament church].

**2. The specific (special, particular) sense of the word**

a. The "universal" church - the whole company of the redeemed throughout the present era (from Pentecost to the Rapture). Often called "the church in prospect" since it is not complete nor gathered in Heaven yet in its entirety. (Mt. 16:18 - "I will build my Church"; Eph. 1:22, 5:23; Heb. 12:13; cp. I Cor. 12:13 - the Body of Christ").

b. The "local" church - a localized body of professed believers whoa re gathered together for worship and edification (Mt. 18:17; Acts 20:28; I Cor. 1:2 - "The church of God which is at Corinth"; I Tim. 3:5; Rev. 2-3).

*NOTE: This is the primary New Testament usage of the word "ekklesia."

The word ekklesia is used a total of 115 times in the New Testament.

A survey of those uses:

1. 5 refer to "non-Christian" assemblies.

   a) Acts 7:38; Heb. 2:12 - refer to the congregation of Old Testament Israel

   b) Acts 19:32, 39, 41 - refer to the civil assembly at Ephesus

2. Approximately 18 refer to the "universal" Church - believers in general (those who have been saved from Pentecost up to the Rapture)

   [Mt. 16:18; I Cor. 12:28, 15:9; Gal. 1:13; Eph. 1:22, 23 (cp. 3:6), 3:10, 21, 5:23-32; Phil. 3:6; Col. 1:18, 24; Heb. 12:23]

3. At least 92 must refer to a local church or churches

## D. What Ekklesia does not mean in the New Testament

1. It never refers to a building.

2. It never refers to a denomination (or ecclesiastical system)

   NOTE: This is a very important point. Many of the hierarchical denominations -- especially the Roman Catholic -- insist that the denomination is the Church (the "Mother Church"), and that the individual local congregation has no identity except as it identifies with and submits to that denominational church. This concept is wholly foreign and antithetical to the New Testament doctrine of the ekklesia.

## E. Two Aspects of the New Testament Church

NOTE: Upon careful study of the word ekklesia in the New Testament, it must be noticed that there are two basic concepts which may be accepted as valid expressions of the "Church." The context of each usage of ekklesia will determine which of the two legitimate concepts is to be understood.

### 1. The primary sense of the word - "the local church"

A body of Christ; often called the visible church; a microcosm, a smaller body of believers.

Definition:

a. An assembly of immersed believers, meeting together regularly in a particular location to fulfill God's program.

b. Scripture:
Mt. 18:17 - "Tell it unto the church"
Acts 15:41 - "Confirming the churches"
I Cor. 4:17 -"I teach everywhere in every church"
Rom. 16:1 - "A servant of the church"
Rom. 16:5 - "The church that is in their house"
I Thes. 1:1 -"The church of the Thessalonians"
Rev. 2:1 - "The church of Ephesus"

c. NOTE: This is the most ordinary, natural meaning of the word ekklesia in the New Testament. Unless some compelling reason is present to reject this meaning, the first rule of hermeneutics asserts that it ought to be accepted.

d. The local church of the New Testament is composed of those who are:
1) Saved (Acts 2:41, 47)
2) Baptized (Acts 2:41; Matthew 28:19)
3) Assembled (Particularly on the first day of the week - Heb. 10:25; John.20:19; Acts 20:7; I Cor.16:2)
4) United for fellowship and exhortation (Acts 2:42-47; Heb.10:24,25)
5) With Bishops (Pastors) and Deacons (Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:1-13)
6) Fulfilling the ordinance of the Lord's Supper (Mt.26:26-f; Acts 2:42; I Cor.11)
7) Carrying out the Great Commission (Making Disciples- Matthew 28:18-20)

**2. The generic (general) sense of the word - "the church" (the universal church)**

The Body of Christ; often called the invisible church; a macrocosm, a greater body of believers which will be in heaven.

a. Definition: All of the redeemed of this age who will one day be assembled in heaven (hence, "the Church in prospect"). This general (non-specific) use of the word "church" does not refer to an actual assembly, such as "The Church at Corinth" (I Cor. 1:2), but to all who are redeemed during this present age (from Pentecost to the Rapture).

b. Scripture:

Mt. 16:18 - "I will build my Church"

I Cor. 12:28 - "God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers..."

I Cor. 15:9 - "I persecuted the Church of God"

Gal. 1:13 - "I persecuted the Church of God"

Eph. 1:22, 23- "Gave Him to be head over all things to the Church"

Eph. 3:10 - "Be made known through the Church"

Eph. 3:21 - "Might be glory in the Church"

Eph. 5:23-32 - "...Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for her..."

Phil. 3:6 - "Concerning zeal, persecuting the Church"

Col. 1:18 - "He is the Head of the Body, the Church..."

Col. 1:24 - "For His body's sake, which is the Church."

Heb. 12:23 - "To the general assembly and Church of the firstborn (ones), which are written in Heaven..."

NOTE: The general (generic) usage of the word "Church" is often described as:

"The Church" (Eph. 3:10, 21)
"The Church of God" (I Cor. 15:9)

Like the New Testament does, we often use the word "Church" implying a broader meaning. Example: One preacher said, "The Church of Jesus Christ today in America has been bitten by materialism and worldliness. The Church needs a revival today!"

d. NOTE: The two usages of the word Church are not antithetical or contradictory, but rather one is an outward demonstration or expression of the other.

EXAMPLE: All who are part of the "Universal" Church (the "Bride" and "Body" of Christ) should be members of local churches.

Sad to say, not everyone who is a member of a local church is part of the universal Church. Some unsaved "professors" end up on the membership rolls of local churches, yet will not be part of the true Bride and Body of Christ.

On the other hand, some people genuinely get saved and will be in heaven (having become part of the universal Church of God), yet because of disobedience, ignorance, etc., never join a local church while living on earth.

3. The following chart reveals the parallels between spiritual (invisible) reality and its physical (visible) outworking on earth.

   Note the parallels between "the Church" and "a local church."

*DIAGRAM:*

**SPIRITUAL REALITY of faith (Salvation)**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1) Personal Faith Acts 10:43-48 (Justification) | 2) Spirit Baptism I Cor.12:13 | 3) Union to the Body of Christ |
| 1) Public Testimony Acts 8:37 (Confession) | 2) Water Baptism Acts 2:41 | 3) Union to a Local Church Body |

**PHYSICAL EXPRESSION of faith (Obedience)**

## 4. Unbiblical extremes of the word "Ekklesia" (church)

### a. The "Local Church Only" view

1) This view holds that every reference to the word "church" (ekklesia) in the New Testament is describing the local church (a particular assembly of believers).

2) This view is totally unbalanced and weak in exegesis.

3) Proponents of the "local church" only view:

"Baptist Briders" / "Landmark Baptists"

4) Doctrinal error stems from this view.

NOTE: The line of reasoning is logical, but not Biblical, and the result is an unBiblical conclusion.

Line of reasoning of the Baptist Briders:

a) Premise #1 - Every reference to "church" in the New Testament is to a "local church" (not true).

b) Premise #2 - Only baptized believers can make up a local church (Acts 2:41) (true).

c) Premise #3 - the local church is the Bride of Christ (Jn. 3:29; Eph. 5:23-32; Rev. 19:7-9, 21:9, 22:17) (not true - Some members in local churches were water baptized, slipped into the membership, but were unsaved).

d) Man's logical conclusion - Therefore, only baptized believers will make up the Bride in Heaven (all other believers who were not baptized will still be in the "family of God" and go to Heaven, but will not enjoy the privilege of being part of the "Bride" of Christ).

5) What is wrong with the "Baptist Brider" view?

a) No exegesis - Example: I Cor. 12:13 - they would view "baptized" as water baptism and the "body" as a local church body.

b) Perversion of Scripture -

(1) Arguments are from logic, not Scripture

(2) They make water baptism to mean more than God does.

c) This view develops a sort of "Baptist Purgatory" (second class citizens in Heaven, who are not good enough to be part of the "Bride" because they did not do certain "works").

*A second unBiblical extreme is:*

**b. The "<u>Universal Church only</u>" view:**

1) Line of reasoning for the "universal church only" view -

a) Premise #1 - Spirit baptism and union to the universal Body of Christ are vital results of salvation (I Cor. 12:31) (true).

b) Premise #2 - Water baptism and local church membership are not essential to salvation (true).

c) Man's logical conclusion: Therefore, baptism and local church membership are not essential for the Christian (not true).

2) What is wrong with the "Universal Church Only" view?

a) It is true that baptism and church membership are <u>not</u> requirements for one to be saved, but it is not true that they are not requirements for the Christian (someone who is already saved).

Water baptism and church membership are not matters of salvation but of obedience! (Mt. 28:20; Heb.10:25).

b) The extremists who hold this view (like the "local church only" proponents) have an unbalanced perspective of Scripture and misinterpret and misapply God's Word.

c) The result of such a view of "the Church" is a disregard for the local church and practical matters of obedience through a particular assembly.

They view small, informal, unstructured gatherings as "church attendance" [no pastor, deacons or church polity].

They also tend to rely on the "electric church" (TV ministries) for most of their edification needs.

## F. Pictures of the Church in the New Testament

The church of Jesus Christ is illustrated in the New Testament by the use of four metaphors (or analogies). Namely: the Body of Christ; the pillar and ground of the truth; the temple of God; and the Bride of Christ.

### 1. The "Body" of Christ

a. Scripture: Romans 12:4-18; I Cor. 12; Eph. 4:4-16.

b. An important point: As the Scripture uses the term "Body" in reference to Christ's church, it is speaking of the Church in prospect (the greater Body of Christ which will gather in Heaven). This "body" is a type, representation or picture of the local organized Body of believers. These specific local bodies of Christ are manifestations or concrete exemplifications of the generic Body of Christ ("the general assembly" - Heb. 12:23), which is in prospect.

Because the term "Body" is mentioned by the Apostle Paul to local churches (at Rome, Corinth, Ephesus and Colosse), this provides the basis for the "Body of Christ" to be applied with its teaching to the local church.

c. Basic teachings of this metaphor:

1) It is the body through which Christ ministers in this age (Eph. 4:12-16).

2) The body is a picture of unity and diversity (many members in one body) (I Cor. 12:12-31).

3) As the body grows to maturity, so must the Body of Christ (Eph. 4:12-16).

4) The Body of Christ has but one Head - Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:22).

"The head is the intelligent director, the authoritative lawgiver to the body, and furnishes the will-force for active obedience. The Church as the Body is to obey the directions, and to execute the authoritative mandates of Christ, the Head" (Hiscox, p. 38).

**2. The "<u>pillar and ground</u> of the truth"**

a. Scripture: I Timothy 3:15

b. This analogy specifically refers to the local church.

c. Basic teaching of the metaphor:

1) The "pillar" - that which holds the building up before the world, makes it attractive.

2) The "ground" - the foundation, that on which the building rests, that which keeps it firm and stable.

3) The point: The truth of God is kept firm and made attractive to the world by means of the ministry of the church. [a local church that is functioning Biblically (cp. context of I Tim. 3) will preserve the truth for ages to come and protect Christians from doctrinal error (I Tim. 4:1ff)]

**3. The "<u>temple</u> of God"**

a. Scripture: I Cor. 3:9-17; Eph. 2:21, 22; I Pet. 2:5.

b. Basic teachings of the metaphor:

1) The foundation - the Gospel of Jesus Christ (I Cor. 3:10-11).

2) The cornerstone - Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:20).

3) The building stones - believers (I Pet. 2:5).

4) The significance of the temple - holiness as the abode of the Spirit.

"Paul declares the building to be holy, as the shrines of heathen gods even were supposed to be; and cautions them not to defile this sanctuary. It is the abiding presence of the Spirit in a Church that gives importance to its existence, and efficacy to its ministrations" (Hiscox).

**4. The "Bride of Christ"**

a. Scripture: Jn. 3:29; Eph. 5:23-32; Rev. 19:709, 21:9, 22:17).

b. Important point: The term "Bride" refers to the church as a whole, the complete "wife" of Christ awaiting the Rapture and Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

c. Basic teachings of the metaphor:

1) Election: The Father chose a Bride for His Son (Jn. 6:37, 39, 44, 65).

2) Engagement: The downpayment of the Holy Spirit has been given to all believers with a promise of Christ's return to receive His purchased possession (Eph. 1:13-14).

3) Rapture: The Son is coming back to receive only His Bride unto Himself (Mt. 25:1-13).

4) Wedding: Eternity with Christ (Rev. 19:7-9, 21:9).

Each of the four pictures (analogies) of the "Church" teaches the believer about his relationships.

For example:

"Body" - shows the believer's relationship to other believers.

"Pillar and ground" - shows the believer's relationship to the truth.

"Temple" - shows the believer's relationship to the Holy Spirit.

"Bride" - shows the believer's relationship to Jesus Christ.

## G. The Origin (Beginning) of the Church

"When did the Church begin?"

THE BIBLICAL ANSWER:

***The Church ("The Body of Christ") began on the day of Pentecost.**

Proofs:

1. **The Church was to be built at a future time from the standpoint of Christ's ministry on earth** (Mt. 16:18 - "I will [future tense] build My church...").

2. **The Church could not exist before Christ died to pay the ransom to purchase His Bride, the Church** (Eph. 5:25, 26; Acts 20:28).

3. **The Church could have no functioning Head until after the resurrection of Christ; therefore, it could not exist until some time after He rose from the dead** (Eph. 1:20, 22; 5:23). (Ryrie, Basic Theology, p. 299)

4. **The Church could not have been an operating entity with functioning spiritual gifts until after Christ's ascension** (Eph. 4:7-12). (Ryrie, p. 399)

5. **The Church could not have begun without the advent of the Holy Spirit, since He is the One who unites believers to the "Body of Christ."**

   a. **Spirit baptism is prophesied** - Acts 1:5; Spirit baptism is fulfilled on Pentecost - Acts 2:5, 11:15, 16; SEE: I Cor. 12:13).

   b. **Interesting parallel** -

      The indwelling ("filling" - Acts 2:2, 4) of the Holy Spirit in believers perfectly parallels the "Shekinah glory" that filled the O.T. tabernacle and temple.

      *The tabernacle (Ex. 40:34) and temple (II Chron. 5:13, 7:1-3; I Ki. 8:10, 11) were initiated and considered operative for worship and service only after the glory of God indwelt them (cp. the future temple - Ezek. 43:4, 5).

      *The body of believers is called "the temple of the Holy Spirit" (I Cor. 6:19).

**6. The Day of Pentecost was "perfect timing" to beautifully illustrate the harvest that God was now going to begin reaping** (Pentecost was a "harvest holiday" in the O.T. - Ex. 23:16).

NOTE: God's new program with the church began exactly at the right season and day!

**a. The Order of God's holidays**

God's timing is perfect! (cp. Lev. 23 for order of Feasts).

--Jesus died on Passover (middle of April)
--He was buried during Unleavened Bread
--He arose in fulfillment of First Fruits
(I Cor. 15:23)
--And now God begins His church on Pentecost (early June)

**b. The Meaning of God's holidays**
(they were a "shadow to things to come" - Col. 1:17; Heb. 8:5).

**1) Passover** - Christ is our Passover Lamb

John 1:29: "Behold the Lamb of God"
I Cor. 5:7 "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us"

**2) Unleavened Bread** - Symbol of corruption.

Jesus did not see corruption
(Acts 2:27).

**3) First Fruits -**

Took place on the day after the Sabbath following Passover, which means it was always on the first day of the week (the Sabbath is the seventh day).

Jesus arose from the dead on the first day of the week and "became the first fruits of them that slept" (I Cor. 15:20) (Wiersbe, Acts p. 24).

**4) Pentecost -**

Seven weeks plus one day (50 days) after First Fruits initiates God's harvest.

"On the feast of First Fruits, the priest waved a sheaf of grain before the Lord; but on Pentecost he presented two loaves of bread. Why? Because at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit baptized the believers and united them into one body" (Wiersbe, p. 24). --

"We being many are one bread"
(I Cor. 10:17).

**7. Pentecost is the precise point and time that Peter refers to as "the beginning" of the Church** (Acts 11:15).

The word "beginning" refers to origin (Col. 1:18), or that which comes first. Pentecost is clearly the starting point of the Church.

**UNBIBLICAL ANSWERS: (regarding the beginning of the Church)**

**1. Some believe that the Church began in the Old Testament (with Israel).**

a. Proponent: "Covenant Theology"

b. Supposed evidence:

1) Acts 7:38 - "The church in the wilderness"

2) Heb. 2:12 - "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee" (quoting Psalm 22:22).

c. Brief refutation:

1) Warning: never build a doctrine from one or two isolated verses.

2) In the two verses above, the word "church" should be translated "congregation" as it is in the Old Testament, to avoid such doctrinal misinterpretation (Ex. 12:3, 6; 16:2, 9; 35:1); Psalm 22:22).

The Assembly (congregation) of Israelites in the Old Testament is distinct from the Church of the New Testament (Rom. 9-11; I Cor. 10:32).

3) The Church had not yet begun from Jesus' perspective (Mt. 16:18).

**2. Some believe that the Church began with <u>John the Baptist</u>.**

a. Proponents: Landmark Baptists (and some "Baptist Briders")

b. Supposed evidence:

1) Matthew 11:12-13

2) Luke 16:16.

c. Brief refutation:

1) John the Baptist <u>prepared</u> the way for Christ and the Church (Mt. 11:10). The ground work for a new "dispensation" began with John's preaching, but the dispensation itself did not begin until the Holy Spirit was sent down from Heaven (cp. Acts 2).

2) *Acts 19:1-7 - The disciples of John were re-baptized to show their new identification with Christ. If the Church began with John, there would not have been such a distinction of baptisms and they would have had the Holy Spirit already.

3) The Church had not yet begun during Christ's ministry on earth (Mt. 16:18).

NOTE: Another reference used by some in an attempt to prove that the Church began prior to Pentecost is the phrase "added unto" (Acts 2:41).

They contend that 3,000 were added on the day of Pentecost to a Church that already existed. This is true. However, the Church had only existed for a matter of hours. These new converts were "added unto" the original 120 disciples (Acts 1:15, 2:1) who had just received the baptism of the Spirit earlier that day.

**3. Some believe that the Church began sometime <u>after</u> Pentecost with the <u>Apostle Paul</u>.**

a. Proponents: Ultradispensationalists (hyperdispensationalists).

b. Three different views among Ultradispensationalists:

1) The Church started in <u>Acts 9</u> (Paul's conversion).

2) The Church started in <u>Acts 13</u> (Paul's turning to the Gentiles).

3) The Church started when the "mystery" was revealed to Paul (Eph. 3:1ff; v. 9).

c. Supposed evidence:

1) They say: Paul preached a <u>different message</u> than Peter and the rest of the Apostles (Gal. 2:7-9).

Paul = <u>Grace</u> salvation, Eph. 2:8-9
Peter = <u>Works</u> salvation (namely, baptism; Acts 2:38).

*Salvation has never been by works! (Rom. 4-5)

*A <u>curse</u> is pronounced on anyone who would preach any other Gospel (Gal. 1:8)

*Galatians 2:7-9 describes 2 different <u>recipients</u> of the Gospel, not two different gospels.

2) They say: Paul began a <u>different church</u> than that of Peter and the rest of the Apostles.

Peter - began the "Church of the Jews"
Paul - began the "Church of the Gentiles"

*Such a distinction contradicts the point of Acts 10 - Peter going to the Gentiles (Cornelius).

*Such a distinction overlooks that Paul and Peter were involved in the same ministry (I Cor. 3:22-4:2).

*Such a distinction forgets that Jews and Gentiles are "one body" by means of the cross of Christ (Eph. 2:16) not by means of Paul's announcement of such a "mystery."

*Such a distinction forgets that Paul became part of the same "church" he once tried to destroy (Gal. 1:13, 23).

d. Brief refutation:

1) The "Church" existed before Paul was even saved (Acts 2:47; 5:11, 14).

2) The Apostles (plural) were the foundation of the Church (not Paul singular) (I Cor. 12:28; Eph. 2:20).

3) After Paul got saved, he became part of the same church and preached the same faith he once tried to destroy before his conversion (Gal. 1:13, 23).

As a matter of fact, he points out a clear distinction between "the Jews religion" and the "church" (Gal. 1:13).

# THE LIFELINE OF THE CHURCH





**THE O.T.** | **THE NEW TESTAMENT GOSPELS** *(A Time of Transition)* + [ **THE CHURCH AGE** ]

| 1) The Church in **"Seed"** form | 2) The Church is **"Conceived"** by means of the Cross | 3) The Church is ***"Born"*** at Pentecost | 4) The Church **"Matures"** throughout the Book of Acts (ch. 3ff) | 5) The Church is **"Taken away"** at the Rapture --"The Dead in Christ rise first" |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Preparation** For the Church by John the Baptist (Mt. 11:12-13; Lk. 16:16) | ***Prediction** Of the Church by Jesus Christ (Mt. 16:18; 18:15-17) | ***Provision** The Church is made possible by the death and resurrection of Christ (Eph. 2:13-16) | ***Initiation** The Church begins with the advent of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2; 11:15; I Cor. 12:13) | ***Development** The Church grows to maturity through the Word of God (Eph. 4:11-16) | ***Departure** The Church is caught away (I Th. 4:13-18) |

NOTE: The Church was eternally in the plan of God (Eph. 3:11) but did not begin until Pentecost. Ever since Pentecost, the Lord has "added to the Church daily" (Acts 2:47; 5:11, 14).

## H. The Distinctiveness of the Church

When God began the Church ("the Body of Christ") on the day of Pentecost, He began something totally new, distinct, unique, and special.

As one studies the Scriptures, careful attention must be given to observe God's distinctive purpose and program for the Church. The Church is distinctively different than PAST Old Testament Israel and is distinctly different than the FUTURE Kingdom of God.

### 1. The Church is distinct from Israel.

a. The point: Israel is not to be equated with the Church. These two programs are totally distinct and unique in God's plan for the ages.

Note: Covenant theology violates this distinction consistently and deliberately.

Proofs that Israel is different than the Church:

1) Israel and the Church are distinguished in Scripture. (I Cor. 10:32; Rom. 9 - 11)

2) The origin of Israel is distinct from that of the Church.

a) Israel's origin:

(1) as a family: Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3)
(2) as a nation: Moses (Ex. 19:5-6)

b) The Church's origin - officially at Pentecost (Mt. 16:18; Acts 2)

3) The divine purpose for Israel is distinct from that for the Church.

a) O.T. Israel's purpose was basically earthly (Ex. 19:6)

b) The purposes of the Church are entirely spiritual, and are not to be fulfilled in any political or civil governmental means (Phil. 3:10)

4) The destiny of Israel is distinct from that of the church.

a) Israel - will serve as head of the nations in the Messianic Kingdom (Is. 61:5, 6).

b) The saints of the Church will be raptured, (and will join the resurrected saints of all dispensations in the air) be united with Christ in marriage, and seated as the coregent with Him in His Kingdom (Rev. 19:6-16).

**2. The Church is distinct from the Kingdom.**

a. The point: The Church is not the Kingdom, but will participate in the future Kingdom.

1) Note: The saint who is today part of the New Testament Church will in the future be a citizen of the Messianic Kingdom (Col. 1:13; Acts 28:31), but beyond that there is no sense in which the Kingdom is to be identified with the Church.

2) The danger here: When the Church is identified with the Kingdom--a Kingdom to which all believers belong--the centrality of the local church is soon discarded.

b. "Much confusion exists because of the failure to carefully define, distinguish, and compare the Church and the Kingdom" (Ryrie, p. 397).

UnBiblical doctrines have resulted from confusing the Church and the Kingdom:

1) Post-millennialism - The Church's mission is to establish the Old TEstament Law of God inthe kingdoms of the world today and thus begin the "Millennial Kingdom" of God on earth, after which time Jesus will return to reign.

2) Roman Catholicism - Based on Augustine's "City of God" - the equation of the Church and the kingdom resulted in the absolute authority of the church on earth" (Ryrie, p. 397).

The Catholic church today is not a mere religious system, but is a political power exercising the authority of a "kingdom" over its subjects with the Pope reigning as king.

**c. Biblical contrasts:**

| **The CHURCH (ekklesia)** | **The KINGDOM (basileus)** |
|---|---|
| 1. local (in particular locations) | 1. universal (over all the earth) |
| 2. present reality | 2. future reality (Rev. 20:4-6) |
| 3. plural (there are many) | 3. singular (there can be but one) |
| 4. function is to disciple | 4. function is to rule |
| 5. Christ dwells spiritually in hearts | 5. Christ will dwell physically on earth (Is. 2:3, 9:6) |
| 6. A mystery (unknown in the O.T. - Eph. 3:9) | 6. Prophesied about in the O.T. (Is. 35, 40, 60) |
| 7. Satan is walking about (I Pet. 5:8) | 7. Satan will be bound (Rev. 20:1-3) |

NOTE: Jesus' parables describing the "Kingdom of Heaven" (Mt. 13) must refer to the present "spiritual kingdom," not the future literal kingdom, since Satan is not bound in the context, but is sowing tares among the wheat.

# I. The Gifts to the Church - Ephesians 4:8-11

In order for the Church to be what God intended it to be, He gifted the Church very carefully.

In Ephesians 4:11, the Bible unfolds in one verse the specific gifts of leadership that God gave to the Church (more general gifts are described by Paul in I Corinthians 12 - 14 and Romans 12:6-8; the four gifts dealt with here are more specific in nature).

## A. APOSTLE

### 1. Definition:

a. The word means "sent one."

b. The New Testament office of apostle was reserved for certain men who met very demanding qualifications.

1) He must have been an eyewitness of the resurrected Christ (I Cor. 9:1; 15:7-10)

2) He must have been personally commissioned by Christ (Gal. 1:15-17)

3) He must manifest the miracle-signs of an apostle (II Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3, 4)

4) He must bear fruit in his ministry (Jn. 15:16; I Cor. 9:2; II Cor. 3:1-5)

**2. Function of the apostle**

a. He laid the foundation of the local church for the entire age (Eph. 2:20; cp. I Cor. 3:10)

b. Two primary means by which the apostles accomplished this:

1) They served as the channels through which God gave the revelation which became the foundation of the Church.

2) They served as guardians (overseers) over the very important first generation of churches.

**3. Specific characteristics of this office.**

a. It was temporary; there was only one generation of apostles.

1) As proven by their qualifications -they had to have seen the resurrected Christ, etc.

2) As proven by their function - they were to lay a foundation.

3) As proven by the fact that they were channels of New Testament revelation; once that revelation was given, apostles were unnecessary (Example: Tongues ceased when unnecessary I Cor. 13:8-10).

b. It was restricted: there were only 13 official apostles.

1) 12 apostles to the Jews

2) 1 apostle to the Gentiles (Paul)

## B. PROPHET

### 1. Definition

a. The word has two aspects:

1) One who foretells divine revelation (Acts 21:10-11)
2) One who forthtells divine revelation (I Cor. 14:29, 32, 37; Acts 15:32)

b. The New Testament office of prophet was necessary because of:
1) The absence of the completed New Testament
2) The demand for divine counsel during the Apostolic age (e.g., Acts 11:27-30)
3) The Gospel spread across the Mediterranean world, making it impossible for the limited number of apostles to adequately minister to all the churches.

### 2. Function of a New Testament prophet.

a. A prophet received direct revelation from God before the New Testament was complete (I Cor. 14:29-32; Acts 11:27-30)
"The transition from Law to grace and from Kingdom teaching to Church truth required new, direct revelation from God. The prophets especially were raised up for this purpose." (McCune)

b. A prophet assisted in the establishment of new churches during the Apostolic age (Eph. 2:20).
This was basically by ministering to churches new revelation and answers to problems they encountered. Again, this prophetic ministry became more necessary as the Gospel spread and apostles were not able to minister to all the churches.

### 3. Specific characteristics of this office.

a. It was temporary
See under "apostle" above [I.c.1.]

b. It was expedient; God utilized prophets because of the needs of that day.

The point: God normally uses written revelation; it was only because of the absence of completed revelation that prophets were raised up in the first century.

## C. EVANGELIST

### 1. Definition:

a. Greek "euangelistas" = "eu" - good; well
"angel" - messenger

"Euangelistas" = a messenger of good
Hense - a messenger of the Gospel (good news)

"Euangelion" = the Gospel (good news)

"Euangelizo" = to proclaim the Gospel

b. Essentially, a New Testament evangelist was a preacher to the unsaved, unevangelized world (cp. Philip - Acts 21:8; Acts 8)

c. The gift of "evangelist" was a work as well as a specific order of men (I Tim. 4:5).

### 2. Function of a New Testament evangelist.

The evangelist was a "pioneer gospelizer"; he took the truth of the Gospel to geographical areas where it had been hither-to unknown. An evangelist was actually a missionary. He was a church planter.

### 3. Specific characteristics of this office:

a. It is abiding; there is no Scriptural indication that it has been done away with.

b. It is itinerant; the evangelist endeavors to work himself out of a job, and then to move on to a new area.

## D. PASTOR/TEACHER

### 1. Definition:

a. The word "pastor" means: "shepherd"

b. The New Testament office of pastor is that of an overseer of God's flock (Acts 20:28), one charged with feeding (Jn. 21:17; I Pet. 5:1-3), guarding (Acts 20:28), and strengthening a specific congregation of believers.

c. The pastor must also be an effective teacher (I Tim. 3:2 - "apt to teach"); every member of the flock is dependent on the Word of God, and thus the pastor must be able to effectively minister the Word to the flock.

### 2. Function of a pastor-teacher

a. Generally, to shepherd God's flock (Acts 20:28).

b. The responsibilities of this office are carefully enunciated in the New Testament. More will be said concerning specific functions later on.

# II. The Biblical COMMISSION of the Church: The Church's Objectives

Why did God ordain the local church? What is its purpose and function? What are its goals? What should we accomplish in and through our Assembly?

## A. The Church's General Objective - to protect, preserve, and propagate the truth

### 1. The key Scripture: I Timothy 3:15

a. The word "church" as used in this verse can have only one meaning - the local church.

b. Notice the historical context: Paul has left Timothy in charge of the Ephesian church, a very strategic work in that first century.
Because Paul has discovered he will be away from Ephesus for some time, he writes to Timothy (under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit) concerning the work in that city. He instructs his co-worker concerning doctrinal purity (1:3-11), prayer (2:1-8), the role of women in church (2:9-15), and the standards for church offices - pastor (3:1-7) and deacon (3:8-13).

He discusses these matters because they profoundly affect the health of the church, and the church is indeed the "pillar and ground of the truth."

c. The significance of the phrase: "the pillar and ground of the truth."

"the pillar" - that which holds the building up before the world, makes it attractive.

"the ground" - the buttress, support, foundation; that on which the building rests, that which keeps it firm and stable.

"the truth" - all that which has been revealed by God to man.

d. Notice that the local church is not one of several divinely established institutions; it is "THE pillar and ground."

Only the local church has God's inscripturated "stamp of approval" for its existence (para-church organizations are not ordained of God, but can be a blessing to God's work to the degree that they work through and for local churches. EX: mission boards; rescue missions; ministries to armed services, college campuses, and jails, etc.).

**2. The teaching of this Scripture:**

If the truth of God is to be kept pure in this age; if that truth is to be made by God's Spirit to be attractive and compelling to the world of lost men, it will be because individual local churches recognize their stewardship of truth and fulfill it carefully within the guidelines of God's Word.

## B. The Church's Specific Objectives:

Basically two-fold: 1) edification
2) evangelism

**1. Edification (Eph. 4:12)**

**a. The Church is God's center for: EQUIPPING God's people**

"For the perfecting of the saints" (v. 12a)

"Perfecting" = to equip or supply God's people with the necessary truth and skills needed to minister.

God's people are equipped in church through:

1) Exhortation
(the teaching and preaching of God's Word)

I Tim. 4:13-16
II Tim. 4:1-5

2) Encouragement
("provoking unto love and good works" - Heb. 10:24-25)

a) By fellowship (Acts 2:42)

b) By mutual assistance (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35)

c) By prayer, praise, and worship (Acts 2:42, 46-47)

**b. The Church is God's Center for:**
**SERVING God's people**

"For the work of the ministry" (v. 12b)

"Ministry" = service

God's people serve in Church by:

1) Teaching (II Tim. 2:2; Acts 13:1,2)

2) Meeting needs (Acts 6; I Tim. 5:3-16)

3) Giving (II Cor. 8 - 9; giving money is a ministry - cp. 8:4; 9:1, 12, 13)

4) Sending missionaries (Acts 13:2-3, 14:26=27, 15:3)

**c. The Church is God's Center for:**
**BUILDING God's people**

"For the edifying of the body of Christ"
(v. 12c)

According to Eph. 4:13-16, the church's goal is to build within itself:

1) Unity (v. 13)

2) Stability (v. 14)

3) Maturity (v. 15-16)

## 2. EVANGELISM

a. Important note:

Evangelism is not the primary goal of the church when assembled. Even though reaching the lost will and should take place during church gatherings (I Cor. 14:23-25), the primary purpose of believers "coming together" (v. 26) is not evangelism but edification.

Evangelism takes place, primarily, when the church is dissembled, as believers go out to their homes, jobs, and market places, etc.

b. Evangelism occurs when the "salt" gets out of the salt shaker and when the "light" spreads out from the light house.

c. Evangelism involves all of God's people:

1) Sharing the Gospel (everywhere - Acts 5:42; 8:4)

2) Making disciples in connection with a local church (Mt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8)

## C. Desirable and Undesirable Qualities of a Church

When a church fulfills its God-given function or purpose, what qualities or characteristics will it have? What qualities will it not have?

Jesus Christ's description of the seven churches in Revelation 2 & 3 gives the answer:

### 1. Commendable qualities of a church

a. A working church (Rev. 2:2a)

b. A discerning church (2:2b)

c. An enduring church (2:3)

d. A separated church (2:6)

e. A suffering church (2:10)

f. A faithful church (2:13; 3:8, 10)

g. A maturing church (2:19)

### 2. Corrupt qualities of a church

a. An unloving church (Rev. 2:4-5)

b. A compromising church (2:14-15, 20)

c. A worldly church (2:20; 3:17)

d. A dead church (3:1)

e. A complacent church (3:15-16)

f. A self-sufficient (arrogant) church (3:17-18)

# III. The Biblical CONSTRUCTION of the Church: The Church's Organization

## A. Church Organization (defended)

1. Many Christians today are believing a lie of the devil. Namely: That "organized churches" are not conducive to good fellowship and spiritual growth.

   While it is true that many churches are so "institutionalized" and "mechanical" that they have become impersonal and cold, the blame does not lie at the feet of organization.

   Even though a viable danger exists for ministers and ministries to become so involved in the church's organization and programs that they overlook the people and needs, still God's Word demands that a church be organized (I Cor. 14:40).

2. Such organization will actually facilitate (promote) love, fellowship and spiritual growth if the goal of edifying God's people is not overlooked (SEE previous chapter in notes).

3. God's Word does not condone a haphazard, chaotic, totally informal style of church meetings, devoid of polity, order, and leadership. Rather, the Bible clearly teaches that churches must have structure or organization. Evidences on the next page:

The churches of the New Testament had:

a. Specific times of meeting together
(Acts 20:7; Heb. 10:25; I Cor. 16:2)

b. Order in the church service
(I Cor. 14:26-40)

c. Qualifications for membership (Acts 2:47)

d. Democratic elections (Acts 6:5-6)

e. Specific church officers (Phil. 1:1)

f. Recognized authority of the Pastor over the flock
(Acts 20:28; I Pet. 5:2)

g. Corporate giving and contributions
(Rom. 15:26; I Cor. 16:1-2)

h. Letters of commendation
(Acts 18:27; II Cor. 3:1)

i. Registers of widows (I Tim. 5:9)

j. Consistent practice of ordinances (Acts 2:41; I Cor. 11:23-26)

k. The exercise of church discipline
(I Cor. 5:4-13; cp. Mt. 18:17)

4. Whenever people gather together, work together, serve together, learn together, and worship together (especially in larger numbers), some sort of organization is necessary to avoid confusion, error, and the opportunity for Satan to cause havoc.

## B. Church Membership

Today we are living in an age characterized by "non-commitment." People shy away from commitment in marriage, friendships, and the business world. Modern man in America wants to be "foot-loose and fancy-free." He tends toward being a "lone ranger" - isolated from intimate relationships.

Many today are repulsed by the words "responsibility," "obligation," "dependability," "submission," and "service."

Such an attitude has "rubbed off" on many of God's people, who, for various reasons, never commit themselves to the membership of a local church.

Some reasons why people refuse to become members may be:

-- Fear - With all the shenanigans that go on in religious circles, many are apprehensive of what they might get themselves involved in.

They also may not want to come under the discipline of a church.

-- Freedom - They want the freedom to up and leave at any time without giving a reason.

-- Unfaithfulness - They lack the responsibility and dependability of being a member.

They admit their unwillingness to be faithful in attendance (It is amazing how many of these same people who say, "There is no membership list in the Bible," can join a number of other clubs, groups, and societies without a question. It is simply a matter of priorities).

**1. The <u>definition</u> of "membership"**

a. Church membership is God's people voluntarily <u>uniting</u> with each other for the purpose of promoting each other's spiritual <u>growth</u> (Eph. 4:16).

b. The word "member" (Greek "melos") whether used literally or figuratively refers to a <u>limb of the body</u> (Vine, p. 58). This word describes a smaller part of the body which is attached to and comprises a composite whole.

**2. The <u>Biblical evidences</u> for membership**

a. The word "member" (Greek "melos" - which occurs 43 times in the New Testament) is specifically applied to the relationship of believers to Christ (I Cor. 6:15) and to the relationship of believers one to another.

--Rom. 12:5 - ". . . everyone members one of another"
--I Cor. 12:27 - "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular"
--Eph. 4:25 - "...we are members one of another"

b. The believer's membership to the "Body of Christ" finds its visible parallel in membership in a local church body (SEE page seven in notes)

c. A well-defined, identifiable, carefully maintained list of members is evidenced in the New Testament

1) Numbers of members were known (Acts 2:41; 4:4)

2) There is clear indication of specific rolls being kept in the church (EX: Widows' Rolls - I Tim. 5:9)

3) The election of deacons assumes an identifiable membership roll (Acts 6:2-5)

4) The acts of church discipline, and especially expulsion, assumes an identifiable membership roll (Mt. 18:17; I Cor. 5:2; II Thes. 3:14-15; III Jn. 10)

5) The concept of membership rolls was common in that day, especially among the Jews (the early church was composed largely of redeemed Jews) (EX: Josephus speaks of records at Jerusalem which listed him and his family) (EX: synagogue membership).

NOTE: It must be acknowledged that the details and particulars of church membership (ex. record-keeping, etc.) are not specifically laid down in Scripture; however, the practice of such is undeniable.

**3. The Need for Membership**

"The necessity of membership in the local church is never questioned in the New Testament. It was taken for granted. Had we asked the believers of the Apostolic period whether it was essential to join a church, they would not have known what we were talking about. Every believer became a member of a church. It was involved in the very profession he made in Christ" (Alva J. McClain)

A committed form of church membership is needed to consistently provide:

a. Mutual edification (Eph. 4:11-16)

b. Mutual encouragement (Heb. 10:24-25)

c. Mutual assistance (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35)

d. Mutual service (Rom. 12:4-8)

## 4. The Qualifications for Membership

The pattern in Scripture for anyone to be part of a local church is basically three-fold:

1) Salvation
2) Water baptism
3) Evidence of Godliness

### a. They must be saved

(Acts 2:41, 47; 5:14; Rom. 1:7; 6:20-22; I Cor. 1:2; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:1, 2:3).

Sacramental denominations hold that salvation is to be found within the "church," therefore, they say you do not have salvation until you are a member of their church. Bible believers, on the other hand, have always held that salvation must precede admittance to the church, that the individual is not qualified to join the church until he has been born again.

### b. They must have been water baptized

(Mt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:41)

1) Water baptism was so closely related to one's profession of faith, that if one had not followed Christ in baptism, his salvation experience would be subject to suspicion (Rom. 16:16; Acts 2:38, 41).

2) Baptism is a public testimony of one's salvation; therefore, any one refusing to be baptized does not bear consistent testimony to his supposed conversion and would not qualify for church membership.

3) Note the parallel between Spirit baptism and the union to the Body of Christ
(I Cor. 12:13 - SEE page 7 of notes)

**c. They must <u>evidence Godliness</u>**
(Col. 3:1-2; I Cor. 5:9-13; Acts 18:27)

The point here is <u>not</u> that the candidate must demonstrate <u>full maturity</u> and <u>total victory</u> before he may be accepted; rather, there must be conformity between the person's testimony of conversion and his manner of life since that conversion. An individual who is knowingly and publically engaged in sins which would demand discipline ought not to be admitted into membership.

[Beware: Unbelievers often slip into a church unknowingly (Jude 4; II Pet. 2:1; Acts 20:29; II Cor. 13:5). Therefore, they must clearly state their testimony before they are allowed to join.

## C. Church Discipline

### 1. The basis for church discipline

a. The holiness of God is to be upheld (I Pet. 1:15-16)

b. The testimony of Christ is at stake (I Cor. 5:1)

c. The purity of the Church body is needed (I Cor. 5:6)

### 2. The Reasons for church discipline

a. Immorality - I Cor. 5:1-6

b. False doctrine - II Tim. 3:5

c. Disorderly walk - II Thes. 3:6-14

d. Divisiveness (schismatic influence) - Rom. 16:17-18

### 3. The Procedure for church discipline

(Mt. 18:15-17)

a. Personal reproof (v. 15)
*"Tell him his fault between thee and him alone"*

b. Private conference (v. 16)
*"Take with thee one or two more"*

c. Public Announcement (v. 17)
*"Tell it unto the church"*
The church must render a verdict; the offender must be notified of the verdict and given one more chance to repent.

d. Public Exclusion (v. 17b; I Cor. 5:1ff)

If unrepentant, the offender is to be severed from the membership.

**4. The <u>Attitude</u> in church discipline**

Not a vengeful vindictiveness, but:

a. Brotherly love (II Thes. 3:14-15)

b. A spirit of meekness (Gal. 6:1)

**5. The <u>Goal</u> of church discipline**

The purpose for church discipline is not permanent excommunication but the <u>restoration</u> of the erring brother (EX: child discipline)

II Cor. 2:5-11 - When the offender repents and publically acknowledges his sin:

a. "Forgive him" (v. 7)

b. "Comfort him" (v. 7)

c. "Confirm your love toward him" (v. 8)

## D. Church Ministers

### 1. The two officers of the New Testament local church (pastors and deacons)

a. While the New Testament describes five offices (Eph. 4:11; I Tim. 3:13), two are temporary offices (apostles and New Testament prophets, who were the "foundation" builders of the Church - Eph. 2:20 [See Section I 1,2]) and three are permanent (abiding). These three are:

1) Evangelist (church planter)

2) Pastor-Teacher

3) Deacon

b. Though a New Testament "evangelist" was a pioneer gospelizer who travelled from city to city establishing local churches, it was the pastor(s) and deacons who ministered in that church once established. Therefore, only two offices are valid positions in a New Testament local church (pastor and deacon).

c. New Testament evidence of two church offices:

1) Paul specifically recognized the offices of "bishops (pastors) and deacons" when writing to the church at Philippi (Phil. 1:1).

2) God gives the qualifications of only two church offices in I Timothy 3:1-15

a) Bishop (pastor) - 3:1-7

b) Deacons - 3:8-13

## 2. The office of Pastor

### a. The function of the pastor

The ministry of the New Testament pastor is basically seen by the five different words used to describe his position.

**1)** **"Elder"** ("presbuterion") - the mature example to the church

a) This word points to the seniority, rank, or dignity of the pastoral office

b) Scripture: Acts 14:23, 20:17, 28; I Tim. 4:14, 5:17; Titus 1:5, 7; I Pet. 5:2; Rev. 4:4, 10.

**2)** **"Bishop"** ("episkopos") - the overseer of the church

a) "Epi" = over; "skopeo" = to look or watch

b) This word points to the leadership, guidance, and vigilant superintendence of the pastoral office.

*The pastor must carefully look out for the well-being of the flock entrusted to his care.

c) Scripture: Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:5, 7; James 5:14; I Pet. 5:2.

**3)** **"Pastor"** ("poimen") - the Shepherd of the church

a) This word points to the tender care of the pastoral office

*The pastor is to tend the flock (this involves leading, feeding, and protecting God's "sheep").

b) Scripture: Eph. 4:11; Acts 20:28; I Pet. 5:1-2.

**4)** **"Preacher"** ("kerux") - the exhorter of the church.

a) The word "preach" means to herald, proclaim, or publish a message

*The pastor is to boldly proclaim the "whole counsel" of God -
II Tim. 4:2

b) Scripture: I Cor. 1:18, 21; 2:4; Rom. 10:14; Titus 1:3; Phil. 1:18.

**5)** **"Teacher"** ("didaskalos") - the instructor of the church.

a) This word points to the careful, skillful, and diligent explanation of the Word of God. The word refers to the teaching (doctrine) ministry of the pastoral office (I Tim. 3:2)

b) Scripture: Acts 13:1; I Cor. 12:28, 29; Eph. 4:11; II Tim. 4:2; Heb. 5:12; James 3:1; I Tim. 3:2

NOTE: The words "elder," "bishop," and "pastor" all refer to the same office. They simply describe different aspects of the pastoral office. Many, in an attempt to justify "elders," "bishops," and "pastors" as being separate church offices, fail to see the Biblical evidence which identifies the three terms as one and the same office. The words are used interchangeably in the following verses:

**1) Acts 20:17, 28**

The same "elders" (presbuterous - v. 17) are also called "overseers" (episkopous - bishops - v. 28), who are to "feed" (poimenein - pastor or shepherd - v. 28) the church of God.

(Hence, the offices of elder and bishop are undeniably linked together with the function of pastoring God's flock)

**2) Titus 1:5-9**

The "elders" (v. 5) are identified as "bishops" (v. 7) who are to be able to teach "doctrine" (didaskalia - v. 9) [cp. I Tim. 3:2 - bishops must be "apt to teach"]

**3) I Peter 5:1-4**

The "elders" (v. 1) are to "feed" (poimanate - pastor or shepherd, v. 2) the flock . . . taking the "oversight" (episkopouvtes - position of the bishop - v. 2)

"Therefore, we must reject the episcopalian form of church government that sets bishops apart from and over pastors. At the same time we must also set aside the presbyterian system of polity as unscriptural, for it makes a false distinction between ruling and teaching elders (or lay or pastoral elders) which Paul did not make (cp. I Tim. 5:17-19 with 3:2). Finally, the Plymouth Brethren are wrong in rejecting paid pastors, for that same passage (I Tim. 5:17-18) shows that elders should be honored financially for their ministry" (Greg Waser, "Pastor-Elder-Overseer" - Calvary Baptist Theological Journal, Spring 1988, p. 72, 73).

**b. The <u>qualifications</u> of the pastor**

**1) <u>Personal</u> qualifications**

a) "Husband of one wife" - "a one-woman type man" (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6)
b) "Vigilant" - alert, keeps watch for dangerous trends, Satan's attacks etc. (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8)
c) "Sober" - sensible and wise, a clear thinker; discerning (I Tim.3:2; Titus 1:8)
d) "Good behavior" - respectable; a well-ordered life (I Tim. 3:2)
e) "Not self-willed" - not selfishly stubborn (Titus 1:7)
f) "Just" - fair, impartial, honest (Titus 1:8)
g) "Temperate" - self-control (Titus 1:8)
h) "Devout" - a holy life (Titus 1:8)
i) "Not a lover of money" - not greedy or materialistic (I Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7; I Pet. 5:2)
j) "Not addicted to wine" - abstinent from alcoholic beverages (I Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7)

**2) <u>Public</u> qualifications**

a) "Blameless" - without reproach; no one can accuse him (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6)
b) "No striker" - not quick-tempered and physically violent (I Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7)
c) "Patient" - long-fused" toward others (I Tim. 3:3)
d) "Not a brawler" - not contentious or argumentative (I Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7)
e) "Hospitable" - to meet the needs of strangers (brethren unacquainted with) (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8)
f) "A good reputation with outsiders" - respected by the unsaved (I Tim. 3:7)

**3) <u>Family</u> qualifications**

a) "Rules his own house well" - Children are controlled, wife is submissive (I Tim. 3:4)
b) "Faithful children" - believing children (Titus 1:6)

**4) <u>Ministry</u> qualifications**

a) "Not a novice" - not immature in the faith (I Tim. 3:6)
b) "Able to teach" - (I Tim. 3:2)
c) "Faithful to the Word of God (Titus 1:9)
d) "Able to refute those who contradict the truth" (Titus 1:9)
e) Able to manage the church of God (I Tim. 3:5)

## 3. The office of deacon

### a. The function of the deacon

1) The ministry of the deacon is seen by the Greek word "diakonos" which means servant. While ALL believers should be servants in the general sense, the "deacon" is a church servant in an official sense.

2) The office of deacon is not an office of leadership or authority but of service to relieve the pastor from mundane tasks (Acts 6:1-7)

3) The deacons serve the church by relieving the Pastoral Leadership from preoccupation with such mundane tasks as managing and dispensing the churches finances and managing the church property, building etc.

4) Any preaching or teaching that a deacon performs would be done because of his personal character and spirituality, not because of his office (EX: the deacons (Acts 6:5) - Stephen (Acts 7) & Philip (Acts 8)

### b. The qualifications of the deacon

SEE: Acts 6:1-7; I Tim. 3:8-13

1) The deacon basically has similar qualifications as the pastor with the following exceptions:

   a) He does not have to be "apt to teach" (I Tim. 3:2) since his office is one of service not spiritual leadership

   b) He does not have to be able to manage the spiritual matters of the church as the pastor must (I Tim. 3:5) but must be humble and willing to do common tasks such as taking care of material needs (Acts 6:1-4)

## 4. Contemporary Issues relating to church ministers

### a. The issue of "ordination"

**1) What is ordination?** It is simply a church's recognition of what God has already done. It is God who calls a man into the ministry; a church simply recognizes such a calling (EX: God ordained Paul to the Gospel ministry (I Tim. 1:12; 2:7; Acts 13:2); the church at Antioch recognized God's calling (Acts 13:3)

**2) Three passages are normally cited as a basis for contemporary ordination:**

a) Acts 14:23 - "Ordained" (cheirotoneo) - to choose or elect by the raising of the hand
(Evidently, Paul and Barnabus had part in recommending the men, and the congregations approved their nominations by voting with upraised hands).

b) I Timothy 2:7 - "Ordained" (tithemi) - to set, place, or appoint. It is actually God who ordained a man, placing him into the ministry.

c) Titus 1:5 - "Ordain" (kathistemi) - lit. "to place down," to set or appoint. [NOTE: Titus is told to ordain elders. Because of the newness of the work on Crete, the Christians in the churches would not have been qualified to choose elders for themselves, hence Titus did the selecting]

**3) Ordination is recommended for the following reasons:**

a) To keep "self-appointed" men out of the ministry

b) To confirm in the candidate's heart that he is qualified and called of God.

NOTE: Many preachers greatly used of God in the past were never ordained (EX: Spurgeon, Wesley)

## b. The issue of "<u>women pastors</u>"

1) While God does and did use women to speak His Word (EX: Miriam - Ex. 15:20; Deborah - Jud. 4:4; Philip's daughters - Acts 21:9; Priscilla - Acts 18:26; cp. I Cor. 11:5), He has **never** sanctioned women to hold the <u>office</u> of elder or pastor.

2) The Bible forbids women pastors

a) I Cor. 14:34-35 - This injunction by Paul was not a cultural mandate, but one that was revealed by God formerly "in the Law."

b) I Tim. 2:11-14 - "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority..."

"Usurp authority" - to exercise one's own authority; to act on one's own authority.

The <u>reasons</u> for such a prohibition are:

(1) Creation order (v. 13 - The idea is "headship" - man being created first is to be the head or leader - I Cor. 11:3)

(2) A woman's proneness toward deception (v. 14) - Women generally tend to make decisions etc., more on an emotional basis whereas men tend to make decisions on a rational basis.

c) I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6 - The bishop (pastor) must be the "husband of one wife" - a woman therefore is disqualified.

# Excursus

# What the Bible teaches about... The GENDER of CHURCH LEADERSHIP

I realize that not everyone is going to agree with this message. However, I will preface my remarks and exposition by saying: I appeal to saved believers in Christ, to those who love God and His principles and to those who hold to the Scriptures as their only rule for faith and practice.

The modern feminist movement (coming under the guise of being a savior for women) has gone to great lengths to: Minimize the unique significance of our maleness or femaleness; Blur God-given sexual distinctions; Incite dissatisfaction and discontentment with Biblical domestic relationships and roles; and to Re-define femininity and masculinity by erasing the distinctive features of both.

There are clear differences between the male and female gender -- differences not of inferiority and superiority, but different strengths and functions. There are differences in make-up physically and emotionally; these differences should not be weapons to fight with but tools to build with. Each is to complement the other, fill in the weak spots, round out the edges, etc. What is wrong with distinctive roles and responsibilities? What I see in Scripture is not a difference of essence, but a difference of function. Not differences of worth or value, but of role and responsibility.

The question I will seek to briefly answer in this article is this: **Can women lead a church in the position of elder (pastor or overseer)?**

**Note five Bible principles establishing male leadership in the church assembly.**

**I. The distinct ROLES in the family illustrate God's intention for male leadership** (both in domestic and ecclesiastical relationships)

I Cor. 11:3 - *"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."*

Eph. 5:22-25 - *"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husbands is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."*

Col. 3:18-19 - *"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them."*

Male leadership in the home and church is simply a difference in role (function) and responsibility for the sake of order and unity.

(Even the three Persons of the Triune Godhead have distinctive roles [a headship is seen in the Trinity - I Cor. 11:3] - Example: The Father planned creation, the Son performed Creation.)

With the erosion of male leadership in the home has come the erosion of male leadership in the church. What is happening in the church today is a mirror of what is happening in the home.

Leadership is a servant role; the man is to serve the woman in the home and church by providing unselfish, benevolent, sacrificial leadership.

A leader serves the ones led by providing:
--An example to follow
--Protection
--Direction
--Initiation
--Instruction

**II. The QUALIFICATIONS of the pastor** (*"bishop"* = overseer) **demands male leadership in the church**

A. I Timothy 3:1-7

In the New Testament God uses three words to describe the ministry of church leadership:

1. Bishop (*"episcopos")* (I Tim. 3:1-7; Ti. 1:7)
2. Elder (*"presbuteros")* (Acts 14:23; I Tim. 5:17; Ti. 1:5)
3. Pastor (*"poimen")* (I Peter 5:2)

These three words are used to describe three facets of the same office (three descriptions of the same person).

In Acts 20, Paul called the *"elders"* ("*presbuteroi")* (v. 17) of the Ephesian Church. He refers to these same men as *"overseers" ("bishops - episcopoi")* (v. 28), and commands them to *"feed" ("poimaino - pastor")* the church of God (v. 28b).
Peter exhorted the "*elders"* to *"shepherd"* (pastor) the flock by taking the *"oversight"* (I Peter 5:1-2).

I Tim. 3:1-7 - *"This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."*

*"If a man desires the office"* (v. 1)
*"The husband of one wife"* (v. 2)
*"He* (v. 1). . . *he* (v. 5) . . . *he* (v. 6) . . . *he* (v. 7)"
*"If a man know not how to rule his own house..."*

B. Titus 1:5-6 - *"For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly."*

*"Ordain elders* (v. 5) . . . *the husband of one wife* (v. 6) . . ."
*"He . . . he . . ."* (v. 9)

**III. The RESTRICTION of I Corinthians 14:34-38 prohibits female leadership in the church**

**V. 34**
***"Keep silent. . . not permitted to speak" -***

--In the context this prohibition would definitely apply to speaking in tongues.

--It does not mean that women cannot pray in church or give testimonies (because I Cor. 11:5 speaks of women *"praying"* [not necessarily leading in prayer] and *"prophesying"* or uttering in plain language a truth God has revealed to her).

The *"speaking"* in this verse refers to an authoritative leadership role over men as evident by the qualifying phrase ***"but they are commanded to be under obedience*** (submission) (i.e. to male leadership)."

It is vitally important to note that God's restriction (given via the Apostle Paul) is not one that only applied to his time, generation or culture. He states: *"As also saith the Law"* (v. 34). This reference to the Old Testament shows this New Testament teaching to be an eternal principle [not one limited to Paul's day].

**V. 35**
The Apostle Paul further applies the *"speaking"* of women to questioning the male leadership in public worship. Such disruptive, divisive questions by women who were flaunting and abusing their Christian liberty would undermine the leadership and cause a divisive, disunited spirit in the church body.

God calls it a ***"shame for women to speak in church"*** (v. 35) (that is: it is a shame for a woman to verbally usurp or interrogate the male leadership of the Church). The women were to hold such questions to ask their husbands at home (v. 35).

**IV. The COMMANDS of I Timothy 2:11-15 prohibit female leadership in the church**

In the context, Paul is describing true Godliness (by men [v. 8] and women [v. 9-10]).
I Tim. 2:9-10 - *"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.*"

Paul now further delineates how a Godly woman will act in church in verse 11.
**V. 11**
***"Learn in silence"*** - to be taught without opening her mouth to refute what was taught.

***"With all subjection"*** - Her being taught requires a submissive heart toward the one doing the teaching (she is to have a submissive attitude both toward her reception of truth and in her response or obedience to it).

**V. 12**
***"I suffer not*** (do not allow or permit) ***a woman to teach"*** -
The teaching in view is that of teaching *"men"*.
--Women can teach women (Ti. 2:4-5)
--Women can teach children (Lois and Eunice to Timothy - II Tim. 1:5)
--But women are not to teach men

The Bible does not specifically prohibit a woman from *"preaching"* (per se) but from pastoring (or leading an assembly [church] with men present).

Example: In the Great Commission, we are all (male and female) commanded to *"preach* [proclaim] *the Gospel to every creature"* (Mk. 16:15).

Example: Christian women are exhorted to *"teach"* the younger women (Ti. 2:4-5 - *"That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed"*).

--A woman may [with her husband] be involved in the personal discipleship of a man (EX: Priscilla with her husband Aquila - Acts 18:26 - *"And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.")*.

--A woman can serve in many capacities in the church like Phoebe did (Rom. 16:1).
--It is proper for women to teach children and other women in a church setting.

*V. 12* - ***"Usurp authority"*** - lit. Does not mean to seize authority (as if, on the other hand, she can have that authority if it is given to her). It means to exercise her own authority over the man (in terms of giving direction or instruction in the church context - 3:15).

It is interesting how many Evangelical Feminists are quick to interpret these verses based on first-century Jewish culture, when the writer himself by-passes his own culture and goes back to the beginning of time (Gen. 2 & 3) to prove his point.

***Paul gives two reasons for why women should not lead men in the church:***

**1) <u>Creation order</u> (v. 13)**

***"Adam was first formed, then Eve."***

By creation order, God is showing which gender was the leader (head) and which was the helper.

Paul's reference to creation order shows that his teaching is not based on temporary cultural norms, but on permanent facts of creation.

**2. <u>The Fall</u> (v. 14)**
(A woman's proneness to certain deceptions)

Women--being generally more emotional (more feeling oriented), responding with her heart more than her head, responding more to emotion than to reason, to feeling than to fact, to the subjective rather than the objective--are easier victims to Satan's temptations.

--Many cults were founded by women (Ex: Mary Baker Eddy - Christian Science; Ellen G. White - Seventh Day Adventists)

--Many extra-Biblical revelations which have brought so much confusion and chaos to Christianity came about by women seeing apparitions of Mary or receiving the supposed gift of tongues.

**V. The EXAMPLES of the New Testament pastor** (elders) **evidences male leadership in the church**

--There is not one example of a woman leading a New Testament assembly.

--Every reference to an *"elder"* is to men in the Bible (Old Testament and New Testament)

--The 70 Elders Moses chose to assist in the leadership of Israel were men (Num. 11:16).

--The 12 Apostles, who also functioned as elders, were men (Lk. 6:13).

--Those who led along with the Apostles were men (Barnabas, Silas, Luke, Timothy, Titus).

--Every elder selected by the local churches was a man (Acts 14:23, 20:17; I Tim. 5:17; Ti. 1:5; Ja. 5:14; I Pet. 5:1).

Someone might ask: Didn't God use Deborah to lead Israel (Judges 4)? Yes, however:

1. Israel was not a "church" and she was not a "pastor" (she was a judge)
2. She lived at a time when *"every man did that which was right in his own eyes"* (Jud. 17:6, 21:25)
   The book of Judges is filled with examples of people whose roles and behavior was not necessarily normative.
   Note: Deborah prophesied privately, not in public forum.

Someone else might ask: Doesn't Paul say in Gal. 3:28 that in Christ *"there is neither male nor female"*? Yes, but Paul is not denying the differences of sexuality, he is saying that there is no distinction between how God saves each (the context is soteriological; not describing functional differences).

The issue is not one of ability, but does one fit the qualifications of the New Testament? (some women may be very articulate speakers, but this does not decide the issue).

The issue is not one of public acceptance, but does God accept female rule in the church as revealed in His Word? (society may say it is okay, but the Bible does not).

The issue is not cultural but Biblical (times and societies may change, but God's principles do not).

The issue is not popularity (many may be filling ecclesiastical positions now though it was never intended by God; but the prevalence of something has never been used as a measuring stick of its rightness).

The issue is not what is traditional, but what is Biblical?

The issue is not male chauvinism nor male ego but about being faithful to what God established without feelings of superiority.

God's will never contradicts God's Word. He will never lead someone to violate His Holy Scripture. (God has never called one woman to pastor a church! How do I know? Because His Word prohibits such) (Jer. 23:32 -*"Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord."*)

> *"No woman may step into the place of the man without violating the very Word she would try to teach to both women and men"* (Lenski)

*My counsel to women pastors:*

1) Let the Bible not society be your authority on matters of Christian service.

2) Re-examine the bible's teaching on the role of leadership and the New Testament teaching of the pastoral office.

3) Upon being convicted of God's design for Godly male leadership, humbly resign your position and pray for God to use your life and gifts according to His will and purpose for you.

May God give us Christian women who have the inner qualities of humility, gentleness, holiness, Spirit control, and contentment so that each willingly and gladly submits to her God-given role and utilizes her great God-given gifts and abilities in His way and His will.

Recommended Book: **Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (A Response to Evangelical Feminism)** (Edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem; Crossway Books, Wheaton, IL, 1991)

## E. Church Government

Who runs the church? Does it report to headquarters? A pope? A synod? A convention? An elder board?

The evidence of the New Testament is overwhelmingly clear that churches are to govern themselves. Hierarchal systems are not Biblical (Rev. 2:6, 15). There is only one mediator - Christ (I Tim. 2:5); He is the Head of each church!

**Arguments for Congregational church government:**

*It is the church as a whole that is:*

1. Responsible to exercise church discipline (Mt. 18:15-17; I Cor. 5:1-13)

2. Responsible for resolving doctrinal and moral problems (Acts 15:1-3; I Tim. 3:15; Rev. 2-3; I Cor. 6:2)

3. Responsible for sending out missionaries (Acts 13:1-3) and receiving their report (Acts 14:26-27)

4. Responsible to maintain its own purity (moral and doctrinal) (I Th. 5:21; Rom. 16:17; Jude 3; I Jn. 4:1)

5. Responsible to elect its own officers (Acts 6:3, 5) and messengers (I Cor. 16:3; II Cor. 8:19, 23)

6. Responsible to preserve its own unity (Rom. 12:16; I Cor. 1:10; Phil. 1:27; Eph. 4:3)

7. Congregational polity upholds the equality (Eph. 3), "priesthood" (I Pet. 2:5, 9), and spiritual competence (I Cor. 16:2) of every believer.

# Biblical Distinctives held to by BAPTISTS

*Doctrines held to by the Baptists which differentiated them from Romanism.*

## Biblical Authority

II Timothy 3:16, 17 – "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."

## Autonomy of the Local Church

Matthew 18:15-17 – "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. 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. 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." (Compare 1 Corinthians 5:4-7)

## Priesthood of all Believers

I Peter 2:5, 9 – "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ…But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light"

## Two Ordinances in the Church

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."

I Cor.11:23-25 – "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: 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. 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."

## Individual Soul Liberty

Romans 14:5-12 – "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

## Saved, Baptized Church Membership

Acts 2:41, 47 – "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls…And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

## Two Offices (Pastors & Deacons)

I Tim.3:1-13 – "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop (overseer), he desireth a good work." (1 Tim. 3:1) (Note: The words "Elder" "Pastor" and "Bishop" are three terms describing the same office. Acts 20:17, 28) "And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. (1 Tim. 3:10)

## Separation of Church & State

Matthew 22:21 – "…Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."

# IV. The Biblical CEREMONIES of the Church - The Church's Ordinances

## A. An Definition of "Ordinance"

**1.** **An ordinance is a symbolic rite** (a regularly repeated practice) which sets forth a central truth of Christianity.

a. Symbol = a sign or visible representation of an invisible truth or idea.

b. Rite = a regularly repeated practice which has spiritual meaning

**2.** **Three tests of an ordinance**

(How do you know if a practice found in the New Testament is perpetual or continuing?)

a. It must be commanded by Christ

b. It must be practiced by the early church

c. It must be explained in the New Testament epistles

*Only two symbolic practices meet the above qualifications:

1) Baptism

2) The Lord's Supper

**3.** **NOTE: An ordinance is not:**

**a)** **A sacrament** (it is not a means of grace - Ex. Catholicism)

**b)** **A seal** (it is not a seal or undeniable evidence of salvation or covenant relationship with God - Ex. Reformed theology/Covenant theology)

# B. Baptism

**What the Bible says about the ordinance of Baptism**

## 1. The institution of baptism

### a. Baptism was Christ's first public act

(Mt. 3:13-17 - *"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him. 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: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.")*

### b. Baptism was Christ's last command

(Mt. 28:19-20 - *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."*)

### c. Baptism was an early church practice

(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."*; 8:38 - *"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."*; 10:45-48 - *"And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost...Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord..."*)

## 2. The Mode of baptism

**Biblical baptism is immersion into water**

Proof:

**a. The meaning of the Greek word** - "baptisma" (noun); "baptizo" (verb)

1) In classical Greek - immersion (Liddel & Scott lexicon)
2) In Septuagint Greek - immersion (II Ki. 5:14 - Naaman)
3) In the New Testament every passage requires or allows the meaning of "Immerse"

**b. The syntax of the Greek**

1) In relation to "water"
   a) Water is never the subject of a passive verb -
      EX: Water (subject) was poured (passive) on him
   b) Rather, water is always the object of a preposition.
      EX: He was baptized in water

2) In use with prepositions
   The prepositions (eis; en) that follow the word baptized specifically mean "in" or "into" never "by."

**c. The context of the baptisms.** Circumstances in contexts describing baptisms support immersion.

*EX: "Coming up out of the water" (Mk. 1:10)*
*EX: "Went down into...came up out of" (Acts 8:38, 39)*

## 3. The subjects of baptism: only believers

### a. Only those who repent can be baptized

EX: "Repent and be baptized"

(Mt. 3:2-6 - *"And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins."*; Acts 2:38 - *"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins,a nd ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."*)

### b. Only those who believe can be baptized

Mark 16:16 - *"He that **believeth** and is **baptized** shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."*

Acts 2:38 - *"**Repent** and be **baptized**..."*

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 8:12 - *"But when they **believed** Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were **baptized**, both men and women."*

Acts 9:36 - *"And Philip said, If thou **believest** with all thine heart, **thou mayest*** [be baptized]. *And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."*

Acts 16:14, 15 - *"Lydia ... **attended** unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was **baptized**..."*

Acts 16:31, 33 - *"And they said, **Believe** on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...and [he] was **baptized...**"*

Acts 18:8 - *"And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, **believed** on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing **believed**, and were **baptized**."*

### c. Only those who have the Holy Spirit can be baptized

(Acts 10:47 - "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?")

### d. Only those who are disciples can be baptized

(Mt. 28:19-20 - *"Go ye therefore, and teach* [lit. make disciples] *all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. . ."*)

***Infant baptism has no Biblical support at all - It is a doctrine of men, not God.***

**4. The symbolism of baptism**

**a. Baptism symbolizes the believers union or identification with Jesus Christ.**

Baptism is the believer's way of showing others "whose side he's on."

**EX: Christ identified with John's righteous message**
(Mt. 3:12-17 "*Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. 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: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*")

**EX: The disciples of John identified with John's message of repentance** (Mt. 3:1-6 - *"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins."*)

**EX: The New Testament believer identifies with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. He is picturing his spiritual union into Christ**
(Rom. 6:1-6 - *"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 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. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."*)

**b. Water baptism is the outward expression of what spirit baptism is the reality of - namely, union to Christ**

(Acts 10:47 - *"Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"*; I Cor. 12:13 - *"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."*)

**c. Since a believer is picturing a once and for all union or identification with Christ, baptism never needs repeating, whereas the Lord's Supper is repeated since it illustrates continual fellowship.**

Conclusion:

This doctrine like no other has been attacked, twisted, confused, and misused by Satan.
Some say there is no Baptism for the NT Church: Ultradispensationalists
Some say Baptism saves: United Church of Christ
Some say Baptism (ie sprinkling) washes away original sin: Roman Catholicism

But all that matters is what the Bible says:
God expects you as a Christian to identify with Christ by being Baptized (immersed in Water)

This ordinance does not save, but is an important matter of obedience. Its important because it's part of the great commission.
Join a N.T. church which Biblically practices Baptism.

# Excursus

# A Historical look at: BAPTISM

**By: Erwin Lutzer - "The Anabaptist Controversy"**
**(Excerpts from the Tape: Origins of Infant Baptism)**

Michael & Margeretta Satler - Michael had been a priest, but left the priesthood after he found there was no Biblical evidence for celibacy. So he left and was married. More than that, they joined a group called the Anabaptists. The prefix "Ana" means again. The again-baptizers; more easily said, re-baptizers. The Anabaptists were people who believed that their infant baptism didn't count, because they said it's not found in the Bible; therefore, we need to be re-baptized as adults upon profession of faith. And so they went ahead as adults, having professed faith in Christ, and they baptized one another as part of a little group way back in Germany in 1526. When they were coming back from a little town called Schlicime, they were arrested while walking through the forest and captured and on May 17, 1526, they were tried, and after 1 1/2 hours, the judges came back with this verdict, "Michael Satler shall be committed to the hangman who shall take him to the square and there first cut out his tongue and then chain him to a wagon, tear his body twice with hot tongs and five times more before the gate, then burn his body to powder as an arch-heretic." He was brought to the place, and just before he died, he cried, "Almighty eternal God, thou art the truth, and because I have not been shown to be in error [he had asked if he could debate the point from the Bible, but his prosecutors said "No."], I with thy help on this day testify to the truth and seal it with my blood." With a sack of powder tied around his neck to hasten the death, Satler was thrown into the fire. When the ropes on his hands burned through, the dying man raised his hands in a sign of triumph and prayed, "Father, I commend my spirit into thy hands." His wife was persuaded to recant, but she did not. Eight days later, she was forcibly drowned in the Necar River.

*Infant baptism has no Biblical support at all - It is a doctrine of men, not God.

**Ancient history** - the practice was that the church (religion) and state (government) were one and the same. Pagans killed true Christians because they would not worship the pagan idols (EX: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego)

But Jesus came along and taught something different. That His kingdom was not of this world. Put your sword away, my kingdom will not be advanced that way. Render to Caesar what is Caesars, and to God what is God's -- i.e. keep church and state separate.

Christians were thrown to the lions because they would not bow and say Caesar was Lord. Worshipping the emperor was not just a religious experience, it was a political expression of your loyalty to the Roman Empire.

One day a Christian man named Origin thought, "Wouldn't it be great if the Christians were in power? Then we could use the power of government to advance Christianity, and the tables would be turned."

That's exactly what happened. One day an emperor was "converted". Constantine was coming to conquer Rome and he saw a "sign," which said "In this sign conquer." He believed it was the sign of the Christian God - the cross. And he said, this is the religion I'm going to use to advance my political ambitions. And it was. I don't believe that Constantine was converted / born again, he just decided the Christian religion would be the most profitable one in that it would help him advance his kingdom.

The very first thing that Constantine did was to take Christian crosses and he welded them to his soldier's shields. From now on Christianity would be spread by the sword. The same swords that spread paganism would now begin to spread the doctrines of Christianity, and that would become the unifying force in the Roman empire. After Constantine became the emperor, he called the Council of Nicea, one of the most important councils in church history, to discuss the deity of Jesus Christ. What in the world is an emperor doing calling a theological council? Was it because he was so interested in the fine points of doctrine, that he wanted to really find out the truth? No. Historians tell us that Constantine was bored with the discussions, he was confused with them, he didn't' really care what the council came up with. But what he really did want was unity. In his opening speech he said that these religious discussions and debates were as bad as war, that they hurt unity. Why was he interested in unity? So that he would be able to use Christendom as the basis now to unify the empire so that his political ambitions could be more acutely and actually realized. After his death, Christianity was made officially the religion of the empire.

A question for you: Do you think that when the Holy Roman Empire was suddenly Christianized, that it increased the number of true born-again Christians? Of course not. They were still the minority, among all those who were members of this big church/state. All you had to do to be a member of the state church was be born. Now the pagans found themselves being put to death because they were not "Christian."

Infant baptism is NOWHERE in the New Testament. First references to it are found in 200 B.C. North Africa, where Tertullian, one of the great theologians of the church, wrote a document <u>against</u> it. He was against it, but this shows that it was practiced.

A few scattered references to infant baptism before , but after the time of Constantine, infant baptism suddenly became the accepted practice everywhere. Why? Before Constantine, infant baptism, the sacraments, was a religious issue -- a question of whether they imparted grace. But after Constantine, infant baptism became a political issue. You were not just born a citizen of a country, you were born a Christian, and so you were "christened" so that you would religiously be in line with "Christendom."

People opposed the notion that the Church could embrace everyone. The Donatists said that the church was a minority, those who put their faith in Christ and were baptized as adults. Everyone could not be made Christian, but rather those who could prove that they believed in Christ and lived holy lives as evidence of it. Along came the sword. The Donatists were persecuted, massacred, and stamped out.

Why did the Empire persecute those who re-baptized? Were they so concerned for the souls of infants of these Anabaptists who might not be baptized? No, they saw re-baptism as insubordination. Here is a group within society not cohesive with the society, and that broke up the Holy Roman Empire. Children were forcibly baptized against the wishes of their parents.

**Zwingli's thoughts on the Anabaptists:**

"Nothing grieves me more than at the present I have to baptize children, for I know it ought not to be done. I leave baptism untouched. I call it neither right nor wrong. If we were to baptize as Christ instituted it, then we would not baptize any person until he has reached the years of discretion, for I find it nowhere written that infant baptism is to be practiced." Zwingli studied this with some other scholars; however, when they went on to become Anabaptists because of their convictions, Zwingli went back on his. He felt infant baptism had to be supported, for the sake of the empire.

**Luther:**

"There is not sufficient evidence from Scripture that one might justify the introduction of infant baptism at the time of the early Christians after the apostolic period. But so much is evident that no one may venture with good conscience to reject or abandon infant baptism, which for so long a time has been practiced." Wait a minute, Luther, didn't you teach us "Sola Scriptura" (the Bible only); yet now you say although there is not sufficient Biblical evidence, yet it's been practiced so long...tradition, Luther? There was fear of what would happen to society if there developed two groups of people - those truly saved and baptized after and those baptized but not believers. Luther knew that salvation only comes from faith, yet he had to reconcile infant baptism, so he taught that infants are born sinners, then on the eighth day when they are baptized, God gives them faith, although he did not hold that every person baptized as an infant was truly saved. He believed the infant was made a Christian, but that it eventually wore off and later (through Confirmation) one had to accept Christ personally.

**Calvin:**

Saw a parallel between circumcision and infant baptism. Saw the baptism as a sign of a covenant. And many meanings have been attached to this statement.

All these men were part of the medieval notion that the church and state should be united, and that as a result of that unity, the sword could be used to promote the doctrines of Christianity, or if not to promote it, at least to take care of the heretics.

During this medieval period, infant baptism was used by the state to unify the empire, to make everyone a part of that over-all state church.

## C. The Lord's Supper ("communion")

### 1. The institution of the Lord's Supper

**a.** **Instituted by Christ** (Mt. 26:26, 27; Mk. 14:22-26; Lk. 22:14-20)
**b.** **Instituted for the church** (I Cor. 11:23-26)

***Three Views regarding the Lord's Supper:***

***Open** **communion** - Any obedient believer present in a church gathering may partake (the Biblical view)
**Close communion** - Only church members, or members of a church of like practice may partake
**Closed communion** - "Landmark" Baptists

### 2. The elements of the Lord's Supper

**a.** **Unleavened bread representing the Body of Christ**

**b.** **Unfermented wine representing the blood of Christ**

**c.** **UnBiblical views of the elements:**

**1)** **Transubstantiation** - The elements are changed or transformed into the actual body and blood of Christ (Catholic view)
**2)** **Consubstantiation** - the spiritual presence of Christ is with the elements (Lutheran view)

### 3. The subjects of the Lord's Supper

***Obedient believers**

**a.** **"Believers"**
1) Jesus limited the Lord's Supper to His disciples
2) The Lord's supper is a "reminder" of what Christ did for you. One does not remember what he has not believed.

**b.** **"Obedient"**
"But let a man examine himself" (I Cor. 11:28)
"Unworthily...damnation" (I Cor. 11:29)

### 4. The Meaning of the Lord's Supper

**a.** **Memorial** - past (Christ's death (I Cor. 11:24-26)
**b.** **Symbol** - present (the believer's continual oneness with Christ [I Cor. 10:17] and dependence on Christ [Jn. 6:53])
**c.** **Prophecy** - future ("till He come" - I Cor. 11:26)