

THE CHURCH

And My Relationship With It

Study #3

This study looks at one of the most confusing and misunderstood doctrines of the Bible. People have all kinds of ideas as to what a church really is. Some people think it is a **building** (a cathedral, or some place of worship). Others

think of a church as a **denomination** (a human organization) and speak of the “Catholic Church,” the “Presbyterian Church,” the “Baptist Church,” etc. Some Christians conceive the “Church” as consisting of all

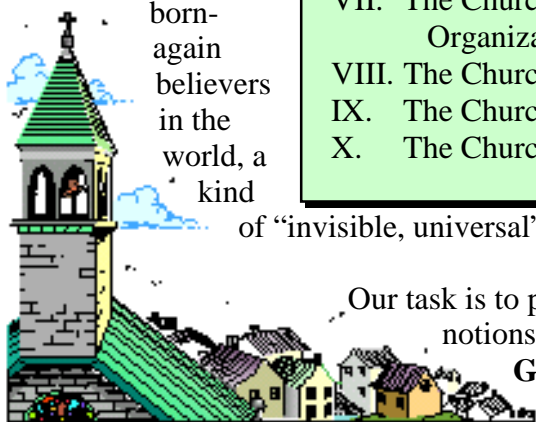
born-again believers in the world, a kind

of “invisible, universal” church.

Lesson Overview

- I. The Church Is A New Testament Institution.
- II. The Church Is An Assembly.
- III. The Church Is A Living Organism.
- IV. The Church Has Officers.
- V. The Church Makes Decisions.
- VI. The Church Is An Independent Institution.
- VII. The Church Is A Commissioned Organization.
- VIII. The Church Has Ordinances.
- IX. The Church Is To Be Financed.
- X. The Church And You

Our task is to put aside all these notions and determine what **God** says a church is in His Word.



I. THE CHURCH IS A NEW TESTAMENT INSTITUTION.

Look up *Matthew 16:18*. This is the *first* mention of the Church in the Bible.

- A. Who founded (built) the Church? _____
- B. Look up *John 1:42*. What is the meaning of Peter’s name? _____
- C. Look up *1 Peter 2:3-8*. Who did Peter identify as the “Rock” upon which the Church would be built? _____
- D. In *Acts 4:10-11*, Peter and John identify Jesus as, “the S_____ which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the C_____.”
- E. How does the Apostle Paul identify Jesus Christ in *Ephesians 2:20*?
The C_____ C_____ S_____.



Note: This institution, the local New Testament church, was built upon Jesus Christ. It is new and is not to be confused with the nation of Israel. The Old Testament is primarily addressed to Israel, and the New Testament is mainly written to churches. Don’t confuse these two institutions (church and nation). The Bible distinguishes the two in *1 Corinthians 10:32*.

II. THE CHURCH IS AN ASSEMBLY.

The word “church” (or “churches”) is found 114 times in the New Testament, and is translated from the Greek word “EKKLESIA.”

This word “ekklesia” means – “a company of people called out for a specific purpose.” It has its roots in the democracies of the Greek city-states, when the town crier would call out the citizens to a meeting to conduct business.

In *Matthew 16:18*, the Lord Jesus did not change the meaning of ekklesia, but He distinguished it from other assemblies of the day with the personal pronoun “MY.” Thus, a New Testament church is the “Lord’s Assembly.”

Definition of a Church

A New Testament church is an organized assembly of baptized believers who band together for the purpose of fulfilling the Great Commission.



III. THE CHURCH IS A LIVING ORGANISM.

A. The church has a Head.

Man-made religious organizations have their heads – presidents, popes, moderators, superintendents, etc. Each New Testament Baptist church also has a Head – but One vastly different from any of the above.

- 1. Look up Colossians 1:18 and Ephesians 5:23, 24. Who is the Head of each New

Testament Baptist church?

- 2. Each church is to be S_____ to its Head.
- 3. Look up John 17:17. In what way is a church subject to its Head? _____

Note: Jesus Christ is not a “figure-head.” Any “church” which is not subject to Him and His laws is out of control. No church has the right to *make* laws – it may only obey the laws already given by the Head through His Word.

A church without a living Head is dead!

B. The church is a body.

- 1. Romans 12:5 says we are, “one body in C_____.”

Circle each occurrence of the word “body” in this passage.

(1 Corinthians 12:12-27) “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. {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. {14} For the body is not one member, but many. {15} If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? {16} And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? {17} If the whole body were an

eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? {18} But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. {19} And if they were all one member, where were the body? {20} But now are they many members, yet but one body. {21} And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. {22} Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: {23} And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. {24} For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: {25} That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. {26} And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. {27} Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”

2. According to 1 Corinthians 1:2, who is the letter of 1 Corinthians written to?
The C_____ of G_____ at Corinth.
3. In 1 Corinthians 12:27, what does Paul call this church of God which is at Corinth?

4. According to 1 Corinthians 12:18,20,26-27, what are the Corinthians in the church considered? M_____
5. According to verse 18, how did they get into the body of Christ at Corinth? _____
6. Answer the following questions according to this passage in 1 Corinthians 12.

- a. Are there many or few members in the church? _____(v.14)
- b. Are some members of the church unnecessary? _____(v.21)
- c. What are two things members do on behalf of each other? (v.26)

7. How do members get into the church?
1 Corinthians 12:18 _____
Acts 2:47 _____
8. From a practical standpoint, what does this truth about *members being added to the church by God* mean regarding your commitment to the church? _____

9. Should Christians become members of the local church they are attending? _____

IV. THE CHURCH HAS OFFICERS.

- A. Look up *Philippians 1:1*. What are the two offices in a church?**
B _____, (*elders, pastors*) and
D _____.

- B. Look up *1 Timothy 3:1-13*. This reference gives the qualifications required for these two offices.**

Note: The terms “bishop,” “elder,” and “pastor” are used interchangeably in the New Testament. We prefer to use the term “pastor” because the other two have been given unbiblical ecclesiastical connotations.

- C. MY PASTOR(S)**

1. Look up 1 Peter 2:25 and 5:4. Who is the Chief Pastor of my Church?

2. The word “pastor” means *shepherd*. Look up 1 Peter 5:2 and Acts 20:28. What does



the Bible call the church in relation to its pastor(s)? The F_____ of God.

3. According to 1 Peter 5:2, what is the duty of the pastors? _____

4. According to Ephesians 4:12-14, why has the Lord given our church a pastor(s)? _____

5. According to Acts 20:17, 28-31, how will our pastor(s) protect me? _____

6. According to Hebrews 13:7, we are to R_____ our pastor(s) and F_____ them.

7. According to Hebrews 13:17, we are to O_____ our pastor(s) and S_____ to their leadership in the church.

How Should We Address Our Pastor(s)?

Many feel unsure as to what they should call their pastor(s) in conversation. There is no God-given title for a pastor, and it is unwise to refer to him as “Reverend” or “Father.” (See Psalm 111:9; Matthew 23:9.) Both of these refer to God.

However, just as we train children not to call their parents by first names out of respect for their place and authority, and thus with their teachers and policemen, etc., it is right to show similar respect to the men God puts over you in your church.

Our senior pastor may be addressed as *Pastor*; our associate pastors as *Pastor (last name)*. The respect in the title is primarily for the God-appointed office more so than for the individual.

Give each of your pastors your confidence, love, encouragement, and constant prayers. Be their co-worker. Go to them in your difficulties; call them when in need. They are able to help you with counsel from the Word of God. Never make them your idol – keep your eyes on the Lord, but neither harshly criticize your pastor(s) or be a party to scheming against them. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 and 1 Timothy 5:17-19.

Also...

Love and appreciate the wife of each of the pastors. They hold no office in the church and have no authority – yet they are so important to their husbands’ ministries. They don’t seek recognition or special treatment.

V. THE CHURCH MAKES DECISIONS.

A true New Testament Baptist Church never *makes* laws – it simply follows its Lord’s commands as set forth in His Word. In a practical sense, a church often needs to make decisions in keeping with this principle. Unlike the hierarchical systems of many religious bodies, Baptist churches practice what is known as *Congregational* church government, where the congregation decides on a course of action.

A. **Look up Acts 6:1-5. Who chose the seven deacons?** _____

- B. *Look up Acts 1:15-26. What preceded the vote of the whole church in electing a successor to Judas? P_____.*
- C. *According to Matthew 18:17, what is the highest decision-making body in spiritual affairs? The C_____.*
- D. *In Matthew 18:18, the decisions of a church congregation are ratified in H_____.*

- a. Christians are to be law-abiding citizens (Romans 13:1-7).
 - b. Christians may disobey a civil law only in the case where they are compelled (by that civil law) to disobey God’s law (Acts 5:29).
2. Governments should not involve themselves with the establishment or support of any particular religious group, except to offer security and protection as it would for all citizens of the land.

VI. THE CHURCH IS AN INDEPENDENT INSTITUTION.

A. *Each New Testament Baptist Church is independent.*

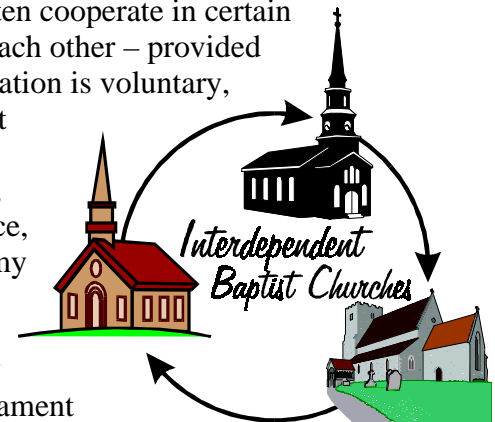
In Acts 15 the men from the church at Antioch came to the church at Jerusalem to consider a matter of extreme doctrinal importance. After they determined the teaching of God’s Word on the matter (verses 15-18), the issue was resolved. Even then, the church at Jerusalem HAD NO AUTHORITY over the church at Antioch. Their sentence was that “. . . we trouble not them . . .”; and they simply wrote a letter making a request (see verse 19).

This is vastly different from the hierarchical religious systems of man – wherein the various congregations of a denomination are controlled and dictated to by “higher authorities.”

- B. *Churches are to be separated from governments.*
 - 1. The Bible teaches separation between the spiritual and the secular institutions (see Matthew 22:21).

C. *Churches may scripturally cooperate with other churches.*

Independence does not mean isolationism. Baptist churches often cooperate in certain areas with each other – provided such cooperation is voluntary, and does not violate the sovereignty, independence, and autonomy of each church.



- 1. New Testament churches worked together to support missionaries. See Acts 11:22-26; 2 Corinthians 8:9-14.

Churches (plural) of G_____	Galatians 1:2
Churches (plural) of A_____	1 Corinthians 16:19
Churches (plural) of J_____	Galatians 1:22

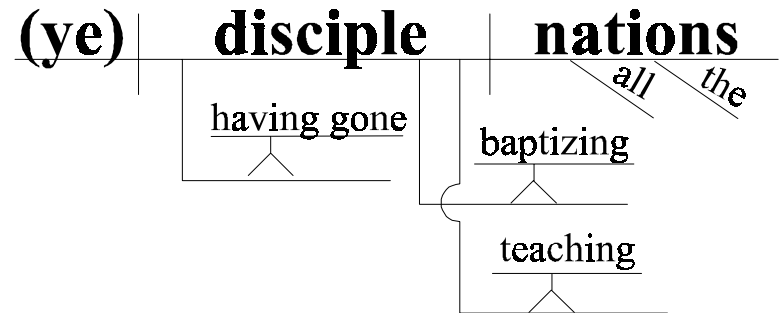
- 2. New Testament churches worked together in social relief. See 1 Corinthians 16:1-3;

Acts 11:27-30; Romans 15:25-26. This financial assistance was a gift, not a loan.

3. New Testament churches were involved in regional fellowship.
4. Read Colossians 4:16. Here were two churches that shared the Scriptures and other apostolic writings.

only – now the disciples are to reach out to the entire world population!

DIAGRAM of Matthew 28:19, 20



The commission is to make disciples of Christ of all peoples of the world. The church is to do more than just evangelize. Soul winning is the first step in “discipling” someone. They also need to be baptized and taught the *whole counsel of God*.

3. Jesus’ promise (Matthew 28:20) is to be with us A_____, even unto the E____!

B. This Great Commission is repeated in each of the Gospels and in the Book of Acts.

Read these passages and see exactly what the mission of a Baptist church is (Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; John 20:21; Acts 1:8).

VII. THE CHURCH IS A COMMISSIONED ORGANIZATION.

A. The church has been given a mission.

The Lord Jesus Christ established His churches to continue His work here on earth. This is not a social ministry, but a spiritual one. Just before the Lord returned to Heaven, He left His church with instructions known as the “Great Commission.”

1. Jesus’ authority (Matthew 28:18)
How much authority does Jesus have? _____

What is this authority?

In this verse, the word “power” is the Greek word *ekousia* (authority power), not *dunamis* (power or might) as a great conqueror would have. When Jesus *said*, “All power is given unto me...” He was speaking of having all authority.

2. Our responsibility (Matthew 28:19-20)
The commission in these verses is not the original authority to preach, baptize, and teach. It was already given (Mark 3:14; Matthew 10:5-6; John 3:22-26, 4:1-2), and that commission was to reach out to Israel

VIII. THE CHURCH HAS ORDINANCES.

A. BAPTISM was taught in Study #2.

B. The LORD’S SUPPER will be taught in Study #12.

IX. THE CHURCH IS TO BE FINANCED.

Financial stewardship will be taught in Study #13.

X. THE CHURCH AND YOU

Having learned these many things about the New Testament church, how should it be applied? Listed below are some practical instructions for you to receive great blessings from your church:

A. Join It.

1. It is God’s will for every born-again believer to be a member of a sound, Bible-believing, New Testament church.
2. Look up Acts 2:47. “The L___ added to the C___ D___ such as should be saved.”
3. Look up 1 Corinthians 12:18. God has S___ the M___ in the B___.

B. Love It.

A Christian ought to love the things his Lord loves. Look up Ephesians 5:25. Christ L___ the C___ and G___ Himself for it.

C. Support It.

1. Your church is the place where you will grow, find comfort and fellowship, and serve the Lord. Write out Hebrews 10:25.



2. Plan now to attend as many of the services and meetings of your church as you can. Decide in your heart never to miss a service unless providentially hindered.

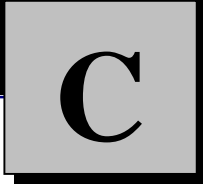
Ask yourself these questions:

If everyone in the church (from pastor down) was as committed to the church as I am, would it continue to thrive? Would as much ministry get done? Would as many people receive Christ? Would attendance on Sunday and Wednesday nights increase or decrease? Would the church be as financially prepared to spread the gospel to the ends of the earth?

SPIRITUAL GROWTH ASSIGNMENT:

- Read your D Lesson (Daily Walk) and answer all the questions.
- Continue reading the Gospel of John *at your own pace*.
- Take sermon notes using your *Spiritual Journal* and be prepared to share highlights next week.
- Where would you like to meet for next week’s session? Be sure to bring your Bible, pen, D Lesson, and *Spiritual Journal*.

Discipler Report Back



I met with _____ on
____/____/____ and reviewed the contents of this
lesson. My comments regarding the discipleship time
together are:

*(make comments only if they are needed to help the Pastoral
staff assist you in ministering to this person)*

Discipler's Name _____

*Please drop this off at the Hospitality Booth in the
church foyer on the first service after conducting
this session. This will help the Pastoral staff stay
current with the status of our new converts and
new members being disciplined.*

Thank You