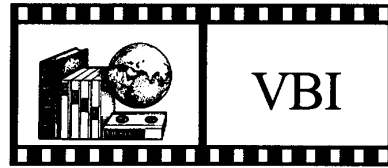
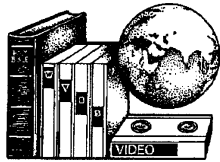


# World Video Bible School®

Established 1986



## THE ONE TRUE CHURCH

*This set of notes is designed to be used by non-credit students of World Video Bible School® and correspondent students enrolled in the Video Bible Institute (VBI). VBI students should pay particular attention to the syllabus. Students not taking the course for credit may bypass the syllabus and use the notes as they see fit for their spiritual enrichment.*



World Video Bible School® / Video Bible Institute  
130 Lantana Lane  
Maxwell, Texas 78656-4231

512+398-5211 (voice)  
512+398-9493 (fax)  
[biblestudy@wvbs.org](mailto:biblestudy@wvbs.org)  
<http://www.wvbs.org>

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# **THE ONE TRUE CHURCH**

## **SYLLABUS**

### **I. GENERAL INFORMATION.**

- A. Instructor: Rod Rutherford.
- B. This course consists of 18 lessons on 6 DVDs.
- C. Each class is approximately 38 minutes long.

### **II. DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE.**

- A. This course is an in-depth study of the church of Christ in the New Testament.
- B. Much attention will be focused on the worship, organization and terms of entrance into the church of the New Testament.

### **III. INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS.**

- A. Required.
  - 1. Bible (ASV, KJV or NKJV).
  - 2. 18 video lessons.
  - 3. Spiral bound book, *The One True Church*, by Rod Rutherford.
- b. Optional.

Brownlow, Leroy. *Why I Am A Member Of The Church Of Christ*. Fort Worth. Brownlow Publishing Co. 1945.

### **IV. REQUIREMENTS.**

- A. View each video lesson in its entirety.
- B. Read the spiral bound course notes in their entirety (it is good to go through the notes at the same time you view the lessons, adding your own notes as needed).
- C. Complete all memory work (explained below).

- D. Submit a term paper (explained below).
- E. Take two written tests.
- F. Have a combined grade average of at least 70.

## **V. MEMORY WORK.**

- A. Memory verses must be written (or typed) from memory, then mailed to VBI for grading. Verses must come from the ASV, KJV or NKJV, according to what you indicated on your original VBI application.
- B. All verses must be written out or typed at one sitting. You may study more and start over if you make a mistake, but you must still start again from the beginning and write all the verses at one sitting.
- C. The following verses must be memorized:
  - Daniel 2:44
  - Matthew 16:18,19
  - Acts 2:38
  - Acts 20:7
  - Romans 16:16
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 16:1,2
  - Ephesians 4:4-6
  - Ephesians 5:19
  - Colossians 1:18
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:15
- D. Memory work is due when you mail VBI your second written test.
- E. Hint: A good method of memorizing is to write the verses on flash cards that can be easily reviewed throughout the course.

## **VI. TESTS.**

- A. There are two tests. The first covers chapters 1-9 in the book. The second covers chapters 10-18.
- B. When you get about halfway through the book (or shortly before), you may contact VBI and request that the test be mailed to you. When you near the end of the course, contact us and request the second test.
- C. When you receive a test, you have permission to look at it and study it.

- D. However, when you take a test, you must do so completely from memory, with no help from notes, Bible, etc.

## **VII. TERM PAPER.**

- A. Choose *one* of the following and write a paper on it:

The Worship of the Church  
The Organization of the Church  
How to Enter the Church

- B. The paper should be a minimum of seven pages, typed and double spaced. If handwritten, the paper should be a minimum of ten pages, single spaced.
- C. The paper is due when you mail VBI your second test and memory work.

## **VIII. GRADING.**

- A. Memory work, term paper and tests will be graded separately.
- B. Final grade is based on an average of all assigned work.
- C. You may request that a grade be explained or reconsidered, but in any case VBI will have the final say.

## **IX. CREDIT.**

- A. Credit will be issued, including a certificate, only after all work has been successfully completed, tapes have been returned (if rented) and all fees for this particular course have been paid in full.
- B. We pray this study of The One True Church has been helpful in your journey to heaven!



# **THE ONE TRUE CHURCH**

## **A Study of the Church of Christ in the New Testament**

### **LESSON ONE: JESUS CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH**

#### **Introduction:**

1. Sincere seekers of truth are bewildered by the thousands of different denominations in the world today.
  - a. Each denomination (sect, or religious body) teaches a doctrine which is different from all the others.
  - b. Each denomination wears a special name to distinguish it from all the other denominations.
  - c. Each denomination worships in a different manner from all the others.
  - d. Yet, all of these different denominations claim to be following Christ!
2. Are all churches right?
  - a. Is one church as good as another?
  - b. If not, which church is the right church?
  - c. Is it possible to find the one, true church today?
3. The existence of this multitude of conflicting denominations is not pleasing to God!
  - a. God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33).
  - b. Jesus prayed that all who believe in Him would be one (John 17:17-23).
    - (1) Surely unity is possible if the Lord prayed for it.
    - (2) Unity is essential in order that "the world may believe...."
    - (3) Unity is possible if it is based upon the Word of God.
4. We must go to the Bible to find the one, true church.

- a. We must test all things by the Word of God (Isa. 8:19,20; 1 Thess. 5:21).
- b. We must accept Jesus Christ as our only authority in religion (Matt. 28:18; Luke 6:46; John 14:15; 15:14; Acts 2:36; Col. 3:17; Heb. 5:8,9).

**Discussion:**

**I. CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH CAN NOT BE SEPARATED!**

- A. Some want Christ, but they do not want His church.
  - 1. They say, "Jesus, yes! The church, no!"
  - 2. Many teach: "Just accept Jesus as your personal Savior and then join the church of your choice."
- B. Christ and His church are bound together. One can not have the church without Christ, or Christ without the church!
  - 1. Christ is the head; the church is His body. A head can not live if it is severed from the body, nor can the body live without its head (Eph. 1:22,23; 1 Cor. 12:20).
  - 2. Christ is the King; the church is His kingdom (Matt. 16:18,19; Col. 1:13; 1 Tim. 6:15).
  - 3. Christ is the Bridegroom; the church is His bride (2 Cor. 11:1,2; Rev. 19:7; 22:17).
  - 4. Christ is the Shepherd; the church is His flock (John 10:11; 1 Pet. 5:4).
  - 5. Christ is the Owner; the church is His possession; the purchase price was His blood (Acts 20:28).
  - 6. Christ is the Builder; the church is His building (Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 3:9; Eph. 2:19-22).
- C. One can not be in Christ without being in His church!
  - 1. The Lord adds to His church all who obey the gospel (Acts 2:38, 41, 47).
  - 2. All spiritual blessings are in Christ (Eph. 1:3).

- a. We are baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:26,27).
  - b. We are baptized into His body, the church (1 Cor. 12:13).
- 3. Christ is the Savior; the church is the saved (Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:23).
- 4. All men are reconciled to God by Jesus Christ in the church (Eph. 2:14-16; 1:22,23).
- 5. Philip preached Christ in Samaria (Acts 8:5).
  - a. He preached the kingdom, which is the church (Acts 8:12; Matt. 16:18,19).
  - b. Therefore, in order to preach Christ, one must preach His church!

## **II. THE CHURCH IS PART OF GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE TO SAVE MAN!**

- A. There are two widely held, but mistaken, views about the church today.
  - 1. Some say Jesus was merely a teacher whose followers formed the church to perpetuate His teachings after His death.
  - 2. Others believe Christ came to establish His kingdom, but failed because the Jews rejected Him.
    - a. He then established the church as a temporary measure until the time was right for Him to return to establish His earthly reign.
    - b. This theory impugns the wisdom and power of God.
    - c. If Christ failed the first time, might He not fail the second?
- B. God's plan of redemption began "before the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8; Eph. 3:8-11).

## **III. CHRIST'S CHURCH IS NOT A DENOMINATION!**

- A. The word "church" in the New Testament, when used in reference to the saved, is used in only two senses:
  - 1. Universal: all the saved everywhere are included (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22,23).

2. Local: the saved in a geographic area who meet as one assembly to worship and serve (1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1).
- B. A denomination is not the universal church, but only claims to be a part of it along with all other denominations.
  1. A denomination is not a local church, but is made up of local churches.
  2. A denomination is smaller than the universal church, but larger than the local church.
  3. "Church" is never used in a denominational sense in the New Testament; therefore, denominations exist without Scriptural authority.
  4. The one, true church of Christ is not a denomination. It is the universal church, which is composed of all the saved, and is made up of local churches which meet in various places all over the world.

**Conclusion:**

1. Can we find the one, true church today?
2. The Word of God is the seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:11).
3. Wherever the pure seed is planted in the world today, the same harvest will be produced which was produced in the first century (Gen. 1:11,12).
4. In the early part of this century archaeologists opened a tomb in Egypt which was 3,000 years old.
  - a. They found wheat seed in it which was perfectly preserved.
  - b. Some of this seed was given to William Jennings Bryan, the statesman.
  - c. Bryan planted it on his farm in Nebraska.
  - d. It produced the same harvest in Nebraska it had produced in ancient Egypt.
5. If we plant the seed of the kingdom today in honest hearts it will produce today what it did in the first century, i.e. the one, true church.

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. How can one find the one true church today?
2. Why can we not have Christ without the church?
3. What is the kingdom?
4. What did Philip preach in Samaria?
5. What are two widely held, but mistaken, views about the church today?
6. Why are they wrong?
7. When did God's plan to redeem lost man first begin?
8. In which two senses is the word "church" used in the New Testament?
9. Is "church" ever used in a denominational sense in the New Testament?
10. How can the true New Testament church be produced today?
11. Where are all spiritual blessings found?
12. How does one get into Christ?
13. How does one get into the church?
14. Is it possible for one to be a member of the one, true church today? How?



## **LESSON TWO: THE PATTERN FOR THE CHURCH**

### **Introduction:**

1. There are thousands of different denominations in the world today.
2. Among the confusion and chaos of conflicting and competing churches, does the Lord's one, true church exist?
3. If the original church built by Jesus is still in existence, how can we find it?
4. We must first go to the Bible to learn what the church is like so that we will have a model by which we can identify it today.
5. The Lord's church is built according to the pattern; there is a model for it in the word of God.

### **Discussion:**

#### **I. WHAT IS A PATTERN?**

- A. According to Webster's Dictionary, a pattern is: "...something to be imitated; a person or thing considered worthy of imitation or copying; a model or plan used as a guide in making things...."
- B. Patterns are essential in building and manufacturing.
  1. Architects draw up patterns (blueprints) for the construction of large buildings.
  2. Manufacturers use patterns (molds) to make thousands of parts, all of which are exactly alike.
  3. Tailors and seamstresses follow patterns to make articles of clothing.
  4. If the pattern is followed exactly, the same article will be produced every time.

#### **II. GOD HAS ALWAYS GIVEN A PATTERN WHEN HE WANTED SOMETHING BUILT.**

- A. God gave Noah a pattern for the ark (Gen. 6:13-16, 22).
- B. God gave Moses a pattern for the tabernacle (Ex. 25:9,40; Heb. 8:5).

- C. God gave David and Solomon a pattern for the temple (1Chron. 28:11,12, 19, 20).
- D. God has also given a pattern for His church.
  - 1. The ark, tabernacle and temple were all types of the church.
  - 2. There is a “form” (pattern) of doctrine which one must obey to be saved (Rom. 6:16-18).
  - 3. Paul taught the same doctrine everywhere, in every church (1 Cor. 4:17; 14:37; 1 Tim. 1:3).
  - 4. Paul admonished Christians to “hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me...” (2 Tim. 1:13).

### **III. THE NEW TESTAMENT IS THE PATTERN FOR GOD’S CHURCH.**

- A. God’s word is not like the words of men!
  - 1. His word is inspired (“God breathed”); (2 Sam. 23:2; Jer. 1:9; Matt. 10:19,20; John 16:13; 2 Tim. 3:16,17).
  - 2. His word is inerrant (fixed and infallible); (Psa. 119:89; Prov. 30:5; John 10:35).
  - 3. It is immutable (unchanging); (Psa. 119:89; Mal. 3:6; Titus 1:2; Jude 3).
  - 4. It is eternal (everlasting); (Matt. 24:35; Jude 3).
- B. God’s word is the standard by which all will be judged at the Last Day (John 12:48; Rom. 2:16; Rev. 20:12).
- C. Just as the Old Testament was God’s Law for Israel, so the New Testament is God’s Law for us today.
  - 1. The Law of God was given through Moses to Israel at Mt. Sinai (Ex. 20; Deut. 5:1- 5).
  - 2. The prophets who lived under the old covenant predicted that God would make a new covenant (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:6-13).
  - 3. The Law of Moses was our tutor to bring us to Christ (Gal. 3:23-25).

4. It was “nailed to the cross” (Col. 2:14).
5. The church of Christ was prophesied in the Old Testament, but came in perfection in the New Testament.

#### **IV. WE MUST FOLLOW THE PATTERN EXACTLY IF WE WANT TO BUILD THE LORD’S CHURCH TODAY.**

- A. We must not teach “another” gospel (Gal. 1:6-9).
- B. We must “abide in the doctrine” of Christ (2 John 9-11).
- C. We must “contend earnestly for **the** faith” (Jude 3).
- D. We must not “add to” or “take away from” the teachings of God’s word (Rev. 22:18,19).

#### **V. THE LORD’S CHURCH CAN BE RESTORED TODAY!**

- A. Old buildings, paintings and cars are restored by going back to the original pattern.
- B. Reformation is *not* restoration!
  1. To reform is “to make better by removing faults and defects.”
  2. The aim of the Protestant Reformation was to reform the apostate Roman Catholic Church by correcting its worst abuses.
  3. To restore is “to bring back to a former or normal position.”
  4. We can completely restore the New Testament church in all its divinely given essentials by following the pattern, which is the New Testament.
- C. The concept of restoration is illustrated in the Old Testament example of Josiah, the boy king (2 Kings 23; 2 Chron. 34, 35).
  1. He returned to the word of God.
  2. He removed the rubbish of idolatry and false teaching.
  3. He restored the faultless faith and pure practice of God’s word.

## **Conclusion:**

1. We **can** find the one, true church today!
2. God has given the pattern for His church in the New Testament.
3. If we follow the pattern, without addition or subtraction, we can **restore** the church of Christ in the New Testament in all its divinely given essentials.

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. According to Webster, what is a “pattern?”
2. What do architects, manufacturers and seamstresses have in common?
3. Name four things for which God has given a pattern.
4. What did Paul teach everywhere in every church?
5. Why was Timothy left by Paul at Ephesus?
6. What did Paul admonish Christians to hold fast?
7. What are four things which distinguish the word of God from the words of men?
8. Which Old Testament prophet foretold that God would make a new covenant with His people?
9. Where is this prophecy found in the Old Testament?
10. Where is it quoted in the New Testament?
11. When did the Old Covenant end?
12. What is the result of not abiding in the doctrine of Christ?
13. What, according to Paul, should happen to one who perverted the gospel?
14. What will happen to one who adds to or takes away from the word of God?
15. What will be the standard of judgment at the Last Day?
16. What does the word “inspired” mean?
17. What is the difference between “reform” and “restore”?

## **LESSON THREE: DESCRIPTIONS OF THE CHURCH**

### **Introduction:**

1. Can we find the one, true church today?
2. We can find it because the pattern for it is given in the New Testament.
3. How can we recognize the Lord's church? What is the church? What is it like?
4. The New Testament describes the church in various ways:
  - a. The "called out;" an assembly or congregation.
  - b. The kingdom of heaven; the kingdom of God; the kingdom of Christ.
  - c. The house or household (family) of God.
  - d. The body of Christ.
  - e. The temple of God.
  - f. A holy nation; a royal priesthood.
5. Each of these descriptions of the church helps us to see a different aspect of its nature.

### **Discussion:**

#### **I. THE CHURCH IS THE "CALLED OUT" CONGREGATION.**

- A. "Church" is from the Greek word "ecclesia" (Matt. 16:18).
  1. "Ek" = out of.
  2. "Kaleo" = call
- B. The church is called out of sin and slavery to Satan and into the service and freedom of Jesus Christ.
  1. By definition, "church" is an assembly, a congregation.
  2. In reference to God's people, "church" is used in only two ways in the New Testament:

- a. Universal: all the saved everywhere in the world (Matt. 16:18).
- b. Local: the saved in one locality who meet together to worship the Lord and to do His work (1 Cor. 1:2).
- 3. The word “church” *is never* used in the New Testament in the sense of a denomination!

## II. THE CHURCH IS THE KINGDOM.

- A. “Church” and “kingdom” are used interchangeably in the New Testament (Matt. 16:18; 26:29; 1 Cor. 11:20-34).
  - 1. When “kingdom of heaven” is used, it refers to the origin of the church (Matt. 3:2; 4:17).
  - 2. When “kingdom of God” is used, it refers to the Divine Architect Who planned the church from the foundation of the world (Matt. 6:33; 26: 29).
  - 3. When “kingdom of Christ” is used, it refers to the Builder, Purchaser and Head of the church (John 18:36; Col. 1:13).
- B. A kingdom has four essential features:
  - 1. A king.
  - 2. Territory.
  - 3. Subjects (citizens).
  - 4. A law.
- C. The kingdom of heaven has all of these:
  - 1. Christ is the King (1 Cor. 15:25,26; 1 Tim. 6:15).
  - 2. The territory is the world (Matt. 28:18; Rev. 1:5).
  - 3. The subjects are Christians (Matt. 13:38; Eph. 2:19; Phil. 3:20; John 3:5).
  - 4. The law is the New Testament (1 Cor. 9:19-21; Gal. 6:2; Jas. 1:25).

- D. The man-made doctrine that Christ is coming to set up His kingdom on earth is false because:
  - 1. The kingdom has already come (Acts 2:33-36; Col. 1:13; Rev. 1:9).
  - 2. Christ's kingdom is *not* an earthly kingdom (John 18:36).
  - 3. When Jesus comes again, He will deliver the kingdom back to God (1 Cor. 15:24).

### **III. THE CHURCH IS THE HOUSEHOLD (FAMILY) OF GOD.**

- A. The church is called God's house (Eph. 2:19; 1 Tim. 3:14,15).
- B. God is our Father (Rom. 8:15; 1 Cor. 8:6; 2 Cor. 6:18; Eph. 4:6).
- C. Christians are the children of God (Rom. 8:14; Gal. 3:26; Phil. 2:15; 1 John 3:1,2).
- D. We become God's children by:
  - 1. Being born again (John 3:3-5; Gal. 3:26,27).
  - 2. Being adopted (Rom. 8:14-17).

### **IV. THE CHURCH IS THE BODY OF CHRIST.**

- A. Christ is the Head Who gives direction to the body (Eph. 1:22,23; Col. 1:18; Eph. 5:23,24).
- B. Christians are members who make up the body (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:20).
- C. Each member has a work to do which is essential to the proper function of the whole body (1 Cor. 12:14-22).
  - 1. If one member suffers, all suffer with it (1 Cor. 12:26).
  - 2. If one member is honored, all are honored with it (Rom. 12:15).
- D. There is complete unity in the body (1 Cor. 12:25).
- E. There is only one body, just as there is only one Head (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:4).

- F. The only way to enter the body is by being baptized into it (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:5).

## **V. THE CHURCH IS GOD'S TEMPLE.**

- A. In the Old Testament, the temple was a physical building where God's people came to worship Him (2 Chron. 3:1 - 7:16).
- B. In the New Testament, God's temple is a spiritual building, which is made up of God's people (1 Cor. 3:9).
  - 1. It is built with "living stones" (1 Pet. 2:5).
  - 2. It is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:19-22).
  - 3. The Spirit of God dwells in it (1 Cor. 3:16,17).

## **VI. THE CHURCH IS A HOLY NATION AND A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD.**

- A. Christians are citizens of two kingdoms while living on earth (Matt. 22:21).
  - 1. We are citizens of the earthly nation where we were born or naturalized.
  - 2. We are citizens of Christ's kingdom, which transcends all national boundaries and political allegiances.
- B. The church is God's chosen nation today just as Israel was His chosen nation in the Old Testament (Deut. 7:6; Gal. 3:29; 6:16; 1 Pet. 2:5,9; Rev. 1:6).
- C. Our citizenship is in heaven where our King is (Phil. 3:20).

## **Conclusion:**

- 1. We can learn what the church is like by looking at some of the figures used to describe it in the New Testament.
  - a. It is the "called out" because its members are called out of Satan's kingdom into the kingdom of Jesus Christ.
  - b. It is the "kingdom" because Christ reigns over it as King, Christians are His subjects, and the New Testament is His law.

- c. It is the “family” or “household” of God because God is our Father, all Christians are our brothers, and we come into the family by being born again.
  - d. It is the “body of Christ” because He is the Head and Christians are members who make up the one body.
  - e. It is the “temple of God,” which is built of living stones upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ as the chief cornerstone.
  - f. It is a “holy nation” made up of kings and priests whose citizenship is in heaven.
2. We can find the one, true church today if we can find one which fits the descriptions given in the New Testament.

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

- 1. What are some of the figures used in the New Testament to describe the church?
- 2. What does the word “church” mean?
- 3. In reference to the saved, how many ways is “church” used in the New Testament? What are they?
- 4. Is “church” ever used in the New Testament to refer to a denomination?
- 5. Prove that “church” and “kingdom” are used interchangeably in the New Testament.
- 6. What are four essential features of a kingdom?
- 7. How do people enter God's family?
- 8. Who is the head of the church?



## LESSON FOUR: THE CHURCH IN PURPOSE, PROPHECY, PREPARATION and PERFECTION

### Introduction:

1. We continue our search for the one, true church by looking for its origin:
  - a. When did it begin?
  - b. Where did it begin?
  - c. By whom was it established?
2. We shall learn four things about the beginning of the church:
  - a. The church was **purposed** by God from the beginning of time.
  - b. The church was **prophesied** in the Old Testament.
  - c. The church was **prepared** by John and by Jesus.
  - d. The church came in **perfection** on the first Pentecost following the resurrection and ascension of Christ.

### Discussion:

#### I. THE CHURCH WAS PURPOSED BY GOD.

- A. Christians (members of the church) were chosen in Christ “before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4).
  1. Some think “the foundation of the world” refers to the beginning of the Christian age.
  2. It is parallel with “eternal purpose” in Eph. 3:11.
  3. Peter makes a distinction between “foundation of the world” and “these last times” (the Christian dispensation); (1 Pet. 1:20).
  4. Jesus equated “the foundation of the world” with the time of Abel, the son of Adam and Eve (Luke 11:50,51).
- B. Those who teach the church was merely “a spiritual contingency,” or “the vestibule of the kingdom” are clearly mistaken!

## II. THE CHURCH WAS PROPHESED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

- A. God promised David He would place David's son on his throne (2 Sam. 7:12,13; Acts 2:29,30).
- B. Joel promised the coming of God's Spirit (Joel 2:28 - 32 ).
  - 1. The Spirit would be poured out "afterward" ("in the last days"); (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17).
  - 2. Whoever would call on the name of the Lord would be saved (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:37,38).
- C. Isaiah foretold the building of God's house (Isa. 2:2,3).
  - 1. It would happen "in the last days."
  - 2. God's house (church) would be established.
  - 3. All nations would come into it (Matt. 28:19,20).
  - 4. The word of the Lord would go out from Jerusalem (Acts 1:8).
- D. Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan. 2:31-45).
  - 1. Nebuchadnezzar had seen a great image made up of four different elements:
    - a. The head of gold represented Babylon.
    - b. The breast and arms of silver represented the Medo-Persian Empire.
    - c. The belly and thighs of brass represented the Greek (Macedonian) Empire.
    - d. The legs of iron and feet of iron and clay represented the Roman Empire.
  - 2. "In the days of these kings" (Rome), God would set up His kingdom which would never be destroyed (Dan. 2:44).
- E. We have seen six things which were prophesied about the coming of Christ's kingdom or church.

1. The son of David would sit on the throne of an eternal kingdom.
2. God's Spirit would be poured out at the beginning of the church.
3. It would take place "in the last days."
4. It would be during the reign of the Roman rulers.
5. Salvation would then be available to those who called on the Lord's name.
6. The word of God would be sent forth from Jerusalem.

### **III. THE CHURCH WAS PREPARED BY JOHN AND BY JESUS.**

- A. John preached: "The kingdom is at hand (very near);" (Matt. 3:1,2).
  1. John came to prepare the way for Christ (Mal. 3:1; 4:5,6; Matt. 11:7 - 10 ).
  2. John was not in the kingdom; therefore it was not established in his day (Matt. 11:11).
  3. After John was killed, Jesus promised to build His church; therefore, the church was not built during the ministry of John (Matt. 14:1-12; 16:16 -18 ).
- B. Jesus began His public ministry preaching, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17).
  1. He taught His disciples to pray for the coming of the kingdom Matt. 6:9,10).
  2. He foretold that some of His contemporaries would still be living when His kingdom came (Mark 9:1).
  3. After His resurrection, He commanded the apostles to wait in Jerusalem (Acts 1:4-8).
    - a. They would be baptized in the Holy Spirit.
    - b. They would be His witnesses to all the world.
  4. The kingdom would come with power (Mark 9:1).

- a. The power would come with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).
- b. Therefore, the kingdom would come when the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles.

#### **IV. THE CHURCH CAME IN PERFECTION ON PENTECOST.**

- A. All prophecies pertaining to the coming of the church were fulfilled on this occasion (Acts 2).
  - 1. It was “in the last days” - the Christian dispensation (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:16,17).
  - 2. It was during the reign of the Roman rulers (Dan. 2:44; Luke 2:1; 3:1).
  - 3. It was in Jerusalem (Joel 2:32; Isa. 2:1,3).
  - 4. The Holy Spirit was poured out upon the apostles (Joel 2:28; Mark 9:1; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; 2:1-16).
  - 5. The Son of David (Christ) was reigning at the right hand of God (2 Sam. 7:12,13; Matt. 1:6-16; Luke 3:23-31; Acts 2:30,31).
  - 6. Salvation was available to all who called upon the name of the Lord (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:37,38).
  - 7. The word of God went forth from Jerusalem to all the world (Isa. 2:3; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; Col. 1:23).
- B. God’s church had begun; henceforth, all who are saved are added to it (Acts 2:41, 47).

#### **Conclusion:**

- 1. The Lord’s church began in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ when 3,000 souls called on the name of the Lord by repenting and being baptized for the remissions of sins and were added by the Lord to His church.
- 2. Any church which began at any other time or place is not the one, true church!
- 3. We can be added by the same Lord to the same church today by obeying the same gospel in the same way!

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What does “the foundation of the world” refer to?
2. Who prophesied that God would pour out His Spirit in the last days?
3. When and where did the Lord’s church begin?
4. How does one enter the church?
5. Was John the Baptist ever in the church?
6. Did the church come during the personal ministry of Jesus?
7. Who foretold that the church would come in the days when Rome ruled?



## LESSON FIVE: THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH (1)

### Introduction:

1. We are seeking to find the one, true church by going to the New Testament pattern to learn its marks of identification.
2. Since the church is made up of saved people, and saved people worship God, we must find the New Testament pattern of worship for it will be a key mark of identification of the true church.

### Discussion:

#### I. WHAT IS WORSHIP?

- A. Some say, "Everything we do is worship."
  1. They confuse **worship** with **service**.
  2. Abraham told his servants: "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship" (Gen. 22:5).
    - a. He had traveled for three days, but he did not consider it to be worship.
    - b. He was going to worship by offering a sacrifice.
- B. Worship is a specific act or acts of homage rendered to God.
  1. "The adoration, homage or veneration given to a deity; the rites, ceremonial forms, prayers, etc. such adoration requires or assumes" (*Funk and Wagnall Standard Desk Dictionary*).
  2. The Greek word "proskuneo," the common New Testament word for worship, means "to kiss, to make obedience, to do reverence, to worship (Abbott-Smith's *Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*).

#### II. WHO IS THE OBJECT OF OUR WORSHIP?

- A. Man worships many things:
  1. Idols (Isa. 44:14-17; Gal. 5:19-21; 1 John 5:21; Rev. 21:8).
  2. Success, money, power, fame (Col. 3:5; 1 John 2:15-17).

3. Self (Matt. 16:24; 2 Tim. 3:1,2).
  4. Fellow human beings (Acts 10:25,26).
  5. Angels (Col. 2:18; Rev. 22:8,9).
- B. The Godhead (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) is the only Being worthy of man's worship (Ex. 20:1-6; 34:14; Psa. 29:2; Matt. 4:10; Heb. 1:6; Rev. 4:9-11).

### **III. HOW SHALL WE WORSHIP GOD?**

- A. We must worship Him "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23,24).
1. "In spirit" means we must have the right attitude of heart.
  2. "In spirit" also means we must approach God out of a pure life (Isa. 1:10-17; 1 Tim. 2:8).
  3. "In truth" means that we only engage in those acts of worship which are according to the truth, i.e. authorized by the word of God (John 17:17; Col. 3:17).
- B. We must worship according to the New Testament pattern.
1. Under the Old Testament, many things were practiced in worship which are not authorized for Christians.
    - a. Keeping the Sabbath (Ex. 20:8-11).
    - b. Keeping various feasts and holy days (Ex. 23:14-18; Lev. 16; 23).
    - c. Worshiping at the temple in Jerusalem (1 Kings 8:25-53).
    - d. Animal sacrifices and vegetable offerings (Lev. 1-7).
    - e. Tithing (Lev. 27:30; Deut. 26:12,13).
    - f. Instruments of music, choirs and dancing (1 Chron. 25:1-7; 2 Chron. 29:25; Psa. 150).
    - g. A separate priesthood (Ex. 28:1 - 29:1).
  2. The Old Testament pattern of worship is no longer binding today.

- a. Worship is not tied to a building or place (John 4:20-24).
- b. All Christians are priests (1 Pet. 2:5,9; Rev. 1:6).
- c. The Old Law was taken away at the cross along with its worship and feast days (Col. 2:13-17; Heb. 7:12).

#### IV. WHEN SHALL WE WORSHIP GOD?

- A. Christians can, and should, worship God every day.
  - 1. We must “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess 5:17).
  - 2. Daily Bible study should be the practice of every Christian (Acts 17:11; 1 Pet. 2:2).
  - 3. Singing praises to God can be done any time of the day or night (Jas. 5:13; Acts 16:25).
- B. Some acts of worship are limited to the first day of the week (Acts 20:7).
- C. The first day of the week is especially set aside by God as a day of worship.
  - 1. Christ arose from the dead on the first day of the week (Luke 24:1).
  - 2. Christ met with His disciples on the first day of the week (John 20:24-26).
  - 3. The church of Christ began on Pentecost, which always came on the first day of the week (Acts 2:1; Lev. 23:5,6, 15, 16).
  - 4. The disciples met to worship on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1,2).
  - 5. By the end of the first century, the first day of the week was commonly called “The Lord’s Day” by Christians (Rev. 1:10).
    - a. “The early disciples met ‘on the first day of the week’ to observe this simple rite (the Lord’s Supper - RR ). Many authorities could be called to prove the truthfulness of this statement, but it is not called in question by anyone who has carefully investigated the subject” (George A. Klingman, *Church History for Busy People*, p. 86).

- b. “The ante-Nicene writers who wrote after John followed a consistent pattern in considering ‘the first day,’ ‘the Lord’s day,’ the ‘resurrection day,’ and the day of meeting, Sunday, as identical” (Homer Hailey, *Revelation*, p. 107).
- D. Some argue that the Sabbath (Saturday, the seventh day) is the day of worship required of the church just as it was of Israel.
  - 1. They credit either Constantine or the Pope with changing the day.
  - 2. Constantine made Sunday an official day of rest because this was the day the Christians already used as a special day of meeting for worship.
  - 3. The sabbatarians do not understand the law has been changed and we are no longer under the Sabbath law today (Heb. 7:12).
  - 4. The Old Covenant (of which the Sabbath was a part) has been replaced by the New Covenant (Heb. 8:6-13).
  - 5. Nine of the ten commandments are found again in the New Covenant; the only one missing is the fourth: “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.”
- D. The command to keep the Sabbath day implied that **every** Sabbath day was to be kept; the same is true with the first day of **every** week (1 Cor. 16:2).

### **Conclusion:**

- 1. One of the ways we can identify the one, true church today is by its worship.
- 2. The church of Christ worships in spirit and in truth.
- 3. The only authorized special day of worship is the first day of the week.

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

- 1. Prove by the Scriptures that not everything we do is worship.
- 2. What are some of the things men worship?
- 3. What are two requirements of acceptable worship, according to Jesus?

4. What is the meaning of worship “in spirit?”
5. What is the meaning of worship “in truth?”
6. What are some Old Testament worship practices which are not acceptable today?
7. What are some acts of worship which Christians can and should do every day?
8. Prove that the first day of the week is the special day Christians are required to worship.
9. Answer the false contention that Constantine changed the day of worship.
10. How many of the ten commandments are found again in the New Testament? Which one is omitted?
11. Who is the only acceptable object of worship?
12. Prove by the Scriptures that it is wrong to worship angels.



## **LESSON SIX: THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH (2)**

### **Introduction:**

1. A key mark of identification of the one, true church is its worship.
2. Two things are essential for our worship to be pleasing to God (John 4:24):
  - a. Right attitude (in spirit).
  - b. Right acts (in truth).
3. The Lord's Supper is a required act of worship in the New Testament pattern.

### **Discussion:**

#### **I. WHAT IS THE LORD'S SUPPER?**

- A. It is a memorial (Matt. 26:26-28).
  1. Men erect monuments to commemorate important events.
  2. The purpose of the Lord's Supper is to bring to our remembrance the Savior's death for our sins.
  3. "This do...in remembrance of Me" (1 Cor. 11:23 - 25).
- B. Its elements are unleavened bread and fruit of the vine.
  1. Jesus instituted the Supper during the Jewish Feast of the Passover (Luke 22:14-20; Ex. 12:1-20).
  2. Unleavened (made without yeast, i.e. fermentation) bread was used by the Lord to symbolize His sinless body (Ex. 12:15; 1 Cor.5: 6-8).
  3. Fruit of the vine (grape juice) was used to symbolize His blood, which was shed for our sins (Matt. 26:28; Rev. 1:5).

#### **II. WHAT ARE THE NAMES BY WHICH IT IS KNOWN IN THE BIBLE?**

- A. Some of the common denominational names for the Lord's Supper are:
  1. The Eucharist (comes from the Greek word for giving thanks).

2. The Mass (Roman Catholic name for the service which includes communion).
    - a. Roman Catholics teach transubstantiation (the doctrine that the bread and wine become the literal body and blood of Christ when the priest prays over them; thus Christ, in effect, is sacrificed again).
    - b. Christ was once (Greek = Hapax, "once for all") offered for our sins (Heb. 9:28).
    - c. Jesus is using a figure of speech called a "metaphor" (one thing is said to be another) when He says, "This is My body," "This is my blood;" the meaning is, "This **represents** My body, My blood" (Matt. 26:26-28).
  3. The sacrament (a religious rite by which grace is given).
    - a. The Lord's Supper is never called a sacrament in the New Testament.
    - b. It is a **memorial**, not a means of receiving grace!
  4. If we will call Scriptural things by Scriptural names, we will eliminate much misunderstanding and confusion.
- B. The Lord's Supper is called "the breaking of bread (Acts 2:42; 20:7).
1. This is a synecdoche (the part stands for the whole).
    - a. "Breaking of bread" includes drinking the cup.
    - b. "Cup" is a metonymy (a figure of speech where the container stands for that which is contained).
- C. The Lord's Supper is also called "communion" (1 Cor. 10:16,17).
1. "Communion" comes from the Greek "koinonia," which means "joint participation, fellowship" (Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol. IV, pp. 154, 155).
  2. The unity of the church is shown in the Lord's Supper since all eat of the same loaf and drink from the same cup.
- D. It is called "the Lord's table" (1 Cor. 10:21).

1. "Table" is a metonymy (the object is called by that upon which it is placed).
  2. The "Lord's Table" does not mean the literal table, but the communion which is placed upon the table.
- E. It is also called "the Lord's Supper" (1 Cor. 11:20).
1. It belongs to the Lord.
    - a. It was instituted by Him.
    - b. It commemorates His death for our sins.
  2. It is a "supper" i.e. a meal to be eaten.

### III. WHEN AND HOW OFTEN SHOULD THE SUPPER BE EATEN?

- A. Denominations vary in their time and frequency of observance.
1. Some partake daily; others weekly; several monthly or quarterly.
  2. Some partake on Saturday; others Sunday; still others on any day of the week as well as religious holidays, at weddings, etc.
- B. What does the Bible say?
1. The **only** day specified is the **first day** of the week (Acts 20:7).
    - a. Paul was in a hurry to get to Jerusalem by Pentecost (Acts 20:16).
    - b. Nevertheless, he delayed in Troas for seven days in order to commune with the saints on the Lord's Day (Acts 20:6).
  2. Since every week has a first day, the Lord's Supper should be observed **every** first day of **every** week!

### IV. WHO SHOULD EAT THE LORD'S SUPPER?

- A. Some denominations "police" the Lord's Supper.
1. They examine their members to be sure they are "worthy" to eat.
  2. This practice is known as "closed communion."

- B. The Lord's Supper is for Christians!
  - 1. Its purpose is to remember Christ's death for our sins.
  - 2. It is obvious that one who has not obeyed the gospel and received the benefits of His shed blood, has no reason to partake.
- C. Should Christians who have sinned eat the Lord's Supper?
  - 1. Some misunderstand "unworthily" in the King James Version.
    - a. They think they are unworthy to partake; all of us are unworthy, yet are commanded to eat.
    - b. "Unworthily" is an adverb of manner, which describes the **way** the Supper is eaten, not the **one** eating.
    - c. The New King James Version makes it clear: "For he who eats and drinks in an **unworthy manner**..." (1 Cor. 11:29).
  - 2. Christians who have sinned can, and must, repent and pray to be forgiven (Acts 8:22; Jas. 5:16; 1 John 1:9).

## V. HOW SHOULD THE LORD'S SUPPER BE EATEN?

- A. One should partake in profound reverence.
  - 1. One who does otherwise brings condemnation upon himself (1 Cor. 11:27,29).
  - 2. One must "examine" himself to be sure his thoughts, motives and intents are right (1 Cor. 11:28).
- B. One must partake in remembrance of what Christ did for us in His death on the cross (1 Cor. 11:24,25).
- C. The regular observance of the communion proclaims the Lord's death until He comes again (1 Cor. 11:26).

## Conclusion:

- 1. The Lord's Supper is one of the five acts of worship required of God's church upon the first day of the week.
- 2. Its purpose is to remind us of what God has done by giving His Son for us.

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What are the Scriptural designations for the Lord's Supper?
2. When and how often should the Lord's Supper be eaten?
3. What is the purpose of the Lord's Supper?
4. Who should partake of the Lord's Supper?



## LESSON SEVEN: THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH (3)

### Introduction:

1. God has given a pattern in the New Testament for the worship of His church.
2. There are five acts of worship which God has authorized for His church:
  - a. The Lord's Supper,
  - b. Prayer,
  - c. Singing,
  - d. Preaching and teaching,
  - e. Giving.
3. In this lesson, we shall look at prayer as an act of worship (Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 2:1,2,8).

### Discussion:

#### I. WHAT IS PRAYER?

- A. Let us first consider what prayer is not.
  1. It is not some fetish like a magic wand to be used to get out of trouble when everything else has failed.
  2. It is not merely a "sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed."
  3. It is not a sermon, either to God or man.
  4. It is not a substitute for obedience to God (1 John 3:22).
- B. Now, let us see what prayer is.
  1. It is "an earnest request, entreaty, supplication; an humble and sincere request to God or a god" (Webster's *New World Dictionary*).
  2. It is "... the desire, opportunity and privilege of talking with (to - RR) God" (Herbert Lockyear, *All the Prayers of the Bible*, p. 17).

3. "Prayer is man's response to God's willingness" (Matt. 7:7-11).

## **II. WHO SHOULD PRAY?**

- A. Christians should pray always (1 Thess. 5:17).
  1. If one refuses to hear God's word, God will refuse to hear his prayer (Prov. 28:9).
  2. God hears the prayers of the righteous (1 Pet. 3:12; 1 John 3:22).
- B. In public worship assemblies, men are charged with leading prayer (1 Tim. 2:1-15).
  1. Prayers must be made for all men (anthropos); (v. 1).
  2. God desires all men to be saved (anthropos); (v. 4).
  3. God desires "the men {andras = males} pray everywhere...." (v. 8).
  4. All must pray, but leading is done by men (vv. 8-14).

## **III. HOW SHOULD WE PRAY?**

- A. Our prayers must be addressed to God (Matt. 6:9; 11:25; 26:39, 42; Luke 23:34, 46).
- B. Our prayers must be in the name of Jesus Christ (John 14:13, 14; 16:24).
  1. This means "by His authority" (Col. 3:17).
  2. He is the only Mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5).
  3. He is our High Priest (Heb. 4:14 - 16).
  4. He is our Advocate with the Father (1 John 2:1).
- C. Our prayers must be offered in a humble manner (Luke 18:9-14).
- D. Our prayers must be asked in faith (Jas. 1:6-8).
- E. Our prayers must be in harmony with God's will (1 John 5:14; Matt. 26:39).

- F. Our prayers must be offered out of a forgiving spirit (Matt. 6:14, 15; Eph. 4:32).
- G. Our prayers must be offered out of a pure life (1 Tim. 2:8; Isa. 59:1,2).
- H. Our prayers must be fervent (Jas. 5:16).
- I. Our prayers must come from right motives (Jas. 4:3).

#### **IV. FOR WHAT AND WHOM SHOULD WE PRAY?**

- A. We should pray for leaders in the government (1 Tim. 2:2).
- B. We should pray for the sick (Jas. 5:14, 15).
- C. We should pray for our food (Matt. 6:11; 14:19; 1 Tim. 4:4).
- D. We should pray for gospel preachers (Col. 4:2 - 4; 1 Thess. 5:25).
- E. We should pray for forgiveness of our sins (Matt. 6:14,15).
- F. We should pray for our enemies (Matt. 5:44).
- G. We should pray for the lost (Rom. 10:1,2 Luke 23:34 and Acts 2:36-38).
- H. We should pray for all men (1 Tim. 2:1,2).
- I. We should include praise and thanks in our prayers (Matt.6:9; Col. 3:17).

#### **Conclusion:**

1. The saints in Jerusalem “continued steadfastly... in prayers” (Acts 2:42).
2. They offered “constant prayer” for Peter when he was imprisoned by Herod (Acts 12:5).
3. The church at Antioch prayed when they sent out missionaries (Acts 13:1-3).
4. Paul and Barnabas prayed and fasted when they appointed elders (Acts 14:23).
5. The one, true church is a praying church!

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. Names the five acts of worship which are authorized by God for His church.
2. Define prayer.
3. Who should lead the prayers in the worship assembly?
4. Whose prayers will God not hear?
5. To Whom should all our prayers be addressed?
6. In Whose name should we pray?
7. Who are some of the people for whom we should pray?
8. Will God forgive us if we are not willing to forgive others?

## LESSON EIGHT: THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH (4)

### Introduction:

1. God has clearly specified that His church worship Him by singing.
2. God's people have always been people who sing:
  - a. Israelites sang when they crossed the Red Sea (Ex. 15:1-18).
  - b. Deborah and Barak sang at the defeat of the Canaanites (Judg. 5).
  - c. The Jews sang when the temple was rebuilt (Ezra 3:11).
  - d. The early Christians sang in spite of persecution (Acts 16:25).
  - e. Redeemed souls sing in heaven (Rev. 15:3,4).
3. Singing is the **kind** of music commanded in the New Testament for the worship of God's church. (Eph. 5:19; Col.3:16).

### Discussion:

#### I. THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF MUSIC:

- A. Vocal music is made by man without external assistance.
  1. Singing, humming, whistling and imitating the sound of musical instruments are all different types of vocal music.
  2. It may be done as a solo, quartet, choir or congregation.
- B. Instrumental music is music made by playing upon a man-made instrument such as a piano, drum, guitar, etc.
- C. These kinds of music are often mixed.
  1. One may sing a song, but hum certain parts.
  2. One may accompany his singing by playing on an instrument.

## II. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, WORSHIP INVOLVED BOTH VOCAL AND INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC.

- A. David appointed 4,000 men to praise God with musical instruments (1 Chron. 23:5).
- B. Hezekiah restored the musicians and singers appointed by David (2 Chron. 29:25-30).
- C. Many of the Psalms enjoin praising God with instruments (Psa. 150).
- D. We are not under the Old Testament pattern of worship today (Col. 2:14; Heb. 7:12; 8:6-13).
  - 1. There is no more authority for using instrumental music in our worship today than there is for dancing or animal sacrifices!
  - 2. The pattern for the one, true church is the New Testament.

## III. GOD HAS COMMANDED VOCAL MUSIC FOR HIS CHURCH.

- A. The church at Ephesus was commanded to “sing” (Eph. 5:18, 19).
  - 1. Verse 18 shows a contrast between the drunken worship of the pagans with the spiritual worship of the Christians.
  - 2. Christians are to **speak** to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.
    - a. “Speak” means “to utter words with the ordinary voice; talk; to express or communicate opinions, feelings, ideas, etc. by or as by talking” (*Webster’s New World Dictionary*).
    - b. This requires **audible** words which convey meaning.
    - c. Humming, whistling or imitating the sounds of musical instruments are not speaking; therefore they are not authorized in worship.
  - 3. Christians are to speak **to one another**.
    - a. This requires reciprocal action; all are involved.

- b. **Every** Christian is commanded to sing; another can not do my singing for me any more than another can partake of the Lord's Supper for me!
    - c. Eph. 5:19 requires **congregational** singing.
  - 4. The testimony of church history is that congregational singing was the universal practice of the early church:
    - a. The prevailing mode of singing during the first three centuries was congregational. The whole congregation united their voices in the sacred song of praise, in strains suited to their ability. . . **the most ancient and most common mode of singing was confessedly for the whole assembly**; men, women and children blended their voices in their songs of praise in the great congregation (Lyman Coleman, *Ancient Christianity Explained*, pp.329,330).
    - b. From the apostolic age, singing was always a part of divine service, in which the **whole body** of the church joined together; and it was the decay of this practice that first brought the order of singers into the church (M'Clintock and Strong's *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, Vol. IX, p. 776).
  - 5. They were commanded to sing and **make melody in the heart**.
    - a. The music of the voice is accompanied by the heart.
    - b. The only instrument is the human heart, made by God.
- B. The church at Colossae was also commanded to sing (Col.3:16).
  - 1. Col. 3:16 and Eph. 5:19 are parallel.
  - 2. The plural pronouns indicate the church as a whole is meant.
  - 3. Singing is a means of **teaching and admonishing**.
    - a. Humming, whistling and imitating the sounds of instruments can neither teach nor admonish!
    - b. Neither can the sound of organs, pianos, drums or guitars!

4. We are to sing with grace **in our hearts**; this is the only instrument mentioned!

#### IV. **THERE IS NO AUTHORITY FOR INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN THE WORSHIP OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH.**

- A. Everything we do must be done by the authority of Christ (Matt. 18:18; Col. 3:17).
  1. We dare not go beyond what He has commanded (2 John 9-11; Rev. 22:18,19)!
  2. Christ did not command instrumental music in the worship!
  3. No apostle or other inspired man ever commanded instrumental music in the worship!
- B. The testimony of history clearly shows that instrumental music was not used by the early church!
  1. "Both the Jews in their temple service and the Greeks in their idol worship, were accustomed to sing with the accompaniment of instrumental music. The converts to Christianity accordingly must have been familiar with this mode of singing. . . But it is generally admitted, that the primitive Christians employed no instrumental music in their religious worship" (Lyman Coleman, *The Apostolical and Primitive Church*, pp. 368, 369).
  2. 'It is said that the introduction of the organ into Christian worship was due to Pope Vitalian in the seventh century" (*The Oxford Companion*, 9th Edition, p. 184).

#### **Conclusion:**

1. The one, true church worships God by the **only** kind of music He authorized – **acappella, congregational singing!**
2. Any church today, which engages in other kinds of music, lacks an essential identification mark of the New Testament church!
3. We must remember that the purpose of our worship is to praise God; it is not to entertain ourselves!
4. God has spoken; His faithful servants willingly obey.

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What are the two general kinds of music?
2. What are some of the specific types of vocal music?
3. What kind of music in worship was acceptable in the Old Testament.
4. Can an organ or other man-made musical instrument speak, teach or admonish?
5. What is the instrument God ordained to accompany the singing of His people?
6. Was instrumental music ever an accepted part of the worship of the New Testament church?
7. Is there any New Testament authority for choirs, quartets or solos in Christian worship?
8. If a church has a choir or uses instrumental music in its worship, does it have a right to call itself the church of Christ?
9. What is the testimony of history concerning congregational singing in the early church?
10. Who introduced the first organ into the worship of the church? When?



## LESSON NINE: THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH (5)

### Introduction:

1. Any organization must have money to carry on its work; the church is no exception.
2. God has given the perfect pattern for church finance in the New Testament.
3. Giving is an act of worship.
  - a. Giving the best of one's herd or flock for sacrifice was an act of worship in the Old Testament (Lev. 1:3, 10; Num. 18:12).
  - b. Giving as God has prospered us is also an act of worship in the New Testament.
4. In this lesson, we shall study giving as an act of worship, and also as the **only** means God has given His church to raise the money for its work.

### Discussion:

#### I. DENOMINATIONS USE VARIOUS MEANS TO RAISE MONEY.

- A. Many practice tithing (giving ten per cent of one's income).
  1. Tithing was part of the Law God gave to Israel (Lev. 27:30; Num. 18:21; Mal. 3:8-10).
  2. This Law was "nailed to the cross" (Col. 2:14; Heb. 7:12).
  3. Giving is commanded in the New Testament; tithing is not!
- B. Many man-made churches use gimmicks to get people to give.
  1. Bingo, raffles, walkathons, are common.
  2. Bake sales, bazaars, car washes and auctions are also used.
- C. Some denominations receive much of their support from investments in business.
  1. The Roman Catholic Church has billions of dollars invested.

2. The Mormon Church is one of the richest in the world because of its ownership of property and businesses.

## II. GOD'S PATTERN FOR GIVING IS GIVEN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

- A. The method is mentioned in 1 Cor. 16:1,2:
  1. Paul wrote as an inspired apostle (1 Cor. 14:37).
  2. Paul's letter was addressed, not only to the Corinthians, but also to "all who in **every** place call on the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:2).
  3. The same instruction had been given to the churches of Galatia (1 Cor. 16:1).
    - a. Paul was raising money for the needy in Jerusalem and Judea.
    - b. The Holy Spirit used this particular situation to reveal God's plan of finance for His church (John 14:26 ).
  4. Paul taught the same thing "everywhere in every church" (1 Cor. 4:17).
- B. The means of carrying out the method is plainly given (1 Cor. 16:2).
  1. **When?** "On the first day of the week."
    - a. This is the day disciples assembled to worship (Acts 20:7).
    - b. The Greek "kata" signifies the first day of **every** week (Thayer's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 328).
  2. **Who?** "Let each one of you."
    - a. Giving, like singing and communion, is an individual act which is done in corporate worship.
    - b. I can not give for another, nor can another give for me.
  3. **What?** "Lay by him in store" (KJV ) or "Lay something aside" (NKJV).

- a. Each Christian must separate a portion of his income to be given to the church.
  - b. The Greek for “in store” literally means “to put into the treasury” (McGarvey and Pendleton, *Thessalonians, Corinthians, Galatians and Romans*, p. 161).
- 4. **How Much?** “As he may prosper.”
  - a. This is much fairer than a tithe applied to all alike.
  - b. The rich must give more, the poor give less, but all give as they have been prospered by God.
- 5. **Why?** “That there be no collections when I come.”
  - a. Since the money was in a common treasury, no special effort would have to be made to gather the funds as would have been the case if each had kept his contribution at home.
  - b. Having a church treasury and a weekly offering assures that funds are available when needed.

### III. THE PRINCIPLES WHICH GUIDE GIVING ARE GIVEN IN SECOND CORINTHIANS, CHAPTERS 8 AND 9.

- A. One must first give himself to the Lord (2 Cor. 8:5; Rom. 12:1; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20).
- B. One must follow the example of his Savior (2 Cor. 8:9).
- C. One must “sow bountifully” (2 Cor. 9:6,10,11; Luke 6:38).
- D. One must purpose in heart (2 Cor. 9:7).
  - 1. One should plan in advance how much he is going to give.
  - 2. Our contribution should receive priority in our spending (Matt. 6:33).
- E. One should give cheerfully (2 Cor. 9:7).
- F. By giving as prospered, we lay up treasure in heaven (Matt. 6:19-21).

#### **IV. CHRISTIANS ARE STEWARDS OF ALL GOD HAS GIVEN THEM.**

- A. A steward is a servant who has been given charge over property which belongs to another.
  - 1. He is not the owner of the property.
  - 2. He must give an account for his stewardship (1 Cor. 4:2).
- B. The parable of the talents illustrates the responsibility of a steward (Matt. 25:14 - 30 ).
- C. All that anyone has belongs to God: time, talent, money, etc. (Acts 27:23).
- D. Covetousness is one of the most subtle sins of all (Luke 12:13-21; Col. 3:5; 1 Tim. 6:6-10).

#### **Conclusion:**

- 1. Giving is one of the five acts of worship required of God's people today.
- 2. The New Testament pattern of church finance is found in 1 Cor. 16:2.
  - a. It is to be done on the first day of every week.
  - b. Each Christian must give as God has prospered him.
  - c. We must purpose in heart how much we are going to give.
  - d. We must "sow bountifully" if we expect to reap bountifully.
  - e. We must give cheerfully.
- 3. If we follow God's plan for giving, His church will have all the funds its needs to do everything God wants it to do.

#### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

- 1. Prove that giving is an act of worship.
- 2. Why doesn't the one, true church practice tithing?
- 3. What are some of the gimmicks used by man-made churches to raise money?

4. Name two denominations which have great wealth because of business.
5. Where is God's New Testament law of giving found (book, chapter, verse)?
6. Prove that 1 Cor. 16:2 is of universal application.
7. What is the specified day the contribution is to be made?
8. Explain "lay something aside."
9. Prove that giving must be done every first day of every week.
10. How much are Christians required to give under the Law of Christ?
11. Prove that the funds given are to be put into a common treasury.
12. What are some of the principles which guide our giving?
13. What is a steward?
14. What does 1 Cor. 4:2 say is required of a steward?
15. What is one of most common and most subtle of all sins?
16. What mistake did the Rich Fool make?
17. What is the "root of all kinds of evil?"
18. Give Scriptural support for bake sales, car washes and church auctions.
19. What would be wrong with a church investing in business?
20. Which kind of "business" is the church in? Soul saving or money saving?



## LESSON TEN: THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH (6)

### Introduction:

1. The recipient of our worship is God (John 4:24).
2. The special day of worship for Christians is Sunday, the first day of the week (Acts 20:7).
3. The two essentials of true worship are:
  - a. In spirit = right attitude (John 4:24).
  - b. In truth = right acts (John 4:24).
4. The **only** acts of worship authorized by the New Testament are:
  - a. The Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7).
  - b. Unaccompanied, congregational singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).
  - c. Prayers (1 Tim. 2:1,2).
  - d. Giving (1 Cor. 16:2).
  - e. Preaching and teaching (Acts 20:7; Matt. 28:19; Eph. 4:11,12).
5. In this lesson we shall study preaching as one of the acts of worship.

### Discussion:

#### I. GOD HAS ALWAYS USED MEN TO PROCLAIM HIS WILL.

- A. Noah was "a preacher of righteousness" (2 Pet. 2:5; 1 Pet. 3:18-20).
  1. He preached for 120 years (Gen. 6:3).
  2. He converted no one but members of his immediate family.
  3. He was truly a great preacher and great man!
- B. The prophets were also spokesmen for God.
  1. Elijah was a bold defender of truth (1 Kings 18).

2. Isaiah preached that the Christ was coming (Isa. 7:14; 9:6,7; 11; 53).
  3. Jeremiah had the word of God in him “like a burning fire” (Jer. 1:9, 10; 6:16; 20:9).
- C. Ezra set the proper procedure for all preachers (Ezra 7:6, 10).
  - D. John the baptist prepared the way for the Lord (Matt. 3:1,2; Mark 1:1-5).
  - E. The Son of God was a preacher also (Matt. 4:17, 23).
  - F. The apostles of Christ were specially selected preachers (Matt. 10:6,7; 2 Tim. 1:11).

## **II. CHRISTIANITY IS A “TAUGHT” RELIGION.**

- A. Jeremiah foretold that people would have to be taught in order to be in a covenant relationship with the Lord (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:6-13).
  1. Under the first covenant, one was a child of God because he was born of Israelite parents.
  2. When he grew to maturity, it was necessary to teach him to know God.
  3. Under the new covenant, one must first be taught to know God before he can be in a covenant relationship with Him.
- B. Jesus emphasized that teaching was essential to His new law.
  1. We are drawn to God by means of teaching and learning (John 6:44, 45).
  2. The word of God is “seed” (Luke 8:11).
    - a. The seed must be sown in good soil to produce a harvest (Luke 8:4-15).
    - b. The word of God must be taught to those who have receptive hearts before the kingdom (church) can exist.
  3. In the Great Commission, Jesus commanded His disciples to go, teach, baptize and teach (Matt. 28:19,20).

- C. Both evangelists and teachers are a part of the continuing ministry of the Lord's church (Eph. 4:11,12).

### **III. EVANGELISTS ARE PREACHERS OF THE GOSPEL.**

- A. Philip was an evangelist.

- 1. He preached in Samaria (Acts 8:5-12).
- 2. He preached to the man from Ethiopia (Acts 8:26-39).
- 3. Apparently, he was "located" in Caesarea for at least twenty years (Acts 8:40; 21:8,9).

- B. Timothy was an evangelist.

- 1. The church at Ephesus had elders, but Timothy was also located with the church (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Tim. 1:3).
- 2. The duties of Timothy were:
  - a. To remind the brethren of their duties in the Lord (1 Tim. 4:6).
  - b. To be an example to the believers (1 Tim. 4:12).
  - c. To give attention to reading, exhortation, teaching and meditation (1 Tim. 4:13-15).
  - d. To take heed to himself and what he taught (1 Tim. 4:16).
- 3. Timothy was given a solemn charge to preach the gospel (2 Tim. 4:1-5).
  - a. He was to preach "in season and out of season."
  - b. He was to "convince, rebuke and exhort."
  - c. He was to be watchful, endure hardship and do the work of an evangelist.

### **IV. PREACHING THE WORD IS AN ACT OF WORSHIP.**

- A. The Jerusalem church "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine" {teaching, preaching} (Acts 2:42).

- B. When the saints assembled on the first day of the week, Paul preached to them (Acts 20:7).
- C. Justin Martyr, who lived in the first half of the second century, wrote of the worship of the church in his day: "On Sunday a meeting is held of all who live in the cities and villages, and a section from the Memoirs of the Apostles (the New Testament) is read and the writings of the prophets , so long as time permits. When the reader has finished, the president, in a discourse or homily, gives the admonition and exhortation to imitate these noble things...." (George A. Klingman, *Church History for Busy People*, p. 91).

#### **V. PREACHING HAS BEEN CORRUPTED IN MODERN TIMES.**

- A. Sermons have been shortened to the point there is little substance in them.
- B. Exhortation may be done but rebuking and reproving are considered too "negative" and are, therefore, omitted.
- C. The emphasis is on entertainment rather than on instruction.
  - 1. Drama and plays often replace sermons.
  - 2. Emotions are played upon while logic and reason are ridiculed.
- D. Preaching which pleases God is Bible preaching (2 Tim. 4:2).

#### **Conclusion:**

- 1. Preaching is a part of the pattern of worship for the one, true church.
- 2. The strength of the church depends, in large measure, upon the strength and soundness of its preaching!

#### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

- 1. How many converts did Noah make?
- 2. Who preached to prepare the way for the Lord?
- 3. How are people drawn to God?
- 4. What is the "seed" of the kingdom?

5. What were Timothy's duties?
6. Is it Scriptural for an evangelist to be located in one area with a congregation, or must he always travel from one church to another?
7. What was involved in the solemn charge given to Timothy?
8. Did the early church have preaching as a part of their worship? Give Scripture.
9. What are some of the ways preaching has been corrupted in our time?
10. What kind of preaching pleases God?
11. What are the two essentials of Christian worship?
12. What are the five acts of worship which are authorized by the New Testament?
13. Who is the recipient of our worship?
14. What is the special day of worship for Christians?
15. Who had the word of God in him "like a burning fire"?
16. What was a major difference between the old and new covenants, according to Jeremiah?
17. How long was Philip located in Caesarea?



## LESSON ELEVEN: THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

### Introduction:

1. There is much misunderstanding about the work of the church among religious people generally.
  - a. Many denominations are simply “glorified country clubs” with a thin veneer of religion.
  - b. Some denominations are more interested in politics and social and economic improvement than in preaching the gospel and saving souls.
2. In the New Testament pattern for the one, true church, the work of the church is clearly defined.
3. God has given His church a three-fold work to do:
  - a. Evangelism - preaching the gospel.
  - b. Edification- teaching and building up the saved.
  - c. Benevolence- helping the needy as opportunity presents itself.

### Discussion:

#### I. THE WORK OF THE CHURCH IS TO PREACH THE GOSPEL.

- A. The gospel must be preached to **every** nation and **every** person in **every** generation (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15).
  1. Those who are taught must become teachers of others (2 Tim. 2:2; Heb. 5:12).
  2. Every member is a missionary according to the measure of his ability and opportunity (Acts 8:4).
- B. The local church was designed by God to be the focal point in world evangelism (1 Tim. 3:14,15).
  1. Its educational method has the capability to train the workers needed (Eph. 4:11, 12).
  2. Its financial method has the capability to supply the funds needed (1 Cor. 16:2; Phil. 1:4, 5; 4:15,16).

- C. The church proclaimed the gospel to the world in the first century.
1. The Jerusalem church sent Barnabas to Antioch (Acts 11:22).
  2. The Antioch church sent out Saul and Barnabas (Acts 13:2-4; 14:26, 27).
  3. The faith of the church at Rome was “spoken of throughout the whole world” (Rom. 1:8).
  4. The church at Thessalonica “sounded out the word of the Lord” in Macedonia and Achaia (1 Thess. 1:8).
  5. Paul was looking to Spain as a new field where he would not “build upon another man’s foundation” (Rom. 15:18-24).
  6. By A.D. 62 the gospel had spread to the whole world (Col. 1:23).

## **II. THE WORK OF THE CHURCH IS TO EDIFY THE SAVED.**

- A. Teaching and learning must continue throughout the Christian life.
1. Those who are baptized must be taught to “observe all things which the Lord has commanded” (Matt. 28:19; 20).
  2. Pastors, teachers and evangelists are for the “equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:11,12).
    - a. One of the qualifications of an elder is that he be “able to teach” (1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17,18).
    - b. Shepherds must “feed the flock” (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2).
  3. Christians need the “pure milk of the word” in order to grow to salvation (1 Pet. 2:1,2).
  4. Christians who do not grow are in danger of falling (Heb. 5:12).
- B. It is essential that Christians “continue stedfastly” (Acts 2:42).
1. All Christians must function as part of a local congregation (Acts 9:26,27).
  2. Every member has work to do (1 Cor. 12:12-26).

3. Members must not forsake the assembly (Heb. 10:24, 25).
- C. The Lord has given the elders the liberty to choose the methods of edifying the members.
1. Preaching on the Lord's day is required by the pattern (Acts 20:7; 2: 42).
  2. Various optional methods have been used effectively:
    - a. Bible classes arranged according to age.
    - b. Special training series.
    - c. Vacation Bible schools.
    - d. Lectureships and workshops.
    - e. Church library.
    - f. Providing tracts, gospel papers and church bulletins.

### **III. THE WORK OF THE CHURCH IS TO HELP THE NEEDY.**

- A. The Jerusalem Christians pooled their resources to help the needy (Acts 2:44, 45; 6:1-6).
1. The members were under no obligation to sell everything and give the proceeds to the church, but they voluntarily did so (Acts 5:4).
  2. No command says that Christians must sell their property and pool their resources.
  3. No other church in the New Testament did as Jerusalem did.
  4. The attitude is bound, but the action is optional.
- B. The disciples at Antioch sent a contribution to the elders at Jerusalem to help the brethren in Judea (Acts 11:27-30).
- C. Paul collected money from Gentile churches to help the needy in Jerusalem and Judea (Rom. 15:25-28).
1. This was for the saints and for all men (2 Cor. 9:12,13).

2. Paul taught the churches of Galatia to “do good to all, especially those of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10).
3. James said that “pure and undefiled religion...is visiting widows and orphans in their trouble” (Jas. 1:27).
4. The church has the obligation to help widows who have no other means of support (1 Tim. 5:4-16).

### **Conclusion:**

1. God has given His church a three-fold work to do:
  - a. Evangelism - preaching the gospel to the lost.
  - b. Edification-teaching and building up the saved.
  - c. Benevolence-helping the needy, both saint and sinner.
2. Men have often corrupted the work which God designed His church to do:
  - a. Those who do such are inward and self-serving.
  - b. Christ’s church must be outward; it is in the world to serve rather than be served.

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What is the three-fold work God has given His church to do?
2. What is “evangelism”?
3. What is “edification”?
4. What is “benevolence”?
5. Give Scriptural support for each of the three works of the church.
6. What is the purpose of having evangelists, pastors and teachers in the local church?
7. Prove by the Scriptures that the church has an obligation to help needy non-members whenever it has opportunity.

8. How does one practice “pure and undefiled religion?”
9. Who is a missionary according to the Scriptures?
10. What is the focal point in world evangelism?



## LESSON TWELVE: THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH (1)

### Introduction:

1. We can find the one, true church today by examining the New Testament pattern.
2. We can restore the one, true church by following the New Testament pattern in all essential details.
3. The New Testament tells of:
  - a. The relationship of Christ and His church.
  - b. The descriptions of the church.
  - c. The beginning of the church.
  - d. The worship of the church.
  - e. The work of the church.
4. In this lesson, we shall learn another mark of identification of the one, true church - its organization.

### Discussion:

#### I. JESUS CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH.

- A. The **only** living “officer” of the worldwide church is the Lord.
- B. He is the Head of the church, which is His body (Eph. 1:22,23; Col. 1:18).
  1. The headquarters of Christ’s church is where the Head is - in heaven (John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; 2:33, 34).
  2. There is **no** place in God’s plan for a pope, president, council or synod !

#### II. THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS BELONGED TO THE INFANCY OF THE CHURCH.

- A. The apostles were Christ’s ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:18 - 20).

1. They had power to bind and loose what had been decreed in heaven (Matt. 16:18,19; 18:18).
  2. By inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they revealed the word of God (John 14:26; 16:13; 1 Thess. 2:13).
- B. The office of apostles was temporary, but the result of their work is permanent.
1. Matthias was chosen to replace Judas, but no one was chosen to replace James (Acts 1:15-26; 12:1,2).
  2. It is impossible to have a living apostle today because no one living has seen the resurrected Lord and therefore, no one is qualified (Acts 1:22,23; 1 Cor. 9:1).
  3. The apostles judge men even today through the inspired word they have given (Matt. 19:28).
- C. The prophets also belonged to the miraculous age (infancy) of the church (Eph. 4:7-13).
1. Prophecy was one of nine miraculous gifts available to the early church (1 Cor. 12:4-10).
  2. Both men and women possessed this gift, but only men exercised it in the public assembly (Acts 13:1; 21:9,10; 1 Cor. 11:5; 14:34,35; 1 Tim. 2:8-15).
  3. The gift of prophecy, like all spiritual gifts, was given only by the laying on of the apostles' hands (Acts 8:14-21; 19:6).
  4. When the New Testament was completed, miraculous gifts passed away (1 Cor. 13:8-13; Jas. 1:25).

### **III. THE NEW TESTAMENT IS THE CONSTITUTION OF CHRIST'S CHURCH.**

- A. The Holy Spirit revealed **all** truth pertaining to salvation through the apostles and prophets in the first century (John 14:26; 16:13; 1 Cor. 2:12,13).
- B. God's word is complete (Jas. 1:25).
1. It "thoroughly equips us for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16,17).

2. It contains “**all** things that pertain to life and godliness” (2 Pet. 1:3).
3. It is the “faith **once for all delivered** to the saints” (Jude 3).
4. We must accept no other gospel (Gal. 1:8)!
5. We dare not go beyond what is written (2 John 9-11)!
6. We must not add to, nor take from, the word (Rev. 22:18,19)!

#### IV. **EACH CONGREGATION OF BELIEVERS IS AUTONOMOUS.**

- A. Every church of Christ is self-governing and independent of all others.
  1. If one congregation goes into apostasy, the whole body is not affected because the congregations are not organically tied together.
  2. It is like a window made up of many panes; if one pane is broken, the others will remain intact; but if the window is a single pane window, only one strike can destroy the whole window.
- B. The autonomy of each congregation is part of the pattern.
  1. Jerusalem carried on its work under its elders (Acts 11:30).
  2. The church at Antioch sent out missionaries (Acts 13:1-3).
  3. Paul and Barnabas appointed elders “in every church” (Acts 14:23).
  4. The church at Ephesus was led by its own elders (Acts 20:17,28).
  5. Philippi had its own bishops (Phil. 1:1).
  6. Peter commanded elders to “Shepherd the flock of God **which is** among you” (1 Pet. 5:2).

#### V. **CONGREGATIONS COOPERATE WITHOUT GIVING UP THEIR AUTONOMY.**

- A. The church at Jerusalem sent Barnabas to assist Antioch (Acts 11:22,23).
- B. Antioch helped the churches in Judea in a time of famine (Acts 11:27-30).

- C. The churches of Christ in Achaia and Macedonia cooperated to provide funds to help the poor among the saints in Jerusalem (Rom. 15:25,26; 1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8; 9 ).
- D. Paul's statement to the Philippian church indicates it was customary for churches to cooperate in mission work even though for a time others had not joined with Philippi in supporting Paul (Phil. 4:15,16).

### **Conclusion:**

1. Jesus Christ is the only Head of His church; therefore, its headquarters are in heaven where the Head is.
2. The New Testament is the perfect constitution for the church of Christ.
3. Each congregation of God's people is independent and self-governing.
4. Pastors, evangelists and teachers are continuing offices in the church.

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. Who is the only living officer of the universal church?
2. How do apostles judge today?
3. Where is the headquarters for Christ's church?
4. Do we have living apostles today? Why, or why not?
5. Does God continue to reveal His will to men today?
6. What is the advantage of each congregation being independent of all others?
7. Did New Testament churches ever cooperate in benevolence? If so, give an example.
8. Did New Testament churches ever cooperate in evangelism? If so, give an example.
9. Why can there be no successors to the apostles today?
10. What are the offices (works) in the church which continue today?

## **LESSON THIRTEEN: THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH (2)**

### **Introduction:**

1. God has given a pattern for His one, true church.
  - a. The pattern is the New Testament.
  - b. We must follow the pattern in all essential details to restore the church.
2. God has given a specific pattern for the organization of the church.
  - a. Jesus Christ is the Head of the church.
  - b. He rules over the universal church from heaven.
  - c. The New Testament is the constitution of the church.
  - d. The offices of apostles and prophets were limited to the miraculous age (infancy) of the church.
  - e. The inspired writings of the apostles and prophets govern the church.
3. In this lesson we shall study the work and qualifications of elders.

### **Discussion:**

#### **I. THERE ARE SOME FUNDAMENTAL FACTS WE MUST KNOW ABOUT ELDERS.**

- A. Several names are used interchangeably for this office.
  1. Paul sent for the “elders” of the church at Ephesus (Acts 20:17).
    - a. They were a distinct group within the church.
    - b. He called these men “overseers” {bishops-ASV} (Acts 20:28).
    - c. They were told to “shepherd” {tend, feed, do the work of a shepherd} the flock of God (Acts 20:28).
    - d. In this passage, elders (presbuteros) are called overseers (episkopos) and told to do the work of shepherds (poimen).

2. It is obvious that elders, presbyters, overseers, bishops, shepherds and pastors all refer to the same office in the church (cf. also Titus 1:5,7; 1 Pet. 5:1-4; read the above passages in the KJV (1611), ASV (1901) and the NKJV).
- B. These names for this office indicate the nature of their work and qualifications.
1. “Elder” comes from **presbuteros** which means “older man.”
    - a. In New Testament times, one was considered a child until the age of 18; up to 40 he was considered a youth; after 40 he was called “presbuteros.”
    - b. The use of this word indicates one must be mature in years, service and spiritual development.
  2. “Overseer” comes from **episkopos** which means a “superintendent.”
    - a. It is translated as “bishop” in 1 Tim. 3:1 and Titus 1:7.
    - b. It refers to the leadership role over the affairs of the church and the souls committed to the bishop’s care.
  3. “Shepherd” comes from **poimen** (Eph. 4:11).
    - a. “Pastor” is the Latin word for shepherd.
    - b. A shepherd leads, feeds, guides and protects his sheep and knows them well (cf. Psa. 23; John 10:1- 15).
    - c. A pastor is an elder, **not a preacher**, or evangelist (see Eph. 4:11).
- C. The New Testament **always** speaks of a **plurality** of elders over **one** congregation.
1. The Jerusalem church had elders {plural} (Acts 11:30).
  2. Paul and Barnabas appointed elders {plural} in every church they established on their first missionary journey (Acts 14:23).
  3. The church at Philippi had “bishops” {plural} (Phil. 1:1).

4. Titus was told to “appoint elders {plural} in every city” (Titus 1:5).
- D. Elders are over **only one** congregation, the church where they are members (1 Pet. 5:2)!

## II. MEN MUST MEET ALL THE QUALIFICATIONS BEFORE THEY CAN SERVE.

- A. The qualifications are given in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
  1. **Desire:** One should want to be an elder not because of power or prestige, but in order to serve.
  2. **Blameless:** This does not mean sinless perfection (1 John 1:8) for no one could ever qualify, but it means that no charge of wrongdoing can be proven against one.
  3. **Husband of one wife:** Only a man can be an elder for only a man can be the husband of a wife; he must be married; he must not be divorced unscripturally (Matt. 19:9) {one divorced Scripturally and remarried is in the same situation as a widower who has remarried; he is the husband of only one wife, else he would be a bigamist}; certainly a polygamist could not be an elder for he could not be a Christian without repentance, which would require that he put away all his wives but the first one.
  4. **Temperate:** Roy Lanier, Sr. said: “This is from a Greek word which refers to the use of wine, and almost surely forbids the use of any wine at all” (*The Church*, p. 106).
  5. **Sober-minded:** Roy Lanier, Sr. wrote: “Serious or subdued in mood, expressions, appearance; solemn, grave, sedate; not affected by passion or prejudice; well balanced under all circumstances” (*The Church*, p. 106).
  6. **Of good behavior:** The American Standard Version renders this as “orderly;” it means one who is punctual, disciplined and organized in what he does.
  7. **Hospitable:** An elder must be willing to open his home to guests and share cheerfully what he has with others (Heb. 13:1,2; 1 Pet. 4:9; 3 John 5 - 8).
  8. **Able to teach:** Elders must be capable, experienced teachers of the word of God. This requires they know the Bible well. They

should be the best Bible students and most skilled teachers in the congregation. No qualification is more important than this one!

9. **Not given to wine:** The ASV has “no brawler.” An elder must not be a drinker of intoxicating beverages. He must not be a fighter or brawler.
10. **Not violent:** An elder must keep his temper under control. He must not be given to outbursts of anger nor use physical force on those who provoke him.
11. **Not greedy for money:** Th ASV translates it: “no lover of money.” While elders should be wise in spending money, both their own and that belonging to the church, they should not be stingy. They must understand that funds given by the church are to be used in the work of the church. The church is in the soul-saving business, not the money-saving business (1 Tim. 6:5-11).
12. **Gentle:** An elder must be kind, patient, well-mannered and tender-hearted (Eph. 4:32). He should never be rude, harsh or rough in his dealings with others.
13. **One who rules well his own house:** An elder’s wife and children must respect him and accept him as the head of the house (Eph. 5: 22-24, 33; 6:1-3). A man who is dominated by his wife is not worthy to be an elder.
14. **Not quarrelsome:** The ASV says “not contentious.” An elder must not love arguments, or take delight in stirring up quarrels. He should be a peacemaker and live at peace with all men as much as it is within his power to do so (Rom. 12:18).
15. **Not covetous:** Covetousness is the unlawful desire for gain or for the property of others. It is idolatry (Col. 3:5; Luke 12:13-21).
16. **Not a novice:** An elder must be a mature Christian. He must be a man of experience in life. A new convert, or an immature Christian, is not suited for the serious responsibilities of a shepherd of the flock of God.
17. **A good testimony from those who are outside the church:** Not only must an elder be respected within the church, but family, friends, neighbors and business associates must recognize that he is a man of integrity, decency and honesty.

18. **Having faithful children:** An elder must be a father, whether naturally or by adoption. Experience raising a family is valuable training for a shepherd of the church. An elder must have children and they must be faithful Christians.
19. **Not self-willed:** An elder has no authority by himself. He is one of a plurality of elders and decisions affecting the church must be made by all the elders. An elder must not be stubborn and insist on always having his way.
20. **Not quick tempered:** An elder should have himself, including his temper and his tongue, under control. Angry outbursts of temper are not in harmony with the disciplined spiritual nature of a shepherd of the flock of God.
21. **A lover of what is good:** An elder must love people and all that is good. He must be on the side of truth and righteousness in every activity of life.
22. **Just:** An elder must be impartial in his judgments when dealing with people. He must treat all others fairly.
23. **Holy:** An elder must be a sincere, devout, righteous, peace-loving servant of God (1 Pet. 1:15,16).
24. **Holding fast the faithful word:** Two reasons are given for this qualification: (1) An elder must be able to exhort fellow Christians; (2) An elder must be able successfully to oppose false teachers and show the fallacy of their teaching. This requires diligent Bible study and a current knowledge of personalities and issues in the church and the religious world.

B. **Every** elder must possess **every** one of these qualifications!!

### **Conclusion:**

1. Elders “watch for the souls” of those committed to their care (Heb. 13:17).
2. Members of the congregation should respect highly godly elders!
3. There is no substitute for qualified elders of the church!

## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are the different names used for the office of an elder?
2. What do each of these names mean?
3. Show that the various terms for elders are used interchangeably to refer to the same office.
4. Show that a congregation must have more than one elder if it is going to have elders at all.
5. Where are the qualifications for elders found (book, chapter and verse)?
6. Explain what “husband of one wife” means and does not mean.
7. Explain the qualification “having faithful children.”
8. How many of the qualifications must an elder have before he can serve?
9. Could a woman serve as an elder? Give reasons for your answer.
10. Does one elder have a right to make decisions without consulting the others?

## **LESSON FOURTEEN: THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH (3)**

### **Introduction:**

1. There is but one, true church!
  - a. Jesus Christ is its only Head!
  - b. Its headquarters are in heaven.
  - c. The New Testament is its constitution.
2. Each congregation, when fully organized, is led by a plurality of elders.
  - a. They are also called shepherds, pastors, presbyters, overseers and bishops.
  - b. Only those who meet the qualifications God has given can serve in this important office.
3. In this lesson we shall conclude our study of elders and also briefly study the work of deacons.

### **Discussion:**

#### **I. ELDERS HAVE A SERIOUS RESPONSIBILITY TO THE CHURCH.**

- A. They must “shepherd” the flock (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-4).
- B. They watch for the souls of the members (Heb. 13:17).
  1. They must give an account for every soul entrusted to their care.
  2. What an awesome responsibility!!!
- C. They rule over the church (1 Thess. 5:12,13).
  1. Those who rule well are to be supported well (1 Tim. 5:17,18).
  2. Christians must “remember those who have the rule over you” (Heb. 13:7).
  3. Members of the congregation also must “obey those who rule over you” (Heb. 13:17).

4. Elders rule in matters of opinion, but they must not be “lords” (dictators) over the church (1 Pet. 5:3).
- D. If elders sin they are to be rebuked, but any accusation against them must be supported by witnesses (1 Tim. 5:19,20).
- E. Elders must guard the church against false teachers (Titus 1:9,10; Rom. 16: 17,18).
- F. Elders should take the lead in church discipline (1 Cor. 5; 2 Thess. 3).

## II. DEACONS ARE SERVANTS OF THE CHURCH.

- A. The word “deacon” means “servant” or “minister.”
  1. In a general sense, every Christian is a servant (minister).
  2. In only two places in the New Testament, the Greek word for servants (diakonos) is not **translated**, but **transliterated** {the Greek word is changed into an English word by replacing the Greek letters with English letters} (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8-13).
    - a. The context indicates that a special class of servants is in view.
    - b. Qualifications are given which may not apply to every Christian.
- B. There are fewer qualifications for deacons than there are for elders (1 Tim. 3:8-13).
  1. **Reverent:** The ASV has “grave.” One who is reverent is one who is serious-minded about spiritual matters. He has his “mind set on the things which are above” (Col. 3:1,2).
  2. **Not double-tongued:** A deacon must tell the truth under all circumstances. He will not say one thing today and another tomorrow, nor will he say one thing to your face but the opposite behind your back. No liar can go to heaven (Eph. 4:25; Rev. 21:8, 27).
  3. **Not given to much wine:** The word “wine” in the Bible is a generic word referring to the juice of the grape. Whether it is fermented or unfermented must be learned from the context. Sweet (unfermented) wine was preferred above the intoxicating,

fermented wine for one could drink more of it. In a society where drinking bouts were common, it is likely that Paul is legislating against gluttony, the excess drinking of sweet wine, rather than being concerning about intoxication in this context.

4. **Not greedy for money:** A deacon must not love money. It must not be his chief aim in life to acquire money and possessions (1 Tim. 6:6-11; 1 John 2:15-17). He must not be stingy with his own money, nor that of the church which may be entrusted to his care.
5. **Holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience:** A deacon must be sound in the faith. He must know the Bible well and pattern his life after its holy precepts.
6. **Let them first be tested:** Only men who have proven their ability and their love for the Lord by steady, faithful service are to be selected as deacons.
7. **Husband of one wife:** This eliminates the possibility of a woman being a deacon for a woman cannot be the husband of a wife. A deacon must be Scripturally married. (Please see the explanation under the same qualification for elders.)
8. **Ruling their children and their own houses well:** Unlike elders, deacons do not have to have believing children, but they must have children. Their wives and children must be respectful and obedient.

C. Qualifications are also given for the wives of church leaders (1 Tim. 3:11).

1. **REVERENT:** Serious minded, godly and pious. (See the comments under the same qualification for deacons.)
2. **NOT SLANDERERS:** The wife of an elder or deacon must not be a gossip or tale-bearer. She must not circulate false reports. Such behavior will destroy a church and disqualify her husband from serving as either an elder or a deacon.
3. **TEMPERATE:** Roy Lanier, Sr. wrote: "This word means moderate in the indulgence of the appetites or passions; self-controlled; restrained" (*The Church*, p. 127).
4. **FAITHFUL IN ALL THINGS:** The wife of an elder or deacon must be a faithful Christian. She must be a good wife and mother. Her Christian life should be an example all can safely follow.

- D. The duties of deacons are appointed by the elders.
1. Although they may assist elders in their work, deacons are under the oversight of elders just like any other member of the church.
  2. Deacons are never said to rule the church.
  3. Elders may meet with deacons, assign their duties to them and receive reports of their work, but deacons do not have an equal vote with the elders in the affairs of the church; deacons are not part of a joint board with elders to rule the church.

### III. A CHURCH MUST EXIST IN ONE OF FOUR POSSIBLE STATES.

- A. A church may be **Scripturally unorganized**.
1. For a period after the establishment of a congregation, it may not be possible to appoint elders and deacons because no one is yet qualified.
  2. The churches established by Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey existed for up to three years before elders and deacons were appointed (Acts 13 and 14).
- B. A church may be **Scripturally organized**.
1. This is the case when a church is able to appoint men who meet the God-given qualifications to serve as elders and deacons.
  2. The goal of every congregation should be to have fully qualified elders ruling them and deacons serving them.
- C. A church may be **unscripturally unorganized**.
1. If a church has men who are qualified to serve as elders and deacons, but refuses to appoint them, it is unscripturally unorganized!
  2. Sometimes men who run the church by business meetings of the male members are reluctant to give up their power to elders.
  3. We must not rebel against God's plan for the organization of His church!
- D. A church may be **unscripturally organized**.

1. This is the case when a church has unqualified men serving as elders or deacons.
2. It would also be the case if a church had only one elder or one deacon, or deacons without elders.

**Conclusion:**

1. God's way for the organization of His church is best!
2. When fully functioning, nothing works better.
3. God's plan is so simple that many refuse to accept it.

**REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What are the responsibilities of elders to the church?
2. What is the meaning of the word "deacon?"
3. How can we tell when special servants of the church are meant?
4. Where is the word "deacon" found in our English New Testament?
5. Where are the qualifications for deacons given?
6. What are two Scriptural states of the organization of the church?
7. What are two unscriptural states of the organization of the church?
8. Explain the qualification "not given to much wine."
9. What are the qualifications for the wives of elders and deacons?
10. Are elders and deacons joint rulers of the church?
11. Do deacons have equal authority with elders?
12. Do we ever read in the New Testament of a "board of elders and deacons?"
13. Why cannot a woman be a deacon?
14. Can a elder sin? If he does, how is it to be dealt with?

15. Who is the only Head of the church?
16. Who is the Chief Shepherd?
17. To whom must all elders given an account?

## LESSON FIFTEEN: THE DISCIPLINE OF THE CHURCH

### Introduction:

1. Members of Christ's true church are sometimes called "saints" in the New Testament (1 Cor. 1:2).
  - a. A saint (literally, "a holy one") is one who has been set apart from the world.
  - b. A saint will be known for his righteous life.
2. Disciples of Jesus are also spoken of as "salt" and "light" (Matt. 5:13-16; Phil. 2:15).
3. The conduct of Christians must be "worthy of the gospel of Christ" (Phil. 1:27).
4. What happens when a child of God goes back into a life of sin?
  - a. Does the church have any responsibility to the one who has fallen away?
  - b. Should effort be made to reclaim the lost and erring (Luke 15:4,8)?
5. An important part of identification of the one, true church is its practice of discipline in an earnest effort to save the soul of the erring member.

### Discussion:

#### I. WHAT IS DISCIPLINE?

- A. Discipline is the "training of the mental, moral and physical powers by instruction, control and exercise" (Funk and Wagnall's *Standard Desk Dictionary*, Vol. 1).
- B. There are two kinds of discipline:
  1. **Preventive** discipline is positive teaching designed to keep one in the strait and narrow way.
  2. **Punitive** discipline is necessary when one has wandered from the strait and narrow way and must be shocked into the realization that he is lost.
- C. Church discipline is an act of love.

1. It should never be carried out to “get even” with someone or as a “club” to beat an individual or group into submission!
2. It must be carried out in love!!
3. A father disciplines his child because he loves him (Prov. 13:24; Heb. 12:5-11).

## II. WHO SHOULD BE DISCIPLINED?

- A. Members of the church who become immoral must be disciplined (1 Cor. 5:1,2, 9-13).
- B. Members who “walk disorderly” must be disciplined (2 Thess. 3:6-11).
  1. The particular people Paul was addressing were lazy people who had become busybodies.
  2. Any sin, including forsaking the assembly, if unrepented of, is subject to the discipline of the church (Heb. 10:25).
  3. We must “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness” (Eph. 5:11).
- C. False teachers and factious members must be disciplined!
  1. Those who cause division contrary to the truth should be **noted** and **avoided** (Rom. 16:17,18).
  2. Those who cause divisions and factions must also be disciplined (Titus 3:10,11).

## III. HOW SHOULD DISCIPLINE BE CARRIED OUT?

- A. It must be done by the whole church to be effective (1 Cor. 5:1-5; 2 Cor. 2:6).
  1. It will not be effective unless there is united action.
  2. One who will not participate in legitimate church discipline is himself in need of discipline.
- B. It must be a “withdrawal of fellowship” (2 Thess. 3:6)!
  1. This should cause the erring to realize the seriousness of his sin.

2. A Christian must not even eat with the brother who has been withdrawn from - all social activities are forbidden (1 Cor. 5:11; 2 Thess. 3:14).
3. The erring member should not be treated as an enemy, but admonished as a brother (2 Thess. 3:15).
4. Discipline should always be done in meekness and love (Gal. 6:1; 1 Cor. 16:14).

#### IV. WHY SHOULD DISCIPLINE BE DONE?

- A. It should be done to save the soul of the sinner (1 Cor. 5:4,5; 2 Cor. 2:6-8; Jas. 5:19, 20).
- B. It should be done to protect other members of the church from the bad influence of the sinner (1 Cor. 5:6-8).
  1. A little yeast infiltrates a whole lump of dough.
  2. If immoral behavior in a brother or sister is not rebuked, the sinner will likely influence others.
  3. If false teaching by a brother or sister is not rebuked, it almost certainly will result in others being led astray and lost.
- C. It should be done to preserve the good name of the church.
  1. The church at Corinth was tolerating a sin that not even the heathen would condone (1 Cor. 5:1).
  2. Immoral behaviour by members of the church will cause the word of God to be blasphemed (Titus 2:5).

#### V. WHEN SHOULD DISCIPLINE BE DONE?

- A. When discipline is needed, it must not be delayed!
  1. Delay encourages the sinner to continue in his evil way (Eccl. 8:11).
  2. We must never forget that **the sinner is lost** until he is brought to repentance!
- B. Warning should be given before final withdrawal takes place.

1. Paul wrote: "Reject a divisive man after the **first** and **second** admonition" (Titus 3:10).
2. When sufficient efforts have been made to cause the sinner to repent, then withdrawal should be done without delay!

### **Conclusion:**

1. The Lord wants the church, which is His bride, to be pure and without blemish (Eph. 5:27).
2. It is essential that the church keep its doctrine pure!
3. It is also essential that members of the church keep themselves "unspotted from the world" (Jas. 1:27).
4. If a church does not practice Scriptural discipline, it has no right to claim to be the church of Jesus Christ!

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What is the meaning of "saint?"
2. Define discipline according to the dictionary.
3. What are the two kinds of discipline? Explain.
4. Does God chasten us because He hates us?
5. Why does a good father discipline his son or daughter?
6. Name three general categories of those who must be disciplined.
7. How should discipline be carried out?
8. Give three reasons for practicing church discipline.
9. How long should a church wait before it disciplines an erring member?
10. If a church fails to practice Scriptural discipline, does it have the right to call itself the church of Christ?

## **LESSON SIXTEEN: THE NAMES OF THE CHURCH AND ITS MEMBERS**

### **Introduction:**

1. We are seeking the marks by which we can identify the one, true church.
2. The New Testament is our guide and authority for it is the blueprint (pattern) for the Lord's church.
3. A key mark of identification of anything is its name:
  - a. Our names distinguish us from other human beings.
  - b. Products are usually registered with the government under a trade name.
4. A key mark of identification of the New Testament church is its name(s) as well as the names applied to its members.

### **Discussion:**

#### **I. DOES THE NAME REALLY MATTER?**

- A. It is commonly said: "There is nothing in a name."
  1. A poet said: "What is in a name? A rose by any other name would smell just as sweet."
  2. Names give identity. Those who argue there is nothing in a name are concerned about their name and would not want it forged.
- B. God attaches great importance to names.
  1. God allowed Adam to name all the animals (Gen. 2:19,20).
  2. God changed Abram's {exalted father} name to Abraham {father of a multitude} (Gen. 17:5).
  3. God also changed Sarai's name to Sarah (Gen. 17:15).
  4. Before the birth of John the baptist Zacharias was told by the angel of God to name him John (Luke 1:13, 57-63).
  5. Before the Lord was born the angel told Joseph: "You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21).

## II. THERE ARE VARIOUS NAMES GIVEN TO THE CHURCH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

A. Many terms describe the nature of the church:

1. **The kingdom of heaven** (Matt. 16:18,19).
2. **The body of Christ** (Eph. 1:22,23; 4:4-6).
3. **The temple of God** (Eph. 2:20-22).
4. **The house {family} of God** (Eph. 2:19; 1 Tim. 3:14,15).
5. **A royal priesthood and holy nation** (1 Pet. 2:9).

B. Most often it is simply called “**the church**” (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:47; 5:11; 8:1; 1 Cor. 4:17; Eph. 3:21).

1. “Church” means “the called out.”
2. Christians are called out of sin and darkness into faith in, and fellowship with God.
3. In New Testament times there were not hundreds of competing denominations as there are today, so the simple designation “the church” was sufficient.

C. Terms are also used which imply ownership.

1. Frequently, the saved are called “**the church of God**” (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 1:2; 11:22; 15:9; Gal. 1:13; 1 Tim. 3:5).
2. The church is also known as “**the churches of Christ**” (Rom. 16:16).
  - a. Christ said: “I will build **My** church” (Matt. 16:18); if it is Christ’s church, then it is the church of Christ.
  - b. “Churches of Christ” refer to the various congregations of the same faith and practice which meet in different geographical localities (Rom. 16:16).
3. Human names give glory to men (Lutheran), or places (Church of Rome; Church of England, etc.), or peculiar doctrines held by a

group (Baptist, Seventh Day Adventist, etc.), but Scriptural names give honor to the Godhead.

### III. SEVERAL NAMES ARE USED TO DESCRIBE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

A. These terms often describe some characteristic of one who follows Christ.

1. **Members** shows our relationship to Christ and to one another in the body (Rom. 12:4; 1 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 4:25).
2. **Disciples** shows that we are learners and followers of Jesus Christ (Acts 6:1; 11:26; 20:7).
3. **Brethren** shows our kinship with one another in the family of God (Acts 12:17; 15:36; 1 John 3:14).
4. **Saints** (holy ones) shows the kind of character Christians must have (Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2; 14:33).
5. **Pilgrims** shows that this earth is not our home (1 Pet. 2:11).
6. **Children** shows our relationship to God and the blessings we will inherit as a result (Rom. 8:16,17; Gal. 3:26,27; 1 John 3:2).
7. **Servants (slaves)** shows that God owns us and we owe obedience and service to Him (Rom. 6:16-18, 22; Rev. 1:1; 2:20).

B. The specific designation given by God to His New Testament people is **Christian** (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16; Jas. 2:7).

1. A Christian is one who is like Christ - a follower of Jesus Christ.
2. Isaiah prophesied that God's people would be called by a new name which the Lord Himself would give (Isa. 62:1,2).
  - a. Salvation would go forth from Jerusalem.
  - b. Gentiles would see God's righteousness (salvation).
  - c. God's people would be given a new name by the Lord.
3. Isaiah 62:1,2 is fulfilled in Acts 11:26.
  - a. The gospel had gone forth from Jerusalem (Acts 1:8; 8:4).

- b. Gentiles had received the gospel (Acts 10:1-11:18).
- c. The disciples were **first** called Christians in Antioch.
- d. “Were called” is translated from the Greek “chrematizo” which means “to be called by a Divine influence.” (See Adam Clarke’s comments on this verse in *Clarke’s Commentary*.)

### **Conclusion:**

- 1. Names are important, especially if God has given them.
- 2. Salvation is only in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:11,12).
- 3. If we are going to restore the New Testament church we must restore the Scriptural terms by which it and its members are called.
- 4. If all spoke the same language in religion, using the same Scriptural designations, all who believe in Christ would be brought closer to that unity for which our Lord prayed (John 17:20-23).
- 5. Let us give honor and glory to God, our Father, and Jesus Christ, our Savior, by calling ourselves after Them.

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

- 1. What is a key mark of identification of anything or anyone?
- 2. Prove that names are important to God.
- 3. What are some of the descriptive terms which are applied to the church in the New Testament?
- 4. What is the church most often called in the New Testament?
- 5. What are two names of the church which show ownership?
- 6. What are some of the descriptive terms used for members of the church in the New Testament?
- 7. Who prophesied that God would give His people a new name? Where is it found?

8. Give two reasons we should use Scriptural designations for the church.
9. Where is Isaiah 62:1,2 fulfilled in the New Testament?
10. Who gave the name “Christian” to the disciples?
11. What are the three passages in the New Testament where “Christian” is found?



## **LESSON SEVENTEEN: HOW TO ENTER THE CHURCH**

### **Introduction:**

1. In our search for the one, true church we have learned that:
  - a. We can find the true church by going to the New Testament which is its pattern.
  - b. The Lord's church began in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost after the resurrection and ascension of the Lord.
  - c. Christ's church worships God in spirit (right attitude) and truth (right acts).
  - d. Jesus Christ is the Head of His church and rules from His headquarters in heaven.
  - e. Each congregation is self-governing under its elders who meet certain qualifications.
  - f. The church has a three-fold work to do: (1) Evangelism (2) Edification (3) Benevolence.
  - g. The church and its members have divinely given names by which they are to be called.
  - h. The church keeps itself pure by practicing discipline.
2. Only one question remains to be answered in our search for the one, true church, i.e. how does one enter the church?

### **Discussion:**

#### **I. ONE MUST HEAR THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST!**

- A. The gospel of Christ is "the power of God to salvation" (Rom. 1:16).
  1. The heart of the gospel is the truth that "Christ died for our sins... that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day" (1 Cor. 15:3,4).
  2. The gospel includes the whole word of truth, i.e. the New Testament (Eph. 1:13).
  3. We will be judged by the gospel (Rom. 2:16; John 12:48).

4. All who do not obey the gospel will be lost (2 Thess. 1:7-9).
- B. The gospel must be preached to the whole world, to every nation, and to every soul in every nation (Matt. 28:19,20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46,47).
  1. Where the gospel has not gone, Christ is not known!
  2. Where Christ is not known, there is no salvation!
- C. One must respond to the hearing of the gospel in order to be saved.
  1. He must **believe** (Mark 16:16).
  2. He must **repent** (Luke 24:27).
  3. He must be **baptized** (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16).
- D. Wherever the gospel is preached, those with “good and honest hearts” will respond, and the church will come into being (Matt. 13:18-23; Luke 8:11).

## II. ONE MUST BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD!

- A. Faith is essential to salvation (Heb. 11:6).
  1. We must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (John 8:24).
  2. We must believe the gospel of Jesus Christ (Mark 16:15,16).
- B. We believe as a result of hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17; Eph. 1:13).
- C. Faith is the proper response to God’s grace (Eph. 2:8-10).
  1. Grace is God’s part - He has given us the Savior Who died for our sins (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 John 2:2).
  2. Faith is man’s part - we must accept God’s offer of pardon through Christ by our faith (Rom. 5:1).
- D. The faith which saves is the faith which obeys!
  1. Mental assent is not enough.
    - a. Some of the Pharisees believed in Jesus, but would not confess Him (John 12:42, 43).

- b. The demons believe and fear, but are not saved (Jas. 2:19).
- 2. True faith expresses itself in obedience from the heart (Jas. 2:20-26; Rom. 6:16-18; Heb. 5:8,9).
- 3. True faith **works** through **love** (Gal. 5:6).

### III. ONE MUST REPENT OF ALL HIS SINS.

- A. Many misunderstand what repentance is.
  - 1. Some think repentance is being sorry for your sins (Acts 2:37,38; 2 Cor. 7:9,10).
  - 2. Others think repentance is a change of life (Matt. 3:8).
- B. Repentance is a **change of the mind, the will**, which is brought about by godly sorrow, and results in a change of life!
  - 1. One becomes sorry (regretful) that he has disobeyed God (Acts 2:37; 2 Cor. 7:10).
  - 2. This regret causes him to change his mind toward sin (Matt. 21:28, 29).
  - 3. He then changes directions in his life and does good instead of bad (1 Thess. 1:9,10; Matt. 3:8).
- C. Faith comes before repentance.
  - 1. Those who hold the false doctrine of “faith only” teach that we must repent before we believe.
  - 2. How can one “repent toward God” if he has not heard of God and does not believe in Him (Acts 20:21)?
  - 3. The Jews on Pentecost heard and believed the gospel **before** they were told to repent (Acts 2:22-38).
- D. Repentance is essential to salvation!
  - 1. Jesus warned: “Repent, or perish” (Luke 13:3)!
  - 2. Repentance and baptism are both essential for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

3. All are commanded to repent because Judgment Day is coming (Acts 17:30,31)!

#### IV. ONE MUST CONFESS THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD!

- A. Confession naturally follows faith (2 Cor. 4:13; Rom. 10:8-10).
- B. If we confess Christ, He will also confess us (Matt. 10:32, 33; Mark 8:38).
- C. Confession of Christ must be made before one is baptized (Acts 8:36-39).
  1. The Ethiopian's confession was: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."
  2. Some say that this verse should not be in the text (see the ASV and many of the modern translations).
    - a. It is true that it is not found in two of the three of the oldest manuscripts of the New Testament which date from 350 to 450.
    - b. However, men such as Irenaeus who lived in the second century and Cyprian who lived in the third, quoted verse 37 as Scripture; it is was in the New Testament which they had!

#### V. ONE MUST BE BAPTIZED FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS!

- A. Burial is a **burial in, and a resurrection from**, water (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12).
- B. Baptism is **in the name of Jesus Christ** {by His authority} (Acts 2:38; Col. 3:17).
- C. Baptism is **into** (Greek - eis) the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19).
- D. What does baptism do?
  1. It puts us into Christ where **all** spiritual blessings are (Eph. 1:3; Gal. 3:26,27).
  2. It puts us in contact with the blood of Christ which washes away our sins (Rev. 1:5; Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:3).
  3. It saves us (1 Pet. 3:21).

4. It puts us in the one body, the church (Acts 2:42,47; 1 Cor. 12:13).
  5. Baptism is the point at which our sins are remitted (Acts 2:38; Matt. 26:28).
- E. Baptism is for those who have heard and believed the gospel and have repented of all their sins.
1. It is not for babies for they have no sin (Matt. 18:3).
  2. Children do not inherit the sins of their parents (Ezek. 18:20; 1 John 3:4).
  3. Believers who are accountable are the only proper subjects of baptism (Acts 8:12)!

### **Conclusion:**

1. In order to enter the one, true church, one must:
  - a. Hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.
  - b. Believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
  - c. Repent of all his past sins.
  - d. Confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
  - e. Be baptized for the remission of sins.
2. We do not join the church of Christ, but are added by the Lord when we obey the gospel of Christ.

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What is the only power for salvation?
2. What is the heart of the gospel?
3. To whom must the gospel be preached?
4. How does faith come?

5. What is the proper response to God's grace?
6. What kind of faith saves?
7. What is repentance?
8. Who confessed, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?"
9. Prove that Acts 8:37 is Scripture.
10. Show that sprinkling and pouring are not Scriptural baptism.
11. Can one join the Lord's church?
12. What are the five steps into the church?

## **LESSON EIGHTEEN: THE FUTURE OF THE ONE, TRUE CHURCH**

### **Introduction:**

1. The one, true church, which belongs to Jesus Christ, will always continue in existence as long as we have the word of God, which is the seed of the kingdom {church} (Luke 8:11; Matt. 24:35; 1 Pet. 1:24,25).
2. It can be restored by following the New Testament pattern.
3. We can identify the one, true church by means of the marks of identification.
4. What is the future of the church of Christ?

### **Discussion:**

#### **I. HISTORY LIKELY WILL CONTINUE TO REPEAT ITSELF.**

- A. It has been well said that “he who does not heed the lessons of history is doomed to repeat the mistakes of the past!”
- B. The history of God’s people has always been one of faithfulness, then apostasy, followed by repentance and restoration.
  1. One can see this very clearly in Israel’s history (cf. the book of Judges).
  2. One can also see it very clearly in the history of the church.
  3. It has been well said that the church is never more than one generation from apostasy (Josh. 24:31; Judg. 2:7, 10).
    - a. Jesus warned of false prophets (Matt. 7:15).
    - b. Paul also warned of false teachers (Acts 20:29, 30; 2 Thess. 2:1-12; 1 Tim. 4:1-5).
    - c. Peter too told of teachers who would try to destroy the faith (2 Pet. 2:1,2).
  4. Besides false doctrine, there is the ever present threat of conformity with the world (Rom. 12:1,2).
    - a. We must not love this world (1 John 2:15-17).

- b. We must remember this world is not our home (1 Pet. 2:11; Heb. 11:10, 16, 24-26).
- C. Satan will use every weapon to destroy the one, true church of God (Eph. 6: 11-18).

## II. THE LORD IS COMING BACK FOR HIS CHURCH!

- A. The Second Coming of Christ is taught throughout the New Testament!
  - 1. He is coming to raise the dead (1 Cor. 15; 1 Thess. 4: 13 - 5:11; John 5:28,29; Acts 24:15).
  - 2. He is coming to judge the whole world (Matt. 25:31- 46; Acts 17:30, 31; Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10).
  - 3. At His coming, the “earth and the works that are in it will be burned up” (2 Pet. 3:10-13).
  - 4. At His coming, the kingdom (church) will be **delivered back to** God (1 Cor. 15:24-26).
    - a. He is **not** coming to **establish** His kingdom, but to **deliver** it back to God, the Father!
    - b. Christ’s bride (church) must be pure and without blemish (Eph. 5:25-27).
- B. **No one knows** the time of the Lord’s return (Matt. 24:36; Mark 13:32).
  - 1. No signs will be given (Matt. 24:27, 37-39, 44).
  - 2. Christ’s coming will be as sudden as labor pains upon a pregnant woman (1 Thess. 5:3).
  - 3. He will come “as a thief in the night” (Matt. 24:42- 44; 1 Thess. 5:2).

## III. THE JUDGMENT WILL TAKE PLACE WHEN CHRIST COMES!

- A. Christ Himself will be the Judge (John 5:22; Acts 17:30, 31).
- B. Everyone will be judged (Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10).
- C. Each will be judged on the basis of his obedience (Matt. 25:31-46).

- D. Man-made churches (human religious institutions) will not survive the Judgment (Matt. 7:13-23; 15:13,14; Luke 6:46).

#### **IV. ETERNITY IN HEAVEN OR HELL WILL FOLLOW FOR ALL MEN!**

- A. Christians have hope of eternal life in heaven (Titus 1:2).
  - 1. Jesus promised to prepare a home for us (John 14:1-3).
  - 2. Peter says it is “reserved for us” (1 Pet. 1:3-5).
  - 3. Our labors and suffering in the Lord are not in vain (Rev. 14:13; 1 Cor. 15:58).
- B. There is no hope given in the Scriptures for those outside the body of Christ when He comes (Eph. 5:23; 2 Thess. 1:7-9).

#### **V. WE MUST BE READY TO MEET THE LORD WHEN HE COMES!**

- A. We must “have our lamps trimmed” (Matt. 25:1-13).
- B. We must use our talents while there is time (Matt. 25:14-30).
- C. Let us follow the Lord’s example: “I must work the works of Him Who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work” (John 9:4)

#### **Conclusion:**

- 1. One must be a member of the Lord’s one, true church in order to be saved!
- 2. One becomes a member when he obeys the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- 3. If you have not done so, obey the same gospel which was preached by inspired men of God in the first century; the same Lord will then add you to the same church.
- 4. You can then live, love and serve the Lord in His one, true church all the days of your life and die with a sure hope of a home in heaven in your heart.

## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is necessary in order for the one, true church to exist?
2. How can we restore the one, true church today?
3. How can we find the one, true church today?
4. What has always been true with God's people, both in the Old Testament and in church history?
5. Did Jesus believe that one religious teacher was just as good as another regardless of what he taught?
6. Beside the danger of false doctrine, what other threat does the church constantly face?
7. Name four things the Lord is coming again to do.
8. Prove that Christ is not coming back to establish His kingdom on this earth.
9. When will the Lord return?
10. In what manner will the Lord return?
11. Who is going to be judged on the Last Day?
12. What will happen to this earth when the Lord returns?
13. Upon what basis will we be judged?
14. Where will faithful Christians be in eternity?
15. Where will people be who have never obeyed the gospel?

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