

*A People of the Book*  
*A Topical Study*

A Study of

Why I Am A  
Member Of The  
Church of Christ

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Why I am a member of the church of Christ  
Lesson # 1

## Introductory Thoughts

### Introduction

Christians are constantly under attack by the enemy of Christ. Satan is like a roaring lion always seeking someone to devour. He has many tactics & methods to trip us up & we must continually be on guard. These lessons are designed to bolster our faith in Jesus & our commitment to be true to His teachings.

### 1. Reasons for this study

#### a. Schemes used by Satan to turn us from Jesus

- 1) **Atheism** – denial of the existence of a divine being; to live life as if there is no God.
  - a) Causes pessimism & skepticism about spiritual things
  - b) Idea – physical or material things are all there is
  - c) Refuted by Christian evidences
- 2) **Legalism** – Justification by works; works based religion. Acceptable to God because doing certain works or living up to a certain standard.
  - a) Produces doubt & a continual sense of guilt. 0
  - b) Never certain doing enough – always falling short & fearful
  - c) No joy or assurance of salvation
  - d) Refuted by the gospel
- 3) **Liberalism** – Truth is something that is abstract & uncertain.
  - a) Everything is relative – depending upon circumstances
  - b) No certainty concerning scriptures or salvation
  - c) Allows unlimited change – Christianity evolves
  - d) This study will attempt to defeat this philosophy

#### b. Identifiable pattern to concept of the church

- 1) **Greek word** - Ekklesia – meaning the called out assembly
  - a) A self governing democratic society whose members were subject to a heavenly king
  - b) A free society that was always conscious that their freedom sprang from obedience to their king
- 2) **First applied to Christianity by Jesus** – Mt.16:18
  - a) Used of the local congregation as well as the world wide body of believers
  - b) An assembly of believers who have fellowship with Jesus & one another (the body of Christ)

### 2. Christianity has an identifiable pattern

#### a. Concept of Pattern

- 1) **Greek word** – Tupos – pattern or form; a mold. When duplicated certain characteristics will always be found.
  - a) Heb.8:5 – make according to the pattern shown you
  - b) Titus 2:7 – show self an example (pattern) of good works

## b. Concept of pattern in NT

### 1) Pattern of belief to be adhered to

- a) Rom.6:17,18 – form of teaching delivered
- b) Jn.8:31,32 – certain body of truth sets you free
  - 1) Noah & flood are truth – not save
  - 2) 1 Pet.1:22 – purified souls in obedience to truth

### 2) Distinctiveness of the faith

- a) A distinctive unchanging body of truth
- b) The faith
  - Gal.1:23 – preaching “the faith”
  - Acts 6:7 – obedient to “the faith”
  - Eph.4:4,5 – one faith
  - Phil.1:27 – contending for “the faith of the gospel”
  - Jude 3 – contend earnestly for “the faith”

### 3) Apostles taught pattern

- a) 1 Cor.1:10 – agree; no divisions; perfectly united
- b) 1 Cor.4:17 – my ways – I teach in every church
- c) 1 Cor.7:17 – the rule I lay down in all churches
- d) 1 Cor.14:33,34 – As in all the congregations  
(Note - God not God of disorder)
- e) 1 Cor.16:1,2 – do what I told the Galatian churches
- f) 2 Tim.1:13 – keep as the pattern of sound teaching

### 4) Consequences when violate pattern

- a) Gal.1:6-9 - anathama
- b) 1 Cor.15:2 – hold firmly to gospel or believe in vain

## 3. Apostles teachings are important

### a. Some want only the red print – all-else up to interpretation

- 1) Only what Jesus says is really important
- 2) Whatever others say is just their opinion – accept or reject

### b. Apostles words are important too

- 1) Mt.10:40 – receive you = receives Me
- 2) Lk.10:16 – rejects you = rejects Me
- 3) 1 Cor.14:37 – what writing to you is Lord’s command
- 4) 2 Pet 3:1,2 – words of Lord spoken through apostles

### c. Scriptures are important too

- 1) 1 Cor.4:6 – do not go beyond what written
- 2) 2 Tim.3:16,17 – inspired of God & profitable
- 3) 2 Pet.1:3,4 – all need for life & godliness in knowing Jesus

## The Church

### Introduction

In the last lesson our focus was the concept of an identifiable pattern in Christianity. The Greek word “tupos” meaning pattern or mold is used concerning several things that relate to the church & the teachings of Christianity. The idea is that there are certain identifiable characteristics to the teachings of the gospel & the apostles. In this lesson we will focus on what the church is & is not.

1. **Church** – Ekklesia = the called out; a group of people called out to an assembly; people called from one realm to another.

a. **Traditional views** concerning the church

1) **The building** – in our day people refer to a building as the church.

Acts 11:22 – report came to the ears of the church

1 Pet.2:9 – Peter referred to the called out as: a chosen people; a royal priesthood; a holy nation; a people belonging to God

2) **A denomination** – many different religious groups all teaching different doctrines.

Jn.17:20,21 – Jesus prayed that we all be “one” (not different)

He wants us one in what we believe & practice

1 Cor.1:10 – Paul condemns division, any division of believers

Eph.4:4-6 – one church which is the body of Christ

b. **What the church is**

1) **Those who have been saved from sin**

a) Mt.1:21 – why Jesus came – save His people from sin

(not from famine, poverty, war, heartache etc.)

(see also – Lk.19:10; 1 Tim.1:15)

b) Acts 2:47 – added saved to the church

As soon as one is saved the Lord adds them to His church.

Therefore if one is saved - are automatically in His church

c) One is saved when they are obedient to form of doctrine

Rom.6:17,18

2) **Those purchased by the blood of Jesus**

a) Acts 20:28; 1 Cor.6:19,20

b) Jesus shed His blood for the forgiveness of man’s sin –

Mt.26:28; Eph.1:7; 1 Pet.1:18,19; Rev.1:5

c) His blood forgives, redeems & washes sinners, yet it was shed to purchase the church. Therefore the church is composed of those who have been forgiven, redeemed & washed by the blood of Jesus. Eph.5:25,26

3) **The sanctified**

a) 1 Cor.1:2

b) **Idea** – those set apart or dedicated to God

4) **The body of Christ**

a) Eph.1:22,23; Col.1:18, 24

b) Both Jew & Gentile are reconciled in this one body – Eph.2:16  
**Reconciled** = to erase the enmity or estrangement between parties & restore friendship. This happens when we are in His body the church.

c. **Note** that all these definitions refer to a relationship with Jesus

- 1) The bride of Christ - Eph.5:22-32
- 2) Enrolled in heaven – Heb.12:22,23
- 3) Those who maintain a special relationship with Jesus

## 2. Nowhere does the New Testament speak about being saved first & then later joining the church.

- a. You do not join the church of Christ – the Lord adds you to it immediately when you are saved. You are reconciled to God in the church immediately upon salvation.
- b. All baptized believers are added to His church – Acts 2:38,39,47

## 3. How is one added to the church?

- a. When one obeys a particular form of teaching they are saved – Rom.6:17,18 (this is man's side of redemption, not God's)
- b. The form of teaching delivered is the teaching concerning the death, burial & resurrection of Jesus – 1 Cor.15:1-7
- c. In the book of Acts we find exactly what people did to become Christians. Below is a diagram of the conversions in the book of Acts. The items checked show which particular areas of obedience the Holy Spirit mentions in that particular conversion.

Pentecost	Samaritans	Simon	Eunuch	Saul	Cornelius	Lydia	Jailor	Corinthians
Acts 2	Acts 8:12	Acts 8:13	Acts 8:35-40	Acts 9:22	Acts 10	Acts 16:14,15	Acts 16:30-34	Acts 18:8

Hearing  
 Belief  
 Repentance  
 Confession  
 Baptism

- d. Some do not acknowledge baptism as part of the salvation experience. They see it as just an outward expression of an inward faith, but scripture shows it is much more.
  - 1) Jesus connects baptism with salvation – Mk.16:15,16 (and is)  
 Not say believes & is saved & can later be baptized
  - 2) Jesus commanded all to be baptized in name of the Father, Son & The Holy Spirit – Mt.28:18-20
  - 3) Paul taught baptism in relation to putting on Christ – Gal.3:26,27
  - 4) Peter taught baptism for the remission of sins – Acts 2:38,39
  - 5) Peter taught that baptism saves - 1 Pet.3:21  
 The blood of Christ cleanses our conscience (Heb.9:14). But our conscience is only clear toward God when we are baptized (1 Pet.3:21). Therefore our conscience is cleansed by Christ's blood at baptism.

#### 4. Consider the following

- a. Mt.28:19 - Into the name of = in Greek means “into the possession of”
  - 1) It is not just a formula of words to speak at a baptism
  - 2) Jesus gave Himself to purify a people unto Himself, a people for His own possession (Titus 2:14). Since baptism is into the possession of the Father, Son & Holy Spirit we become God’s possession at baptism.
- b. The blood of Christ washes away sins at baptism. Paul was told to arise & be baptized & wash away your sins (Acts 22:16). Yet it is the blood of Jesus that washes away sin (Rev.1:5). Therefore we are washed by the blood of Jesus at baptism.
- c. Baptism places one into Christ. It is only in Jesus that people are saved. All spiritual blessings are in Christ (Eph.1:3). To be saved one must be in Christ. Rom.6:3,4 shows that we are baptized into Christ Jesus. We are also baptized into His death & burial. As one rises from the waters of baptism they are raised to walk in a newness of life. The new life follows our baptism into Christ.
- d. Gal.3:26,27 shows that faith leads us to be baptized into Christ. This is how we put on Christ. A person becomes a member of the church when by faith they repent of their sins & confess Jesus as Lord & are baptized into Christ.
- e. Baptism is immersion, not sprinkling or pouring. The Greek word means immersion, to plunge, dunk or submerge. Baptism is described as a burial (Rom.6:4; Col.2:12; Acts 8:36-39). Notice at the Eunuch’s baptism they both went down into the water & came up out of the water.
- f. Baptism is meant only for those who
  - 1) Can be taught – Mt.28:18-20  
(Infants can’t be taught & are not candidates for baptism)
  - 2) Who can believe – Mk.16:15,16
  - 3) Who can repent – Acts 2:38
  - 4) Can obey the form of teaching from the heart – Rom.6:17,18  
(One is to respond from their own free will – their choice)

#### Conclusion

The church of Christ is not a building or a denomination. It is the saved; those who belong to Jesus Christ. The Lord adds all the saved to His church. One becomes a part of the church when by faith in Jesus they respond willingly to Jesus in repentance, confession & baptism. In doing this they put on Christ & become the possession of Jesus.

Why I Am A Member Of The church Of Christ  
Lesson # 3

**The Pattern Of Faith**

**Introduction**

In our study we have noticed that Christianity is ordered after a pattern & is distinctive in its identity. In this lesson we want to pursue this thought of an identifiable pattern as it relates to the faith. We will concentrate on two aspects of the faith – 1<sup>st</sup> that the faith is singular & 2<sup>nd</sup> that the faith is distinctive.

**1. The singular nature of the church**

- a. Notice that way the church is described - singular
  - 1) Eph.3:10,11 – through the church
  - 2) Mt.16:18 – build My church
  - 3) Acts 8:1-3 – against the church
  - 4) Eph.1:22,23 – head over the church
- b. Are times church is plural – referring to several congregations
  - 1) Rom.16:16 – all churches send greetings
  - 2) 1 Cor.14:34 – as in all the churches
- c. Yet nature is singular – one church, one body – Eph.4:4

**2. The singular nature of the faith**

- a. The faith – a body of truth that is taught that produces faith in Jesus
- b. The faith can be obeyed – Acts 6:7
  - 1) Great company of priests obeyed the faith
  - 2) The faith = what was taught & what was believed
- c. The faith can be continued in – Acts 14:22
  - 1) Note “the faith”, not just any faith
  - 2) If any faith good enough – how know which faith to continue in?
- d. The faith is what was preached – Gal.1:23
  - 1) What Paul taught he referred to as “the faith”
  - 2) He did not feel that one faith was as good as another - Gal.1:7-9
- e. Christians exhorted to strive for “the faith of the gospel” – Phil.1:27
  - 1) If any faith good enough – how know what strive for?
  - 2) What believed had to be distinctive
- f. Christians exhorted to contend for the faith – Jude 3
  - 1) The faith was once for all delivered – not many
  - 2) How contend for unless can identify?
- g. Christians can abandon the faith – 1 Tim.4:1
  - 1) Means the faith is distinctive & identifiable
  - 2) 1 Tim.5:8 – the faith can be denied
  - 3) The faith requires certain behavior; when fail do this we deny the faith
- h. 1 Tim.6:19,20 – some wandered from the faith

**3. Eph.4:1-13**

- a. One faith – not many
- b. Gave leaders so be rooted in the faith – understand alike & unite around

4. Christianity is ordered after one body of truth
  - a. Jn.8:31,32 – know truth & made free
    - 1) Refers to the word (teachings of Christ)
    - 2) Unless one remains in Christ's word – not know or follow truth
  - b. Jn.12:48 – word I spoke judge you
    - 1) Standard of judgment – words (teachings) of Jesus
    - 2) Not just following any teachings is OK
  - c. 1 Pet.1:22 – purified soul in obeying truth
    - 1) Obedience to a certain truth purifies (not just any teaching)
    - 2) We must distinguish God's truth from all other truth
  - d. Rom.6:17,18 – obeyed from heart teaching delivered
    - 1) Obedience to truth freed them
    - 2) Was a certain form (identifiable mold) of truth
    - 3) Changed from slaves of sin to slaves of righteousness by obeying a certain body of truth
  
5. The truth by which Christians walk is the word of God
  - a. Gal.5:7 – were running well – what hindered you?
  - b. Jn.17:17 – God's word is truth
  - c. God's word like seed reproduces after it's kind
    - 1) Seed brings forth after it's kind – cotton; okra; watermelon etc.
    - 2) When God's word sown in the heart it produces Christians
    - 3) His word produces the same kind of Christian today as in 1<sup>st</sup> century
  - d. Rom.6:17,18 – not till obey form of teaching that one is freed from sin
    - 1) See this in Acts over & over – Pentecost; Samaritans; Eunuch; Paul; Cornelius; Lydia; Jailor; Corinthians
    - 2) All heard same message & responded to same truth
  
6. What truth must be taught to be obedient to the faith?
  - a. The truth about Jesus
    - 1) Who He is – God's Son; The Messiah; God in the flesh; Lord of all
    - 2) What He accomplished – paid penalty for sin; satisfied God's justice
    - 3) His position – savior; Lord; King; Judge
  - b. How we must respond to these truths
    - 1) Believe – accept wholeheartedly
    - 2) Respond in repentance; confession & baptism
    - 3) Wholehearted obedience in everyday life



Why I am a member of the church of Christ  
Lesson # 4

## The Foundation Of the Church

### Introduction

Christianity is a historical religion, which stands upon the work that Jesus accomplished on the cross. No institution can last longer than it's foundation & the foundation upon which the church is based is Christ Himself. In this lesson we will consider the foundation of the church of Christ.

1. Mt.16:18 – upon this rock I will build My church
  - a. What Peter confessed was the greatness of Jesus – His divinity – Son of God
  - b. The rock is neither Peter nor what he confessed. The rock is the deity of Jesus
  - c. Jesus predicted that not even death could hinder Him
  - d. Isa.28:16 – foundation stone on which God's house built is tried & proven
  - e. Ps.118:22 – God's stone would be rejected
  - f. Acts 4:11 – apostles referred to Jesus as stone which was rejected
  - g. Eph.2:20 – Jesus is the cornerstone
  
2. The apostles teaching on the church's foundation
  - a. 1 Cor.3:11 – no other foundation can be laid  
(to say that Peter is the rock on which church built is to reject revelation)
  - b. 1 Peter 2:3-8 – Jesus is living stone that was rejected & made foundation
  
3. That Jesus is divine was tested & proven right in His resurrection – Rom.1:4
  
4. The church & the kingdom are the same
  - a. Jesus used the terms interchangeably – Mt.16:18,19
  - b. Both are composed of the saints
    - 1) 1 Cor.1:2 – church composed of saints
    - 2) Col.1:12,13 – saints delivered from darkness into kingdom of light
  - c. Both are composed of blood bought individuals
    - 1) Acts 20:28 – church purchased by his blood
    - 2) Rev.5:9,10 – purchase with blood & made them a kingdom
  - d. Church & kingdom composed of priests (Christians)
    - 1) 1 Tim.3:15 – church is God's spiritual house
    - 2) 1 Pet.2:5 – spiritual house made up of priests
    - 3) Rev.1:6; 5:9,10 – kingdom composed of those priests
  
5. Further teachings on the kingdom
  - a. Preached was close at hand
    - 1) By John the Baptist – Mt.3:1,2
    - 2) By Jesus - Mt.4:17; Mk.1:15
    - 3) By the 12 – Mt.10:1,7
    - 4) By the 70 – Lk.10:1
    - 5) Means close – at the elbow
    - 6) Jesus said some would see it – Mk.9:1

b. Preached that saved are part of the kingdom

- 1) Col.1:13,14 – from kingdom of darkness to kingdom of His Son
- 2) Heb.12:28 – literally having received (already here, not future)
- 3) Rev.1:9 – companion in the kingdom

c. Jesus said come with power – Mk.9:1; church started with power - Acts1:8

d. Spoken of as already existing

- 1) Acts 8:12 – Philip preached concerning kingdom
- 2) 1 Thess.2:12 – called into His kingdom
- 3) Mt.7:21 – not all who say Lord, Lord enter

## The New Covenant - # 1

### Introduction

This lesson will focus on the New Covenant Jesus made with mankind. This covenant is distinctively different from the Old Covenant God made with the nation of Israel usually referred to as the Law of Moses. Some people believe & are heard to say – keep the 10 commandments & you will be saved & go to heaven. This statement is not true because, the 10 commandments are the foundation of the Old Covenant that God made with Israel exclusively. Ps.147:19,20 says – “He gave His word to Jacob, His statutes & His judgments unto Israel. He has not dealt so with any other nation; & as for His judgments they have not known them.” Scripture limits the Law of Moses & it’s 10 commandments to the Israelite people alone. This covenant was not meant for Christians; in fact one of the old prophets said that God would give His people a new covenant.

### 1. Jer.31:31-34 – the New Covenant prophesied

#### a. The Old Covenant was not meant to be permanent

- 1) God made the Old Covenant with Israel alone, yet God’s final intention was to bless the whole world through Jesus – Gen.12:1-4
- 2) God was preparing a people through whom He would bring the Messiah into the world.
- 3) The New Covenant was not intended to be like the Old Covenant nor to just incorporate the Old Covenant into it.
- 4) Israel broke that covenant with God & in fact was unable to keep it perfectly because of the sin in their lives. Heb.7:11, 18,19; 8:7,8
- 5) 2 Cor.3:1-16
  - a) It was a ministry that brought death because no one could keep it perfectly.
  - b) The Old Covenant began to fade away into insignificance from the day Moses gave it to Israel.

#### b. The New Covenant was to be written on the hearts of men not on tablets of stone.

- 1) God has always looked at the heart of man & desired sincerity in man in his approach to God.
- 2) By dealing with man’s heart, fellowship could be restored between men & God that had previously been broken because of man’s sin.
- 3) Under the New Covenant man would first be taught of God before he came to God. Under the Old Covenant after 8 days, one was considered to be under the covenant with God.
  - a) The Jew became a Jew shortly after birth, but was not schooled in the Hebrew religion until the age of 12. Thus, under the Old Covenant one came to know God “after the fact”.
  - b) Under the New Covenant one becomes a Christian only after first being taught about God & making a decision to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord.

**c. Those under the New Covenant would have their sins forgiven.**

- 1) The Old Covenant never fully dealt with man's problem with sin.
  - a) The blood of bulls & goats was never intended to remove sin. Heb.10:1-4
  - b) God forgave man his sin based not on the blood of animals but the blood that Jesus would shed on the cross. Rom.3:21-26
- 2) It is only in Jesus that man can have his sins forgiven. – Acts 4:12

**2. The Old Covenant examined**

- a. God called the nation of Israel out of Egypt to make them a holy nation dedicated to Him. They were to obey His voice & keep His commandments – Ex.19:3-6
- b. This group was given the 10 commandments at Sinai – Ex.20:1-17
- c. Statues & ordinances were added to this covenant telling the people how to live a holy life before God.- Exodus chapters 21-23
- d. The people agreed to keep all the commandments & ordinances that Moses had given them from God – Ex.24:3-8
  - 1) Sacrifices were made & part of that blood was saved in bowls.
  - 2) The book containing the 10 commandments & the ordinances were read to the people & all agreed to keep them.
  - 3) Blood was sprinkled upon this book to ratify the covenant
- e. The Law of Moses & the Old Covenant are one & the same – Heb.9:1,8-20  
The Law of Moses & the ordinances are the Old Covenant that is to be replaced in Jeremiah's prophesy – Jer.31:31-34
- f. Christians are dead to The Law – Rom.7:1-7  
(though shall not covet is the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment)
  - 1) Law existed before the Law of Moses because man has always been held accountable for his actions. (see Cain & Able)
  - 2) God has held man accountable to moral laws & principles from the beginning of time.
  - 3) Christians are not held accountable to the 10 commandments or any other part of the Law of Moses.
    - a) However, Christians are held accountable to the eternal principles that are contained in those 10 commandments.
    - b) Those principles existed & were binding upon all mankind before God gave the 10 commandments to Israel.
- g. The Law pointed all men unto Jesus – Gal.3:24,25
  - 1) The Law is referred to as a schoolmaster or guardian - tutor
  - 2) The word means "a boy leader" – one who taught boys morals & ethics & prepared them for manhood.
  - 3) The Law was to prepare Israel for the Messiah (spiritual manhood)
  - 4) When a boy reached manhood "a boy leader" was no longer needed.
  - 5) Now that Jesus has come we live by faith in Jesus, not faith in the Law
- h. The Old Law has been replaced – 1 Cor.9:21
  - 1) We are not without Law but are under Christ's Law

- 2) Under Christ we have peace with God – Eph.2:14
  - a) We are no longer enemies
  - b) Our sin & shortcomings have been taken away
- 3) The old Law has been cancelled – Col.2:14
  - a) Stood opposed to us = like an IOU
  - b) The Law demanded that a debt be paid for our sin = death
  - c) Jesus cancelled that debt against us at the cross
- 4) Christians are not held accountable to the ordinances contained in the Law – Col.2:16,17
- 5) The priesthood under the Old Law has been abolished
  - a) Heb.7:11,12 – under them perfection could never be attained
  - b) Because the priesthood was changed the Law had to be changed  
(Old Covenant priests had to be Levites, Jesus was of Judah)

### **Conclusion**

The Old Law was perfect as a legal system, but man was imperfect & could never keep it perfectly. The Old Covenant & the New Covenant could never run concurrently – Heb.7:12. The Old Covenant brought death & condemnation. The New covenant brings life & peace between man & God.

Why I am a member of the church of Christ  
Lesson # 6

## The New Covenant # 2

### Introduction

In our last lesson we discussed the covenant God made with Israel, showing that the 10 commandments & the Law of Moses all refer to that covenant. We discussed how the 10 commandments were the foundation of that covenant & that this covenant was never intended to be permanent. God prophesied through Jeremiah that a new covenant would be made with the house of Israel & through this new covenant sins would be removed. In this lesson we will continue that discussion & seek to identify who would be included in those covenant people.

### Jer.31:31-34

#### 1. Identifying God's covenant people

##### a. People who know God

- 1) These people different from those at Mt. Sinai – vs.34
  - 2) Gen.17:1-14
    - a) God made a covenant with Abraham & his seed – vs.7
    - b) Circumcision was the sign of being in that covenant relationship
    - c) All males were circumcised – 8 days old; slaves etc.
    - d) If male not circumcised he broke that covenant with God
    - e) People were covenant children & did not know God
  - 3) Under this new covenant people would know God from the least of them to the greatest of them.
    - a) They would be educated concerning the terms of the covenant & obey it from the heart.
    - b) God expected obedience to be from the heart, not just outward compliance to a few regulations
    - c) They would respond to God because they wanted to, not made
  - 4) These people would 1<sup>st</sup> be educated in the specifications of this covenant
    - a) Their hearts would be involved – really committed to it
    - b) They will know God – understand what getting into before they commit themselves to it
    - c) Those educated would respond because they wanted to obey
      - (1) Their minds & hearts would have been given to God
      - (2) Would be personally committed
    - d) Only way to come to God is to be drawn by Him – Jn.6:44,45
      - 1) How draw = be taught
      - 2) Would have heard & learned
- b. Heb.8:7-13 – quotes Jer.31:31-34
- 1) The old covenant could reveal sin but not remove it, and being defective it could not save or justify guilty sinners. It failed to meet the deepest needs of sinful man....sin had made it ineffective.

- 2) If the first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need for a new covenant. But man did not keep the old covenant. Two things happened: (1) Man failed to keep the covenant or law. (2) The law was not able to infuse the power to keep the 10 commandments.
- 3) Therefore, God had to do something or else man would be lost eternally.
- 4) This is the glorious gospel—the wonderful news of the new covenant. God did something. Note the words: “I will make a new covenant” (Hebrews 8:8).
- 5) The new covenant brings man
  - a) The power of a new mind & a new heart. God puts His laws in their mind & writes them upon their heart.
  - b) The old covenant or law condemned the heart and stirred the mind to think of failure and of condemnation and judgment. The new covenant frees the heart and stirs assurance and confidence in the mind of the true believer—absolute security.
  - c) Now they have the *desire and power* to follow and obey God Phil.2:12,13
  - d) A new heart and mind stirs us to love God because He has renewed us, and our love stirs us to seek His face continually.
    - (1) Even when we fail and come short—which we all do ever too often—our hearts are stirred to seek forgiveness and to repent and to begin anew to follow and obey Him.
    - (2) This is the difference between the old and new covenant. The old covenant or law condemned us and had no power to stir and energize us. But the new covenant, Christ within us, does have the power to forgive and stir us to arise and follow God anew and afresh.
- 6) They shall all know Me
  - a) There is no longer any need for human priests or mediators—no need for others to stand between God and man to say, “Know the Lord.”
  - b) Why? Because every man can now stand before God himself. Every person can now know God as though face-to-face. Every person can now approach God.
  - c) How? By the new covenant—through the Mediator of the new covenant, through the Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 8:6).
  - d) This also means that the privilege to know God is now open to all races and nations of people. “All shall know me, from the least to the greatest” (Hebrews 8:11).

- 7) The new covenant makes the first covenant old. God has given a new covenant; therefore, this means that the first covenant is old; that is, it is obsolete and no longer of use.
- a) Very simply, the old covenant of the law has been set aside; now we are to follow after the new covenant.
  - b) But we must *always remember* this: the new covenant is bound up in Jesus Christ. And Jesus Christ never destroyed the law; He fulfilled the law. That is, Jesus Christ *embodies* the law. He embodies the love and grace of God, yes, but He embodies the law of God as well.
  - c) We no longer look to the law nor follow the law. We look to Jesus Christ and follow Him. But in following Him, we follow the righteousness and holiness of God as well as the love and grace of God. We follow the law of God's nature as well as the love of God's nature.

## 2. Jesus came to make a new covenant with us

- a. Mt.26:28 – shed His blood to establish it
  - 1) Man cannot be saved from sin until sin is forgiven by God
  - 2) The blood of bulls & goats cannot take away sin
  - 3) Only the blood of Jesus is sufficient to bring salvation – 2 Cor.5:21
- b. **The blood of Jesus & the new covenant are inter-related**
  - 1) Jesus died to mediate the new covenant – Heb.9:15
  - 2) The blood of Jesus & the new covenant bring salvation from sin
  - 3) Blood dedicated both the old & new covenant
    - a) Heb.9:16-22 – old covenant - animals
    - b) Heb.9:23-28 – new covenant – Jesus'

## 3. We must obey the terms of the new covenant

- a. **The new covenant must be written on our hearts & minds**
  - 1) Means that we must learn & accept this covenant
  - 2) Means that we must voluntarily comply with its terms
- b. **What are the conditions of this new covenant?**
  - 1) One must hear & accept the gospel concerning Jesus
  - 2) One must trust Jesus to save them by doing as He asks
    - a) Repent – turn & no longer walk in rebellion to God – Lk.13:3
    - b) Confess – accept Jesus as their Lord as well as savior
    - c) Be baptized for the forgiveness of sin – Acts 2:38,39; 22:16
- c. **Man is not saved until he meets the requirements of the new covenant**
  - 1) Acts 2:37 – not saved when asked what need do (were cut to heart)
  - 2) Acts 22:14-16 – Paul not saved until baptized (was praying & fasting)





## The Pattern Of Baptism

### Introduction

We have discussed the idea that there is a pattern found in the New Testament concerning Christianity. That pattern is something that was taught in every church in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. In this lesson we will examine that concept as it regards baptism. We will discuss the design & purpose of baptism in the scheme of salvation.

### 1. What is baptism?

- a. **Problem** – struggle to understand because the dictionary defines baptism as – to sprinkle; to pour or to immerse. Therefore many see baptism as meaning all three definitions & all three are practiced in various denominations.
- b. **How this definition came about** – transliteration of Greek word “baptizo”
  - 1) About 1311 AD the Catholic Church began the practice of sprinkling instead of immersion because it was not as inconvenient as immersion.
  - 2) King Henry VIII was a Catholic who wanted a divorce from his wife Kathryn so he could marry Ann Bolin. The pope refused to grant him a divorce so he left the Catholic church & started the Church of England (Anglican church). He appointed the Archbishop of Canterbury as it's head & he immediately granted king Henry his divorce.
  - 3) The Church of England held onto many of the same practices as the Catholic church, one of them being sprinkling instead of immersion.
  - 4) Martin Luther & John Calvin both came from Catholic backgrounds & also followed some of the same traditions of the Catholic church one of them being sprinkling.
  - 5) John Wesley was an Anglican preacher who started the Methodist church & also retained the Church of England's practice of sprinkling.
  - 6) In 1604 King James ordered the scriptures to be translated into the English language.
    - a) 47 scholars & Puritans were chosen to do this work.
    - b) Because king James was a member of the Church of England & had been sprinkled & not immersed, these scholars made a compromise
    - c) Instead of translating the Greek word baptizo as immersion they transliterated the word (English equivalent of the Greek alphabet) & made a new English word.
    - d) Now they were free to define the word any way that they chose.

### c. What baptism means seen from scripture

- 1) You do not have to know the Greek language to understand the Bible. The Bible is self explanatory, so we can understand the meaning of baptism from reading the scriptures.
- 2) Acts 8:36-39 - As they traveled along the road, they **came to some water** and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. (NIV)
- 3) John 3:23 - Now John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, **because there was plenty of water**, and people were constantly coming to be baptized. (NIV)
- 4) Romans 6:3,4 - Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? **We were therefore buried with him through baptism** into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. (NIV)
- 5) **The baptism practiced by the early Christians was immersion not sprinkling or pouring.** Substituting sprinkling or pouring for immersion is following man made tradition & not the commands of Jesus & His apostles. Jesus condemned substituting mans traditions for God's commands in Mt.15:1-9

## 2. The purpose of baptism

- a. **Problem** – some see baptism as simply a symbol, a tradition, or an outward expression of an inward feeling. They also see it as simply how one joins a denomination. Therefore it is not important to the salvation experience.
- b. Mt.28:18-20 - Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore **go and make disciples** of all nations, **baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**, and **teaching them to obey everything** I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."" (NIV)
  - 1) **Meaning of “into the name of”** – into the possession of
  - 2) It is not just a formula of words to say when one is baptizing someone. You do not have to say anything at a baptism. What we must do is disciple them to the Lord. Making disciples means to cause them to believe in & accept Jesus as Lord, renounce their sin & be baptized into the possession of Jesus so they can belong to Him.
- c. Acts 2:38 - Peter replied, "**Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ** for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (NIV)
  - 1) **Meaning of “in the name of”** – by the authority of

2) If Jesus is Lord, I have no other choice but to be baptized; I must bow to His authority.

d. **The purpose of baptism is then** - to submit to the authority of & become the possession of Jesus.

### 3. Baptism accomplishes several things

a. Acts 2:37-41 - When the people heard this, **they were cut to the heart** and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, **what shall we do?**" Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ **for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off-- for all whom the Lord our God will call.**" With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "**Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.**" Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. (NIV)

1) They were convinced that Jesus was the messiah & wanted to submit to His authority. Peter pleaded for them to save themselves by responding to the authority of Jesus & 3000 were baptized that day.

2) They were baptized in the name of Jesus (by the authority of) for the remission of their sins.

3) Therefore baptism is related to salvation & is necessary.

b. Acts 22:12-16 - "A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. He stood beside me and said, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very moment I was able to see him. "Then he said: 'The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. **And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.**' (NIV)

1) Baptism was to wash away Paul's sins

2) Only then did he have a basis to call upon the name of the Lord. Only then could he appeal to Jesus' authority to call on God & save him.

3) He was then a possession of Jesus, saved from his sins

c. Rom. 6:3,4 - Or don't you know **that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?** We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death **in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.** (NIV)

1) Baptism puts us into Christ – no salvation out of Christ – Acts 4:12

2) Baptism allows us to live a new life – **after raised** from the dead

d. 1 Cor.12:13 - For we were **all baptized by one Spirit into one body--** whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free-- and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. (NIV)

- 1) Baptism puts one into the body
  - 2) There is only one body – Eph.4:1-6
  - 3) The body is the church – Eph.1:22,23
  - 4) The saved are added to the church – Acts 2:47
  - 5) Therefore baptism puts one into the body of Christ, which is His church, where the saved are added.
- e. Gal.3:26,27 - You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, **for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ**. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (NIV)
- 1) Baptism allows us to be clothed with Jesus
  - 2) Therefore we become God's sons
- f. Col.2:11-13 - In him **you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature**, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, **having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God**, who raised him from the dead. When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, **God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins**, (NIV)
- 1) Christian circumcision – putting off sinful nature (forgiveness of sin)
  - 2) When is this done? When one is baptized
- g. 1 Pet.3:21 - and **this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also-- not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ**, (NIV)
- 1) Baptism is not for a physical cleansing – is for a spiritual cleansing
  - 2) Enables us to appeal to God for a clean conscience
  - 3) Salvation is based upon the resurrection of Jesus

#### 4. Who is baptism for?

- a. **Problem** – Some denominations baptize babies to save them from inherited sin. They believe that babies are born in sin or inherit it from their forefathers. We grow up & by nature become children of wrath (Eph.2:1-3)
- b. Mt.28:19 - Therefore **go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them** in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (NIV)
  - 1) Disciples are the ones to be baptized
  - 2) Disciples are those who are taught & believe & are willing to make a commitment & become a possession of Jesus.
  - 3) Babies cannot be taught or make that commitment for themselves, so they are not candidates for baptism.
- c. Baptism is for every unforgiven person who can believe in Christ & repent of their sins; people who of their own free will can obey Jesus' commands.

Why I am a member of the church of Christ  
Lesson # 8

## The Organizational Structure Of The Church # 1

### Introduction

Most who come from denominational Christianity into the New Testament church are impressed with the simplicity of its organization. In the denominational world there seems to be a never-ending chain of command in its leadership. We see in the Catholic church a pope; archbishops; bishops; parish priests; in other groups pastors & a board of deacons or directors, none of which are found in the New Testament. Christianity is to be ordered by a pattern (2 Tim.1:13 - What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching NIV). That pattern is found in the New Testament given to us by the inspired apostles. In this lesson we will begin a study of that pattern as it relates to the organizational structure of the church.

### 1. Jesus Christ is the head of the church

#### a. This is an absolute statement of scripture

- 1) Eph.1:22 - That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in **Christ** when he raised him from the dead and **seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms**, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, **not only in the present age but also in the one to come**. And **God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church**, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. (NIV)
- 2) Col.1:18 - And **he is the head of the body**, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so **that in everything he might have the supremacy**. (NIV)
- 3) Any religious organization which exalts a man over the place & preeminence of Jesus is wrong.
- 4) Mt.28:18 - Jesus has all authority - both in heaven & on earth
- 5) Mt.17:1-5 - Peter wanted to elevate all three; God said listen to Jesus

#### b. The question of authority is of prime importance.

- 1) Most religious differences are often attributed to differences in interpretations.
- 2) However it's not interpretations, but authority that is most often the problem. People place man's interpretations above what Jesus said.
- 3) **Jesus said** - Mt.28: 20 - teaching them to **obey everything I have commanded you**. (NIV)
- 4) All religious controversy must be settled by what Jesus taught; His authority.

#### c. The authority of Jesus in the written word

- 1) The apostles words are the words of Christ
  - a) As Jesus sent out the 70 He said - Lk.10:16 - "He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me." (NIV)

- b) Jn.13:20 - I tell you the truth, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me." (NIV)
- c) Jn.14:26 - But the Counselor, **the Holy Spirit**, whom the Father will send in my name, **will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.** (NIV)
- d) Jn.16:12-15 - "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the **Spirit of truth**, comes, he **will guide you into all truth.** He will **not speak on his own**; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you. (NIV)
- e) 1 Pet.1:10-12 - Concerning this salvation, **the prophets**, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to **which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing** when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by **those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit** sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things. (NIV)
- f) 2 Pet.3:15-16 - Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as **our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him.** He writes the same way **in all his letters**, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, **which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other scriptures, to their own destruction.** (NIV)
- g) 1 Cor.4:6 - Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, "Do not go beyond what is written." **Then you will not take pride in one man over against another.** (NIV)
- 2) **The church is to do all in the name of Jesus**
- Means – by the authority of, not just a formula of words
  - His name is above every name – Eph.1:20,21
  - The church is not the authority, even the apostles are taught from God, not on their own – Mt.16:18-19

## 2. Elders are to be ordained as leaders in every church

### a. Their task – to oversee the work & worship of the local church

- 1) They are not the authority, but have the authority from Jesus to lead the congregation according to the command of Jesus.
- 2) Three Greek words describe their work.
  - 1) Presbuteros – means an older man; one who is older & wiser, & experienced
  - 2) Episkopos – means bishop or overseer; one who sees that things are done right
  - 3) Poimen – means shepherd or pastor
- 3) In Acts 20:17,28 all three words are used as Paul describes the work of the elders at Ephesus. Acts 20:28 - Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. (NIV)
- 4) 1 Pet.5:1-3 - **To the elders** among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: **Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers**-- not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. (NIV)

### b. Preachers are not pastors

- 1) In the NT evangelists & preachers are not referred to as pastors
- 2) Eph.4:11 - It was he who gave some to be **apostles**, some to be **prophets**, some to be **evangelists**, and some to be **pastors and teachers**, (NIV)
- 3) Some attempt to justify the action of making the preacher the pastor by saying that no man can be good enough to meet the qualifications laid out in 1 Timothy & Titus. They make a traveling preacher an evangelist & a local preacher a pastor.

### c. The number of elders in a local church is always plural in the NT.

- 1) Scriptures – Acts 14:23; 15:2,4,6,22; 20:17,28; Phil.1:1; 1 Thes.5:12; Titus 1:5
- 2) There are no examples to the contrary in the NT

### d. Elders have responsibility over just one congregation, not many

- 1) The system of having a diocese (one bishop over many congregations) is not scriptural.
- 2) Each church is to be autonomous (self ruling or governing)
  - a) Acts 20:17,28 - Keep watch over yourselves and all the **flock** of **which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers**. (NIV)  
(flock is singular – at Ephesus)
  - b) 1 Pet.5:1,2 - To the **elders** among you...**Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care**, (NIV)
- 3) This serves as a safety valve against full scale apostasy.



Why I am a member of the church of Christ  
Lesson # 9

## The Organizational Structure Of The Church # 2

### Introduction

In the last lesson we began a discussion of the pattern of organization found in the New Testament as regards the church. We discussed Jesus as the head of the church & the church having the responsibility of placing Jesus & His will 1<sup>st</sup> in everything. We also discussed each local congregation having elders or overseers that lead Christians in the will of Jesus. In this lesson we will continue the thoughts about elders & their work. Perhaps the greatest exploitation of power in religion has come through the misuse of the eldership. Many have sought the office & the power & recognition the office might bring with it, but have not desired the work & have done much damage to the local church.

### 1. The work of elders

#### a. Watchman

- 1) Acts 20:28-31 - **Keep watch** over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. **I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard!** Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears. (NIV)
  - a) Sense the intensity of Paul's words. He knew false teachers would arise & try to exploit the church.
  - b) There was no doubt in his mind that this was going to happen & even happen quickly – “from among their own number”.
- 2) Heb.13:17 - **Obey your leaders** and submit to their authority. **They keep watch over you** as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. (NIV)
- 3) The idea of a watchman doesn't carry as much importance today as it did in Paul's day. Back then cities were protected by walls & on the walls were watch towers occupied by men who kept a vigilant eye out for invaders. If an enemy approached he alerted the city to danger so they could defend themselves.
- 4) Ezek.3:17-21 - descriptive picture of the responsibility of a watchman. "Son of man, **I have made you a watchman** for the house of Israel; **so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. When I say** to a wicked man, 'You will surely die,' **and you do not warn him or speak out to dissuade him from his evil ways** in order to save his life, **that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood. But if you do warn the wicked man and he does not turn** from his wickedness or from his evil ways, **he will die for his sin; but you will have saved yourself.**

"Again, **when a righteous man turns from his righteousness and does evil**, and **I put a stumbling block before him**, he will die. **Since you did not warn him**, he will die for his sin. The righteous things he did will not be remembered, **and I will hold you accountable for his blood. But if you do warn the righteous man not to sin** and he does not sin, he will surely live because he took warning, **and you will have saved yourself.**" (NIV)

- 5) This means an elder must know the word of God & teach it so that he can protect the flock of God. There is no substitute for an elder – he must be a man of the word of God.

#### b. Mature the church

- 1) Eph.4:11-16 - It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. (NIV)
- 2) Spiritual babies can be tossed about because of their lack of knowledge & maturity in Jesus. Elders are to speak the truth in love so that they might grow up & no longer be spiritual children.
- 3) Notice that this is not a job they hire someone else to accomplish. They are to be an active part in the maturing of these Christians. God doesn't want them to just see that this is done, but to be an active part in their spiritual development. This is one reason elders must be apt to teach & faithfully holding onto the faith themselves.

#### c. Shepherd the church

- 1) Shepherding often requires discipline – 1 Thes.5:12-15  
Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who **admonish you**. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. And **we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong**, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else. (NIV)

2) Shepherding also requires ministering to wounds & hurts –

a) Lk.15:3-7 – “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent. (NIV)

b) Jn.10:11-15 - "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me-- just as the Father knows me and I know the Father-- and I lay down my life for the sheep. (NIV)

c) James 5:14-20 - Is any one of you sick? He should **call the elders** of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops. My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins. (NIV)

**Note** – James is not talking about miracles, but intercession. God did not answer Elijah's prayer by interfering with the natural order, but by utilizing the natural order to answer his request. God answers the elders prayers according to His will.

1 Jn.5:14,15

d) Ezek.34:2-10 - "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with

the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and when they were scattered they became food for all the wild animals. My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them. 'Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, because my flock lacks a shepherd and so has been plundered and has become food for all the wild animals, and because my shepherds did not search for my flock but cared for themselves rather than for my flock, therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against the shepherds and will hold them accountable for my flock. I will remove them from tending the flock so that the shepherds can no longer feed themselves. I will rescue my flock from their mouths, and it will no longer be food for them. (NIV)

## **2. Restrictions while doing their work – 1 Pet.5:1-4**

- a. Not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be. God wants a man who desires the work, not just one who has to do the work. A cheerful worker.
- b. Not greedy for money, but eager to serve. Elders can be supported, but the purpose is not to be for money, it's to serve.
- c. Not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. Elders are not dictators, they are examples.

### The Organizational Structure Of The Church # 3

#### Introduction

In our discussion of the organizational structure of the church, we have seen the head of the church is Jesus. He is the supreme authority & the one we follow. He gave His instructions to the apostles & inspired them to write the scriptures. He also ordained that in every church there is to be a plurality of elders who were to oversee the church & point Christians to Jesus. Their job is to be watchmen & warn of danger as well as to mature & discipline the church. To accomplish this work they need to be qualified spiritually & Paul gives us a list of these qualifications in his letters to Timothy & Titus.

#### 1 Tim.3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9

1. When discussing qualifications there are **many extremes** people can take as they examine the qualifications.
  - a. Some are very liberal & are willing to make the qualifications **just a list of qualities that are optional.**
    - 1) **Paul said that they - "must" have these qualities** 1 Tim.3:2; Titus 1:6
    - 2) **Meaning** - "necessary", not optional
  - b. On the **other side is the legalistic approach.**
    - 1) To them, no man could ever meet the qualifications.
    - 2) Somewhere in between lies the truth, which shows the character of the man we are looking for.

#### 2. Qualifications of Elders

- a. **His Attitude Toward The Work Of An Elder.**
  - 1) 1 Tim.3:1 - "sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task"
    - a) **Meaning** - "stretch after, reach for, long for.
    - b) **We are not just to appoint the best that are available.**
      - (1) If not capable - Satan use him to destroy the church.
      - (2) His deep desire must be to serve God & His church  
(see this as his calling - task God given him)
    - c) **His task is supremely important** - souls are at stake
      - (1) A "good old boy" just won't do.
      - (2) This is not a popularity contest - someone all like.
      - (3) God is presenting His church to the world -  
bride of Christ must be holy, stunning.
      - (4) This man is charged to lead the church in that holiness.
  - 2) Today the world has no importance upon character - just see what kind of leaders this thinking has brought to us.
- b. **His desire must be for the proper reasons.**
  - 1) 1 Pet.5:2 - not because you must, but because you are willing.
  - 2) Idea is **willingness, not forced** into the task
    - a) He senses the need & task set before him by God.
    - b) He wants to serve God in the capacity of leading God's people.

- 3) **Eager to serve** - eager willingness, with quick lively action.
  - a) Not just eager to be an Elder - eager to serve
  - b) Senses that the work must be done - God has a task for him.

## 2. Qualifications Concerning His Home Life.

- a. **The husband of one wife** - 1 Tim.3:2; Titus 1:6
  - 1) **Means literally** - "a one woman man" - not have more than one wife.
    - a) Can't be single & qualify
    - b) Can't be a polygamist & qualify
  - 2) **Other versions**
    - a) Williams - "must have only one wife"
    - b) New English Bible - "faithful to his one wife"
    - c) New King James Version - "the husband of one wife"
- b. **Having faithful children** - 1 Tim.3:4; Titus 1:6
  - 1) 1 Tim.3:4 - manage family well & children obey with proper respect.
    - a) **Idea** - his ability to lead is seen in his family's character
    - b) Able to manage his own house - good head of his own house
    - c) Helps his children to develop a reverence for God
    - d) His children show respect for his authority as head of the family
  - 2) Titus 1:6 - "a man whose children believe"
    - a) **Means** - faithful (can be relied upon); In NT one whom trusts in Jesus as the Messiah
    - b) **Other versions**
      - (1) American Standard - "children that believe"
      - (2) Knox - "whose children hold the faith"
      - (3) TCNT - whose children are Christians"
      - (4) Taylor - children must love the Lord"
    - c) **Obvious requirement is that his children must be Christians.**
      - (1) **How many?** Is the number important?
        - (a) Lk.14:26 - unable to be a disciple if only 1 child
        - (b) Mk.10:29,30 - disqualified because only 1 child
        - (c) 1 Tim.5:4 - no responsibility if only had 1 child?
      - (2) **Question** - Was God's point fertility or guidance ability?
  - 3) **What if children grown - out of his house & become unfaithful?**
    - a) Is he responsible for the households of his children? Gen.2:24
    - b) See the lives of men like Samuel, David - not all kids faithful.
- c. **What about his wife?**
  - 1) Deacons wife had qualifications - 1 Tim.3:11
  - 2) American Standard & New American Standard - apply to all women
    - a) "ASV "Women in like manner must be"
    - b) NASV "Women must likewise be"
  - 3) It would appear that these are characteristics are expected of all women
    - a) Titus 2:3-5 - what expected of older & younger women
    - b) 1 Tim.5:14 - "give enemy no opportunity to slander"

### 3. His Experience As A Christian

#### a. Having an ability to teach.

- 1) **Means** - apt & skillful in teaching; a gift for teaching; qualified to teach
- 2) **His work is to teach** - guide the flock, watch out for wolves
  - a) To do this he must know the truth & be able to convey truth
  - b) 2 Tim.2:24-26 - sense the skill - patience, not argumentative
  - c) Titus 1:9 - able to exhort & convince those who oppose truth

#### b. Holding faithfully to the word of God - Titus 1:9

- 1) **Means** - paying heed personally.
  - a) Not just able teach others - teaches self & lives it
  - b) Acts 20:29-31 - warns - evil will come from leadership
- 2) **Must personally keep examining our life - be repentant**
  - a) Take our walk with Jesus seriously
  - b) Mt.7:21-23 - not all who say Lord, Lord

#### c. Not a recent convert - 1 Tim.3:6

- 1) **Means** - not one who has recently become a Christian
  - a) He needs to be tested as to his faithfulness & character
  - b) An Elder needs spiritual maturity & wisdom - gained from life
- 2) **If recent convert** - great temptation for pride - Satan get to him easily
  - a) Pride will always bring destruction - self & followers
  - b) 2 Cor.12:7-10 - Paul needed thorn to deal with his pride

#### d. Maintains a good reputation - 1 Tim.3:7

- 1) **Means** - excellent testimony, praiseworthy, honorable
- 2) Maintains a good reputation in the public
  - a) If not - Jesus' name smeared
  - b) Without this - not effective in community
- 3) His Christian life must be seen more than just at the building  
(wherever he goes - Christ is exalted in his life)

### 4. His Character Traits

#### a. Positive

##### 1) Blameless, above reproach

- a) Versions
  - (1) TCNT - "of blameless character"
  - (2) Knox - "one with whom no fault can be found"
- b) Means- not open to censure, irreproachable; can't be laid hold of
  - (1) **Implies more than just being acquitted** - is an absence of charges or accusations against him.
  - (2) **Takes seriously Mt.5:23,24** - goes & makes amends
- c) **Not mean never makes a mistake** - none are perfect

##### 2) Temperate

- a) Versions
  - (1) KJV - self-controlled
  - (2) McCord -clear headed

- b) **Idea is to be a man of self-control, not given to excesses**
    - (1) Reasonable, restrained
    - (2) Conservative in his behavior
- 3) **Self-controlled**
  - a) Versions
    - (1) NKJV - sober- minded
    - (2) RSV - sensible
    - (3) NASV - prudent
  - b) **Means** - of a sound mind, serious, not flippant
- 4) **Respectable**
  - a) Versions
    - (1) KJV - of good behavior
    - (2) RSV - dignified
    - (3) TCNT - a person of a well ordered life
  - b) **Means** - well arranged & modest
    - (1) His life cannot be in disarray (out of control)
    - (2) He must be a well-behaved person
- 5) **Hospitable**
  - a) Versions
    - (1) KJV - given to hospitality
    - (2) Titus 1:8 - a lover of hospitality
  - b) **Means** - a lover of strangers
    - (1) One who opens his house up freely to guests.
    - (2) Ready & willing to entertain strangers.
- 6) **Gentle**
  - a) Versions
    - (1) ABUV - forbearing
    - (2) Rotherham - considerate
    - (3) Conybeare - peaceable
  - b) **Means** - moderate, equitable, fair
    - (1) Disposition must be tolerant, understanding, agreeable
    - (2) Not a controversialist - kind, polite in relationships
- 7) **A lover of what is good - Titus 1:8**
  - a) Because of common interests, he is drawn to what is good
  - b) Can't inspire goodness in others unless devoted to goodness also
- 8) **Upright - Titus 1:8**
  - a) **Means** -denotes righteousness, a state of being right, right conduct
  - b) One who seeks to do what is right **as defined by God.**
- 9) **Holy**
  - a) **Means** - free from wickedness; religiously observing every moral obligation - takes religion seriously
  - b) Inconceivable that a spiritual leader would himself not be pure



10) **Disciplined** - Titus 1:8

- a) **Means** - having power over self; mastering & restraining self
- b) 1 Cor.9:26,27 - buffet body

b. **Negative**1) **Not given to wine** - 1 Tim.3:3; Titus 1:7

- a) Versions
  - (1) NASB - not addicted to wine
  - (2) Weymouth - not a hard drinker
  - (3) Berkley - not a drunkard
- b) **Means** - one who sits long at his wine, drunken
- c) **Note** – closer get to top leadership, less use of wine
  - (1) Timothy – little wine for stomach's sake
  - (2) Deacon – not indulging in much wine

2) **Not quarrelsome, violent** - 1 Tim.3:3; Titus 1:7

- a) Versions
  - (1) NASB - not pugnacious
  - (2) Weymouth - not given to blows
  - (3) Berkley - not a fist fighter
  - (4) Phillips - not violent
  - (5) Rotherham - not ready to wound
- b) **Means** - a bruiser, striker, ready for giving a blow
  - (1) Elders must control their temper, not be ready to fight
  - (2) Not be ready to resent insults or wrong

3) **Not a lover of money** - 1 Tim.3:3; Titus 1:7

- a) Versions
  - (1) Rotherham - fond of money
  - (2) Knox - grasping for money
  - (3) Phillips - not guilty of money grabbing
- b) **Means** - eager for base gain or money
  - (1) Not place an inordinate value on money
  - (2) Not seek to gain money by unethical means
  - (3) His interest is not in the accumulation of wealth
  - (4) Lk.16:10-13 - can't serve God & money

4) **Not overbearing** - Titus 1:7

- a) **Means** - self willed; self pleasing; arrogant, stubborn
- b) An Elder must truly care about God first, then others
- c) See Ezek.34:1-6 - look out for self 1st

5) **Not quick tempered** - Titus 1:7

- a) Versions
  - (1) NASV - not quick tempered
  - (2) ASV - not soon angry
- b) **Means** - easily angered, hot-tempered
  - (1) Prov.22:24,25 - don't associate with - learn their ways
  - (2) Prov.14:17 - hot-tempered does foolish things
  - (3) Prov.15:18 - hot-tempered stirs up dissention

## 5. Relationship of the local church to her elders

### a. Know them & esteem them

- 1) 1 Thess.5:12,13 - Now we ask you, brothers, to **respect** those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. **Hold them in the highest regard** in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. (NIV)
- 2) **Respect** – pay attention to; cherish regard (Hold in highest regard)
- 3) If we are not to speak evil of any man, how much more an elder
  - a) See what blaspheming physical leaders causes
  - b) A house divided against itself cannot stand
  - c) It is a grave thing to speak disrespectfully of or ridicule God's leaders

### b. Be subject to them

- 1) Heb.13:17 - **Obey** your leaders and **submit to their authority**. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. **Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden**, for that would be of no advantage to you. (NIV)
- 2) God wants us to willingly submit because they are essential for our spiritual well being. The body must function in cooperation or it becomes unhealthy.

### c. Be respectful even though they may be in the wrong

- 1) 1 Tim.5:19,20 - **Do not entertain an accusation** against an elder **unless it is brought by two or three witnesses**. Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that the others may take warning. (NIV)
- 2) Don't allow hearsay & rumors – accusations must be verified

### d. Support those who devote full time to their work

- 1) 1 Tim.5:17,18 - The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are **worthy of double honor**, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages." (NIV)
- 2) **Double honor** - refers to value (used for a price paid or received)

# A People of the Book

*Where Truth and Love Abound*



## Our Service Schedule

Sunday:	10:00 a.m.	Bible Study (classes for all ages)
	11:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.	Worship
Wednesday:	7:00 p.m.	Bible Study (classes for all ages)

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