

# The Church

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Authority  
Identity of the Church  
Organization of the Church  
Work of the Church  
Worship of the Church  
Unity of the Church  
God Desires Mercy and Not Sacrifice

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## **Introduction**

God's word is perfect, but men are fallible. If you find any errors in these lessons or have suggestions to improve them, please contact me at [allan@biblestudyguide.org](mailto:allan@biblestudyguide.org).

This series of lessons is not intended to be an exhaustive study on the church. These lessons are in outline form and are, therefore, abbreviated. My intention is for the outlines to present the Scriptures relative to a study on the church and to express a few thoughts. Students should study the Scriptures for themselves and apply the lessons beyond the few suggestions made in the outlines.

Allan McNabb

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# I. Authority

## A. Introduction:

1. Christ is the head of the church (Eph. 1:22-23). As the head, Christ has authority over the church (Eph. 5:22-33; cf. Matt. 28:18-19).
2. As Christians, we must obey Christ (Heb. 5:9; Gal. 6:2; 1 Cor. 9:21) and do the things He has authorized (Col. 3:17; 1 Cor. 4:16; 1 Pet. 4:11).
  - a. It is imperative that we understand the establishment of authority from God's word (Col. 3:17; 1 Cor. 4:16; Rev. 22:18-19) before we can rightly divide the Scriptures (2 Tim. 2:15) coming to a knowledge of Christ's doctrine of the church (2 Jn. 1:9; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
3. In this lesson, we review the Bible principles of establishing authority.

## B. Matthew 21:23-27 Two sources of authority:

1. "Authority" defined:
  - a. The Greek word *exousia* (translated "authority" in Matt. 21:23, 24, 27) is a noun that comes from the Greek verb *exesti* meaning *it is right, lawful*.
  - b. "Authority" is the power to command what is right and lawful.
    1. Jesus has all authority (Matt. 28:18).
  - c. A person conducting himself according to Jesus' commands has authority from Jesus for what he does (Col. 3:17).
    1. This person has authority from heaven.
  - d. A person not conducting himself according to Jesus' commands does not have authority from Jesus.
    1. This person's authority is from man (Col. 2:21-23) and his worship is vain (Matt. 15:8-9; Mk. 7:6-8).
2. There are two sources of authority - heaven and man (Matt. 21:23-27).
  - a. Authority from heaven is God's doctrine (Rom. 6:17; 16:17; 1 Tim. 6:1; Tit. 2:10). It is revealed in the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16-17; cf. 2 Jn. 1:9).
    1. People who obey Christ's doctrine (2 Jn. 1:9) will be saved (Heb. 5:9).
  - b. Authority from man is the doctrines of men and demons (Matt. 15:8-9; Mk. 7:6-8; Col. 2:22; 1 Tim. 4:1; cf. 2 Cor. 11:13-15) and results in eternal death (Pr. 16:2, 25).

## C. The Old Testament is not authoritative today:

1. We must hear and obey Jesus, not Moses or Old Testament prophets (Heb. 1:1-2; 5:9; Matt. 17:5).
2. The old covenant (Ten Commandments) has been replaced with a new covenant (Heb. 8:8-9, 13; 9:11-17; 1 Ki. 8:9, 21).
  - a. The Ten Commandments are a ministry of death (2 Cor. 3:1-8).
  - b. God changed the law (Heb. 7:12; Col. 2:13-14). We must obey the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2; 1 Cor. 9:21; cf. Heb. 5:9; 2 Th. 1:8; 2 Jn. 1:9).
    1. Jesus is the Savior of the body (Eph. 5:23) which is the church (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23).

2. The church is subject to Christ (Eph. 5:24). The church obeys Christ (Heb. 5:9; 2 Jn. 1:9).
  - a. If we are members of a church that is not obeying Christ, we are not in Christ's church but in a man-made church (Col. 2:20-23).
  - b. If we are not in Christ's church, we are not in the church of which Jesus is the Savior (Eph. 5:23, 27).

#### **D. We live under the law of Christ:**

1. Christ has all authority (Matt. 28:18).
  - a. Jesus is God (Jn. 1:1; 1 Jn. 1:1).
  - b. God (Father) is not subject to Christ (1 Cor. 15:27-28).
2. We must hear and obey Jesus (Heb. 1:1-2; 5:9; Matt. 17:5).
3. Jesus is our Creator and the Sustainer of the creation. He has the right to rule (Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 1:3).
  - a. Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14; 19:16).
  - b. We must do all in Jesus' name (Col. 3:17). Everything we do must be authorized by Christ.
4. We must obey Christ - His law and gospel (Gal. 6:2; 1 Cor. 9:21; cf. Heb. 5:9; 2 Th. 1:8; 2 Jn. 1:9).
  - a. Jesus' law is the law of liberty (Ja. 1:25; cf. Gal. 2:4; Col. 1:28), the law of the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2, 4).
    1. We will be judged by Jesus (2 Cor. 5:10), by His word (Jn. 12:48).
    2. James says that we will be judged by the law of liberty (Ja. 1:25; 2:12).
    3. Therefore, the law of Christ and the law of liberty are the teachings of Christ (cf. Heb. 5:9; 2 Jn. 1:9; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
5. Everyone who does not obey Christ's gospel will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord (2 Th. 1:8-10; cf. Col. 2:12-14; Rev. 20:11-15; 21:8).

#### **E. God's commands:**

1. God's commands are in His word (1 Cor. 2:10-16; 14:37). His word cannot be changed (Deut. 4:2; 1 Tim. 4:11; Rev. 22:18-19).
2. God has spoken through Jesus (Heb. 1:1-2; Matt. 17:5). We must obey Jesus (Heb. 5:9; cf. Gal. 6:2; 2 Th. 1:8; 2 Jn. 1:9).
  - a. Jesus commissioned the apostles (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16).
3. The apostles were ambassadors of Christ. God spoke through them (2 Cor. 5:20; cf. 1 Cor. 2:10-16; 1 Th. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).
  - a. God gave commands through the apostles (1 Cor. 14:37; 2 Pet. 3:2).
4. No one is excused from obeying God (Acts 17:30; Rom. 1:20).
  - a. God commands all men to repent (Acts 17:30).
5. We keep God's commandments because we love Him (1 Jn. 5:3).
6. We learn about keeping God's commandments in the Old Testament (Rom. 15:4; cf. 1 Cor. 10:6, 11; Gal. 3:25).

## F. Two types of commands in the Bible - Specific and General:

1. Specific commands include the specifics of carrying out the command. General commands do not include the specifics of carrying out the command.
  - a. Many commands include some specific aspects and some general aspects. In other words, God is specific about some parts of the command and general about other parts of the command.
  - b. When we have a specific command from God, we must obey God by accomplishing the command as specified by God.
  - c. When we have a general command from God, we must employ lawful expediencies to carry out the command.
2. Example of Noah and the ark (Gen. 6:13-22):
  - a. Specifics of God's command:
    1. Gen. 6:14 ark, gopherwood, rooms, cover inside and outside with pitch
    2. Gen. 6:15 length, width (breadth), height
    3. Gen. 6:16 window finished to a cubit, door in the side, three decks
    4. Gen. 6:21 take food for people and animals
  - b. Generalities of God's command:
    1. Gen. 6:14 make, size of rooms, formula to produce the pitch
    2. Gen. 6:16 the exact size of the window, which side the door was to go in, the height between decks
    3. Gen. 6:21 what kind and how much food
  - c. Noah had to:
    1. employ the specifics of God's command.
    2. make lawful choices (i.e., employ lawful expediencies) to fulfill the general aspects of God's command.

## G. We must employ lawful expediencies to obey God's general commands:

1. We learn from the Bible that God requires us to choose a lawful means of accomplishing His general commands. These choices are called expediencies.
  - a. An expedient is something that is advantageous and profitable (rf. Vine's).
  - b. The word "expedient" appears in Jn. 11:50; 16:7; 18:14; 1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23; 2 Cor. 8:10; 12:1 in the KJV (Note: The Greek word is not always translated "expedient" in all of these Scriptures in every translation).
2. **1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23-24** Criteria for expediencies:
  - a. An expedient must be lawful (cf. 1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2).
    1. It cannot be a sin.
    2. For example, a congregation can buy or rent a place to assemble, but they cannot steal a place to assemble.
  - b. An expedient must be helpful (i.e., expedient, KJV; profitable, NASB; beneficial, NIV and NRSV).
    1. From among the realm of lawful things, we must choose something that is helpful in accomplishing God's general command.
    2. Not everything that is lawful is helpful in accomplishing God's command (cf. 1 Cor. 9:19-23; 10:23-33; Rom. 14:1-15:4).

- c. An expedient must edify (build-up).
  - 1. An expedient cannot be something that tears others down (Rom. 14:13, 15, 19-21; 1 Cor. 10:32-33).
- d. An expedient must not be something that has control over us (our master).
  - 1. We cannot be addicted to it. A lawful expedient cannot be employed if it has control over us (e.g., caffeine).
- e. An expedient must not be self-serving (i.e., expediencies must be employed in light of what is good for our brethren; cf. Phil. 2:3-4; Rom. 14:1-15:2; 1 Cor. 10:23-11:1).
  - 1. An expedient that causes a brother to stumble or causes a church to divide cannot be employed (cf. Rom. 14:20-15:3).
- 3. Expediencies are limited to fulfilling God's general commands (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23-24).
  - a. Expediencies must be lawful (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23-24; cf. 1 Cor. 9:21).
    - 1. Lawful things are the things which God has authorized (1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2; cf. Matt. 21:25; 15:8-9; 1 Cor. 4:6; Col. 3:17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Jn. 1:9-11).
    - 2. We cannot claim something to be expedient unless we first have a general command from God.
    - 3. Expediencies cannot substitute what has been specifically commanded.
      - a. To make a substitution of something specifically authorized in God's word is adding to God's word or taking from God's word (Deut. 4:2; Rev. 22:18-19).
      - b. If we make substitutions for things specifically commanded, we are not abiding in Christ's doctrine (2 Jn. 1:9-11) and we are going beyond what is written (1 Cor. 4:6). We are sinning.
  - b. Examples of lawful and unlawful expediencies:
    - 1. **Gen. 6:13-23** Noah and the ark:
      - a. General aspects of God's command:
        - 1. Gen. 6:14 make, size of rooms, formula to produce the pitch
        - 2. Gen. 6:16 the exact size of the window, which side the door was to go in, the height between decks
        - 3. Gen. 6:21 what kind and how much food
      - b. It was expedient for Noah:
        - 1. to employ laborers to help build the ark.
        - 2. to build the rooms, window, and door to the size he determined appropriate.
        - 3. to produce the pitch according to the formula he determined appropriate.
        - 4. to build the decks with heights he determined appropriate.
        - 5. to gather the food he determined appropriate.
      - c. It was not expedient for Noah:
        - 1. to abrogate his responsibility to build the ark.

- a. Noah was specifically commanded to build the ark.
  2. to use any other wood but gopher wood to build the ark.
    - a. God has specifically commanded Noah to use gopher wood.
  3. to build it any size but three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide, and thirty cubits high.
    - a. God had specifically commanded Noah what size to build the ark.
  4. to add a window or door.
    - a. Noah was specifically commanded to build one window and one door.
  5. to employ a formula making bread instead of pitch.
    - a. Noah was specifically commanded to cover the ark with pitch.
  6. to build the desks with a height that could not accommodate the animals.
    - a. Noah was commanded to build the ark so that he and his family with two of every kind could live in it.
  7. to take fish into the ark.
    - a. Noah had been specifically commanded what kinds of animals to take into the ark.
2. **1 Sam. 13:1-15** Saul's unlawful sacrifice:
  - a. It was not expedient (i.e., helpful, profitable, beneficial) for Saul to offer the burnt offering. Because he had been commanded to wait for Samuel (1 Sam. 13:8-15).
  - b. Like Saul, if we change (i.e., substitute) the specifics of God's command, we are:
    1. acting foolishly (1 Sam. 13:13).
    2. keeping what God has commanded (1 Sam. 13:14).
3. **1 Sam. 15:1-26** Saul spares King Agag:
  - a. It was not expedient (i.e., helpful, profitable, beneficial) for Saul and the people to spare King Agag, spare the best animals, and take the plunder. God had specifically commanded them to kill all the people, kill all the animals, and utterly destroy everything.
  - b. Like Saul, if we change (i.e., substitute) the specifics of God's commands by employing unlawful expediencies:
    1. we are disobeying God and doing evil (1 Sam. 15:19).
    2. we are vainly worshiping God (1 Sam. 15:22; cf. Matt. 15:8-9; Mk. 7:6-8).
    3. we are rebellious (1 Sam. 15:23).
    4. we have rejected the word of the Lord (1 Sam. 15:23).
    5. God will reject us (1 Sam. 15:23).



6. are we sinning by transgressing the Lord's commandment (1 Sam. 15:24).

## H. God commands us to follow the apostles' examples:

1. Apostolic examples are peculiar to the New Testament since the apostles had no authority under the Mosaic Law. Therefore, apostolic examples are limited to apostolic teaching beginning on Pentecost in Acts Chapter Two.
  - a. **2 Tim. 1:13** Sound words establish a pattern (i.e., form, standard, example) by which we must faithfully live (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16-17) and by which we will be judged (cf. Jn. 12:48).
2. We must follow the apostles' examples because it has been commanded by God.
  - a. Paul commanded the Corinthians to imitate him (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1).
  - b. By imitating the apostles, we imitate Christ (1 Cor. 11:1; cf. 1 Jn. 1:3, 6; 2:3).
  - c. When we practice the things learned, received, and heard from the apostles, the God of peace is with us (Phil. 4:9).
  - d. We must stand fast and hold the apostolic traditions which are taught in God's word (2 Th. 2:15).
  - e. We must withdraw from brethren who do not live according to the apostolic traditions (2 Th. 3:6-15).
3. Since we are commanded to follow apostolic examples and hold the apostolic traditions, we cannot obey or cling to human traditions that contradict God's word (cf. Matt. 15:8-9; Mk. 7:6-8; Col. 2:21-23; 2 Jn. 1:9).
  - a. Human religious traditions such as sprinkling, pouring, infant baptism, denominationalism, and institutionalism contradict God's commands and apostolic traditions. Therefore, they cannot be followed by Christians.
4. Since we are commanded to follow apostolic examples and traditions, we must follow all apostolic examples and traditions except those excluded by God's word.
  - a. Apostolic examples in keeping the Mosaic Law are not binding upon Christians.
    1. God changed the law under which man lived (Heb. 7:12). We live under the law of Christ, not the Mosaic Law (1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2; 2 Cor. 3:1-18; cf. Rom. 6:17; 16:26; Heb. 5:9; 2 Th. 1:8; 2 Jn. 1:9).
    2. It is impossible to keep the Mosaic Law today since God destroyed the Jewish temple (cf. Matt. 24:1f).
    3. Gentiles did not keep the traditions of the Mosaic Law (Acts 15:1-29; 21:15-25; 1 Cor. 9:20-21).
    4. No one may keep the traditions of the Mosaic Law as a matter of salvation (Gal. 2:21; 5:3-4).
      - a. Keeping the traditions of the Mosaic Law is a matter of personal choice and cannot be bound upon others (Rom. 14:1-13; Col. 2:4-8, 16-17, 23).
    5. Paul kept the traditions of the Mosaic Law when it was expedient. And, he kept Gentiles traditions when they were expedient (Acts 21:24; 1 Cor. 9:19-23).
  - b. Apostolic examples that were cultural are not binding on Christians.
    1. Note: Jewish cultural traditions were often connected to the Mosaic

- Law. Some Jewish cultural traditions were erroneously bound as if they were commands from God (Matt. 15:8-9; Mk. 7:6-8; cf. Matt. 23:1-26; Lk. 11:38).
2. Christians should not judge others in respect to cultural traditions and should not allow others to judge them in respect to cultural traditions (Rom. 14:1-15:6; 1 Cor. 8:1-13; 10:23-11:1; Col. 2:16-23).
    - a. Observance of cultural traditions are a matter of personal preference (Rom. 14:5; 1 Cor. 10:25).
    - b. Christians may only observe cultural traditions that are lawful (1 Cor. 9:21).
  3. Paul observed whichever cultural traditions were expedient (1 Cor. 9:19-23).
    - a. Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is important (Gal. 5:6).
    - b. Jews could no longer observe some Jewish cultural traditions after becoming Christians (Acts 10:9-16, 28-29; 11:1-18; Gal. 2:11-16).
  4. Any lawful cultural tradition may be observed by Christians (Col. 3:17; cf. 1 Cor. 6:12; 9:21; 10:23-24).
- c. Apostolic examples of applying expedients are not binding on Christians.
1. Anything meeting the Scriptural criteria of an expedient (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23-24) may be employed as an expedient by Christians. By nature, expedients today will differ from expedients employed during the first century.
    - a. Expedient modes of travel for the apostles will differ from our expedient modes of travel.
    - b. Expedient facilities for assembling for the apostles will differ from our expedient facilities.

## I. Inferences:

1. Definitions:
  - a. "Infer" is a verb meaning to make a conclusion by the deduction of facts.
  - b. "Inference" is a noun denoting the result of inferring (i.e., the result of making a conclusion by the deduction of facts).
2. Inferences can help us understand the context and the historical narrative
  - a. Occasionally, we can make inferences from the historical narrative in the Bible to increase our understanding of the context in which Scripture was written.
    1. For example, we infer from the Biblical historical narrative that Matthew wrote the first gospel in the Bible. Secular history and the addition of Matthew's name by scribes to early manuscripts agree with inferences from the historical narrative which makes Matthew's authorship more sure.
    2. Inferences are used to establish an approximate date the books of the Bible were written and therefore an approximate order in which the books were written.

- a. If knowing the date a book was written is essential to understanding a doctrine, God would have included the date of writing in His word (cf. Eph. 3:1-4; 5:15-17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3).
  - b. Inferences can help us have a fuller understanding of the historical narrative.
    1. For example, from Genesis 12:1-5 we infer that Lot had become a member of Abram's household sometime after Haran's death (cf. Gen. 11:28f).
    2. For example, from Gen. 12:10; 13:1 we infer that Lot went down to Egypt with Abram.
    3. For example, from Matt. 3:16 we infer that Jesus went down into the water before being baptized since He came up out of the water after being baptized.
  - c. Some inferences from the historical narrative have a degree of uncertainty. These inferences must be view within the degree of uncertainty that exists.
    1. For example, knowing the history of the Caldeans' relationship with the Jews can help us understand the reason that the Caldeans came forward and accused the Jews of disobeying Nebuchadnezzar's command (Dan. 3:8-12). But, these inferences would be merely speculative.
3. Since we are commanded to follow apostolic examples, inferences from authoritative apostolic examples are binding upon us today
  - a. We are commanded to imitate the apostles (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1) and hold the apostolic traditions (2 Th. 2:15; 3:6-7). Therefore, anything that authoritative apostolic examples infer is binding upon us today.
    1. These inferences are sometimes referred to as "necessary inferences." These are inferences that are necessary for us to adhere to in order to please God.
  - b. **Acts 20:7; Heb. 10:24-25** The apostles assembled on the first day of the week to observe the Lord's Supper.
    1. Since the apostles only assembled on Sunday to observe the Lord's Supper, and since God has not given us an exception for assembling on Sunday, we must infer that it is necessary to assemble every Sunday to partake of the Lord's Supper.
4. Inferences in respect to frequency of assembly and worship of the church:
  - a. Christians must assemble on every Sunday.
    1. We learn from the Old Testament (Rom. 15:4) that whenever God commands His people to assemble on a specific day, He infers that they must infer every time that day occurs (Ex. 12:1-28, 43-51; 20:8-11; 23:10-19).
      - a. God did not specify the frequency (i.e., every week, every year, etc.) of observing the Passover, Sabbaths, and feasts. Therefore, Israel properly inferred that they must be observed every time the specified days occurred.
    2. The church must assemble every Sunday (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2).
      - a. Christians are commanded to not forsake our assembling

- together (Heb. 10:25).
    - b. God has not exempted the church from assembling on any Sundays.
    - c. Therefore, the church must assemble on every Sunday.
  - b. **1 Cor. 16:1-2** Christians must lay by in store as they have prospered every Sunday.
    - 1. The apostolic command is to lay by in store as we have prospered on Sunday. The inference is that we must lay by in store every Sunday. Because, God has not given us any conditions under which we are not to take up a collect on Sunday.
  - c. **Acts 20:7** Christians must observe the Lord's Supper every Sunday.
    - 1. We must partake of the Lord's Supper every Sunday since the apostles only assembled on Sunday to observe the Lord's Supper, and since God has not given us an exception for assembling on Sunday.

## J. Silence of the Scriptures:

1. What is silence of the Scriptures?
  - a. God is silent when He has not spoken.
    1. God has spoken if He has authorized something with:
      - a. a specific command.
      - b. a general command requiring an expedient.
      - c. an apostolic example.
      - d. an inference from a command or apostolic example.
    2. God is silent if He has not authorized something with:
      - a. a specific command.
      - b. a general command requiring an expedient.
      - c. an apostolic example.
      - d. an inference from a command or apostolic example.
  - b. For example:
    1. God had said nothing about a priest coming from the tribe of Judah; therefore, He had been silent about priests coming from the tribe of Judah (Heb. 7:14).
    2. God has not spoken regarding mechanical instruments of music in the church; therefore, He has been silent concerning mechanical instruments in the church.
  - c. The things about which God is silent are not authorized by God (1 Cor. 4:6; Col. 3:17). Therefore, they are unlawful and sinful.
    1. God was silent about priest coming from the tribe of Judah (Heb. 7:14). Therefore, it would have been sinful for a man from the tribe of Judah to be a priest.
    2. God has been silent regarding mechanical instruments of music in the church. Therefore, it would be sinful for us to employ mechanical instruments in the church.
    3. God has commanded:
      - a. **1 Pet. 4:11** We must speak (and therefore do) what God has instructed us to do in His word (Rom. 3:2; Heb. 5:12).

- b. **Col. 3:17** Our words and actions must be in the name (i.e., by the authority) of Jesus Christ (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Heb. 5:9; 2 Jn. 1:9). We can only do the things that are authorized.
      1. E.g., Ex. 5:23. Moses spoke in the name of the Lord. The commands Moses gave Pharaoh were authorized by God.
      2. E.g., Esther 3:12; 8:8, 10. Decrees written "in the name" of the king were authorized by the king.
      3. E.g., Acts 4:7, 10. The miracles performed by the apostles were in the name of Jesus. They were by his authority.
      4. E.g., Acts 4:12. We are saved in the name of Jesus - by His authority and power.
    - c. **1 Cor. 4:6** We cannot think beyond what is written. We cannot do anything that has not been authorized in God's word (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3; 2 Jn. 1:9).
    - d. **2 Jn. 1:9** If we do not abide in the teaching of Christ, we do not have God - we've gone "too far" (NASB).
    - e. **Rev. 22:18-19** We cannot add or take from God's word. We cannot do anything that has not been authorized in God's word (cf. Deut. 4:1-2; 12:32).
  4. The apostle Paul and the Jews understood that God's silence was not authoritative.
    - a. **Heb. 7:11-14** Paul uses the fact that God's silence is not authoritative to prove that God, of necessity, had changed the law before Jesus became High Priest.
  5. Men understand that silence is not authoritative.
    - a. **Acts 15:24** The apostles and elders wrote a letter to the Gentiles stating that the false teaching regarding keeping the Mosaic Law had not come from them. This was evidenced by the fact that they had given "no such commandment." They had been silent and had, therefore, not authorized the teaching.
2. Whenever God's silence is not respected, the transgressors are punished.
  - a. **Lev. 10:1-2** Nadab and Abihu:
    1. Nadab and Abihu offered profane (i.e., strange) fire. It was profane because it had not been authorized by God.
    2. They were punished with death for doing something about which God had been silent (Lev. 10:2).
  - b. **Num. 20:7-12** Moses and the rock:
    1. God commanded Moses to speak to the rock (Num. 20:8). God had been silent about striking the rock.
    2. Moses was punishment for doing something about which God had been silent. He was not allowed to enter into the promised land (Num. 20:12).
  - c. **1 Ch. 13:9-10** Uzzah and the ark:
    1. God had been silent about touching the ark (1 Ch. 13:1-13; 1 Ch.

- 15:1-29; cf. Ex. 25:10-15; Num. 3:30-31; 4:15; 2 Sam. 6:6-7).
2. Uzzah was punished with death for doing something about which God had been silent (1 Ch. 13:10).
- d. **1 Sam. 13:1-15** Saul's unlawful sacrifice:
1. God had been silent about Saul offering the sacrifice.
  2. Saul was punished for doing something about which God had been silent. His kingdom would not endure (1 Sam. 13:14).
- e. **Jer. 7:31; 32:35** Israel's sacrifice of their children to Molech (cf. Jer. 7:22-24):
1. Had God been silent about sacrificing their children to Molech?
  2. Was this an abomination (detestable), a sin?

## K. Review:

1. There are two sources of authority - heaven and man (Matt. 21:23-27). We must obey Jesus (Heb. 5:9). Then, we will members of His body of which He is the Savior (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:22-33).
2. We must obey the law of Christ (Matt. 28:18; 1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2; cf. 2 Jn. 1:9). The Old Testament is not authoritative today (Heb. 1:1-2; 5:9; 7:12-14; Matt. 17:5).
3. We must obey God's commands (Acts 17:30; Rom. 1:20; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Jn. 5:3; 2 Th. 1:8-10).
4. God has given us specific and general commands. Specific commands are the commands that include the specifics of accomplishing the command. General commands do not include the specifics of accomplishing the commands.
5. We must employ expediencies to accomplish general commands.
  - e. An expedient must (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23-24):
    1. be lawful.
    2. be helpful (i.e., expedient, KJV; profitable, NASB; beneficial, NIV and NRSV).
    3. not have control over us, be our master (i.e., we cannot be addicted to it).
    4. edify.
    5. not be self-serving.
  - b. Lawful expediencies are limited to fulfilling God's general commands (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23-24).
6. God commands us to follow apostolic examples ( 1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; 2 Th. 3:6, 14).
  - a. Apostolic examples in keeping the Mosaic Law are not binding upon Christians (Heb. 7:12; 1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2).
  - b. Apostolic examples that were cultural are not binding on Christians (Rom. 14:1-15:6; 1 Cor. 8:1-13; 10:23-11:1; Col. 2:16-23).
  - c. Apostolic examples of applying expediencies are not binding on Christians. Anything meeting the Scriptural criteria of an expedient (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23-24) may be employed as an expedient by Christians. By nature, expediencies today will differ from expediencies employed during the first century.
7. Necessary inferences resulting from God's commands and approved apostolic examples are binding on Christians today.
  - a. We learn from the Old Testament (Rom. 15:4) that whenever God commands

- His people to assemble on a specific day, He infers that they must infer every time that day occurs (Ex. 12:1-28, 43-51; 20:8-11; 23:10-19).
- b. The church must assemble every Sunday (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2).
  - c. Christians must lay by in store as they have prospered every Sunday (1 Cor. 16:1-2).
  - d. Christians must observe the Lord's Supper every Sunday (Acts 20:7).
8. God's silence is not authoritative (1 Cor. 4:6; Col. 3:17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Pet. 4:11; 2 Jn. 1:9; Rev. 22:18-19).

## II. Identity of the Church

### A. Introduction:

1. It is important to understand the unique identity of the church as revealed in Scripture.
  - a. Proper identification of the Lord's church from Scripture is necessary so that we may:
    1. identify a congregation of the Lord's church with which to assemble.
    2. avoid sharing in the man-made religious institutions of men.
  - b. Studying the identity of the Lord's church increases our faith resulting in a deeper appreciation of the church which Jesus purchased with His own blood.

### B. "Church," the called out body:

1. "Church" is a translation of the Greek word *ekklēsia* meaning a called out body.
  - a. The Greek word is used relating to Israel's assembly (Acts 7:38), a Greek riotous assembly (Acts 19:32, 41) and a Greek lawful civil assembly (Acts 19:39).
  - b. The Greek word is used to identify the body (i.e., assembly) of people responding to God's call through Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:18)
2. The church is a called out body.
  - a. All people are called through the gospel (2 Th. 2:14; cf. Mk. 16:15; Tit. 2:11-14; Col. 1:6, 23).
  - b. People responding to the call are added to the church by the Lord (Acts 2:38, 47; 1 Cor. 12:13).
    1. The church is composed of Christians (1 Cor. 12:12-14, 27). It is not a physical structure (Acts 17:24; cf. Eph. 2:19-22).
3. The word "church" is the called out body in two senses.
  - a. It identifies the universal church (i.e., called out body) (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22; 5:23-32; 1 Cor. 11:22; 12:28).
  - b. It identifies a church (i.e., congregation, called out body) in a specific location (Matt. 18:17; Acts 5:11; 8:1; 14:23, 27; 1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Th. 1:1).
4. God has called (cf. Rom. 8:28; 1 Cor. 7:17):
  - a. us of Christ (Rom. 1:6) to be saints (Rom. 1:7).
    1. To respond to the call of Christ, we must obey Christ (Heb. 5:9; 2 Jn. 1:9; cf. Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 12:13).
    2. People who respond to the call of Christ are sanctified and thus become saints (1 Th. 4:7; 1 Pet. 1:2, 18-19, 22-23).
  - b. us according to His purpose (Rom. 8:28).
  - c. both Jews and Gentiles (Rom. 9:23-24).
  - d. us into fellowship with His Son (1 Cor. 1:9).
    1. We have fellowship with Christ by abiding in His doctrine (2 Jn. 1:9; 1 Jn. 1:1-7; cf. Heb. 5:9; Gal. 6:2).
  - e. us to peace (1 Cor. 7:15).
    1. We have peace with God having been justified by faith upon obedience to the faith (Rom. 5:1; 1:5; 6:17; 16:26; cf. 1 Pet. 1:22-23).



- f. us by grace (Gal. 1:6).
    - 1. We come in contact with God's grace in Christ (2 Tim. 1:9; 2:1) and are saved (2 Tim. 2:10).
  - g. us to freedom (Gal. 5:13).
    - 1. Having been baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:3) we are free from sin and death (Rom. 6:16-23).
  - h. us in one hope (Eph. 4:4).
    - 1. Our hope is eternal life (Tit. 1:2; 2:13; 3:7; Heb. 9:15; cf. Eph. 5:23).
  - i. us in one body (Col. 3:15; cf. Eph. 4:4).
    - 1. The body is the church (Eph. 1:22-23) of which Jesus is the Savior (Eph. 5:23). As members of Christ's body, we have hope of eternal life.
  - j. us into His glorious kingdom (1 Th. 2:12; cf. Col. 1:13).
  - k. us for the purpose of sanctification (1 Th. 4:7).
  - l. us through the gospel (2 Th. 2:14; cf. Rom. 1:16).
    - 1. People who obey the gospel are added to Christ's body which is the church (Eph. 1:22-23; Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 12:13). They are saved (2 Th. 1:8-10; 2:10; 1 Pet. 1:18-19, 22-23).
  - m. to eternal life (1 Tim. 6:12).
  - n. us with a holy calling (2 Tim. 1:9; cf. 1 Pet. 1:15).
  - o. to receive the promise of eternal life (Heb. 9:15).
    - 1. People who obey Jesus (Heb. 5:9) receive the promise of eternal life (Heb. 9:15).
  - p. us out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Pet. 2:9; cf. Col. 1:13; 2:9-14).
  - q. us to patiently endure suffering (1 Pet. 2:20-21).
  - r. to inherit a blessing (1 Pet. 3:9; cf. Eph. 1:3).
  - s. to His eternal glory in Christ (1 Pet. 5:10; 2 Pet. 1:3).
5. Some names identifying the church:
- a. My (Christ's) church (Matt. 16:18).
  - b. church of the Lord, church of God (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 1:2).
  - c. church of Christ (Rom. 16:16).
  - d. the body, the church (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23; 1 Th. 1:1).
  - e. household (house) of God, church of the living God (Eph. 2:19; 1 Tim. 3:15; cf. Heb. 10:21).
  - f. church of the firstborn (Heb. 12:23).
  - g. God's field, God's building (1 Cor. 3:9).
  - h. the flock (1 Pet. 5:3; Acts 20:28).

### C. Origin of the church:

- 1. God is the originator of man's salvation and the church (Rom. 3:21-26; Col. 1:13-23; Eph. 1:22-23).
  - a. The church was established according to God's eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ (Eph. 3:6, 9-10, 11-12; 5:22-33; Rom. 8:28).
  - b. The establishment of the church was foretold by God through the prophets (Is. 2:2-3; Mi. 4:1-2; Joel 2:28-32). Daniel foretold of its establishment during the Roman empire (Dan. 2:31-45).

2. The church was established on Pentecost (Acts 2).
  - a. The church had not been established as of Jesus' ascension (Acts 1:6). But, it would be established afterwards when the apostles received power from the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:6-8).
  - b. The church was established on Pentecost fulfilling of Old Testament prophesy (Acts 2:1-21, 47; cf. Acts 11:15).
  - c. The church was established on Pentecost in harmony with Jesus' instructions to the apostles before His ascension (Lk. 24:45-49).
    1. Jesus instructed the apostles to remain in Jerusalem until they received power from the Holy Spirit (Lk. 24:49). Afterwards, they were to make disciples of all nations preaching the gospel to every creature (Matt. 28:18-19; Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 24:45-49; cf. Col. 1:6, 23).
    2. On Pentecost, the apostles began proclaiming repentance for the remission of sins (Lk. 24:47; Acts 2:38).
      - a. Note: Some translations read, repentance "and" remission of sins.
  - d. The church was established after the price of its purchased was paid - the blood of Jesus Christ (Acts 20:28).
    1. Everyone who has been added to the church (Acts 2:47) has been redeemed with the blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:18-19).
    2. Therefore, Christians are not their own. They were bought with the blood of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 6:19-20; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).

#### D. Membership in the church:

1. People who obey Jesus are saved (Heb. 5:9). They are added to the church (Acts 2:47) by the Lord upon being baptized for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38-47).
  - a. In like manner, Paul tells us that we are baptized into the body (1 Cor. 12:13). The body is the church (Eph. 1:22-23). Thus, we come in contact (added to) the church upon being baptized.
  - b. In like manner, Paul describes our union with Christ (Rom. 6:3-5; body, church) as marriage to Christ (Rom. 7:1-4; Eph. 5:22-33).
2. As members of the church (body of Christ), we receive all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3).
  - a. We are citizens of God's household (Eph. 2:19; cf. 1 Tim. 3:15) and Christ's kingdom (Col. 1:13).
  - b. We are adopted as sons of God (Rom. 8:23; Gal. 3:26-27; 4:5) and have an inheritance (Col. 1:12; 1 Pet. 1:3-5) as joint heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17; Gal. 4:7).
  - c. All our needs are taken care of by God (Matt. 6:24-34; 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Cor. 9:6-11; Phil. 4:4-9, 19; 1 Pet. 5:6-10).
  - d. God chastens us as sons (Heb. 12:3-14).
3. As members of the Lord's church we are responsible:
  - a. for keeping the church pure (1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Th. 3:6, 14; cf. 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-27).
  - b. for assembling with the saints (Heb. 10:24-25) worshiping in spirit and truth

(Jn. 4:24).

1. Obey our leaders (rulers) - those who watch out for our souls (Heb. 13:17; cf. 1 Tim. 5:17).
- c. for doing our share of work in the church (Eph. 4:7-16; Tit. 3:1-2; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 8:7, 11-15; 9:5-11).
- d. for preserving unity (1 Cor. 1:10; 12:24; Eph. 4:1-6; Phil. 2:1-8) turning away from those who cause divisions (Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Tim. 6:3-5; 2 Jn. 1:9-11) and rejecting factious men (Tit. 3:9-11).

## E. The church is:

1. The church is the kingdom of God and of Christ.
  - a. "Kingdom" denotes the domain of the king.
  - b. In a general sense, a kingdom is the domain over which a king has dominion (authority) and reigns. In this sense, God and Jesus reign over all - heaven and earth (Matt. 28:18-19).
    1. Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 1:5; 17:14; 19:16).
  - c. "Kingdom" is also used in a specific sense in regard to the "church" (Col. 1:13).
    1. "Kingdom" and "church" are synonymous terms for the body of Christ.
      - a. Jesus promised to build His church and gave Peter the keys to the kingdom (Matt. 16:16-18). "Church" and "kingdom" are synonymous in this limited sense.
    2. The church is referred to as the kingdom of God (Jn. 3:3; Rom. 14:17), kingdom of Jesus (2 Tim. 4:1; 2 Pet. 1:11), and kingdom of heaven (Matt. 16:19).
      - a. People who are faithful members of God's kingdom when they die, will also be eternal members of God's kingdom in heaven (Rev. 21:1-22:5).
    3. The church, being the kingdom of Jesus, is subject to Christ according to God's will (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:22-24).
2. The church is the house (household) of God (Eph. 2:19; 1 Tim. 3:15).
  - a. Jesus is Son over the house of God (Heb. 3:6).
    1. Christians are Christ's brethren and brethren of one another in God's house (Heb. 2:12; cf. Matt. 23:8; 25:40).
  - b. Jesus is High Priest over God's house (Heb. 8:1; 10:21).
    1. Christians are priests (1 Pet. 2:4-9).
  - c. Judgment begins with the household of God (1 Pet. 4:17).
    1. The people who obey the gospel are members of God's household (1 Pet. 4:17; cf. 2 Th. 1:8).
  - d. God's household is the household of faith (Gal. 6:10).
    1. People who are obedient to the faith (Rom. 1:5; 6:17; 16:26) are in God's household (Rom. 6:3; 8:1-15; cf. Gal. 3:26-4:7).
3. The church is the temple of God in which God dwells in the Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 6:15-16; Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Pet. 2:4-5).

- a. Since the church is the temple of God and the church is composed of Christians, each Christian is a temple of God (1 Cor. 6:15, 17, 19-20).
4. The church is the body of Christ of which Christ is the head (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:16-18; Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:12-28).
  - a. As head of the church, the church is subject to Christ (Eph. 5:22-24).
  - b. As members of Christ's body, we are saved (Eph. 5:23; cf. Acts 2:47).
5. The church is the bride and wife of Christ (Rom. 7:1-4; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:22-23).
  - a. People who are baptized into Christ are united with Him (Rom. 6:3-5; 1 Cor. 12:13; Col. 2:9-14). Therefore, they are one in spirit with Christ (1 Cor. 6:17).
  - b. Christ's bride, the church, will be eternally united with Him in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:1-9).
    1. These are the people whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life (Rev. 20:12, 15; 21:27; cf. Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5).

## F. The church is not:

1. The church is not a physical building (Acts 17:24).
  - a. The church is composed of Christians (1 Cor. 12:12-14, 27). It is not a physical structure (Acts 17:24; cf. Eph. 2:19-22).
2. The church is not a social club established for eating and drinking (Rom. 14:17; cf. 1 Cor. 11:22).
3. The church is not a denomination or man-made religion (1 Cor. 1:10-13; 3:1-4; Col. 2:20-23; cf. Matt. 15:8-9; Mk. 7:6-8).

## G. Review:

1. The church is the called out body of Christ.
  - a. All people are called through the gospel (2 Th. 2:14; cf. Tit. 2:11-14; Col. 1:6, 23).
  - b. People responding to the call are added to the church by the Lord (Acts 2:38, 47; 1 Cor. 12:13).
    1. The church is composed of Christians (1 Cor. 12:12-14, 27). It is not a physical structure (Acts 17:24; cf. Eph. 2:19-22).
2. The word "church" is the called out body in two senses. It identifies the universal church (i.e., called out body) (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22; 5:23-32; 1 Cor. 11:22; 12:28) and a church (i.e., congregation, called out body) in a specific location (Matt. 18:17; Acts 5:11; 8:1; 14:23, 27; 1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Th. 1:1).
3. God is the originator of man's salvation and the church (Rom. 3:21-26; Col. 1:13-23; Eph. 1:22-23). The church was established according to God's eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ (Eph. 3:6, 9-10, 11-12; 5:22-33).
  - a. The church was established on Pentecost (Acts 2).
4. People who obey Jesus are saved (Heb. 5:9). They are added to the church (Acts 2:47) by the Lord upon being baptized for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38-47; 1 Cor. 12:13).
  - a. As members of the church (body of Christ), we receive all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3).
5. The church is the kingdom of God and of Christ (Col. 1:13; Jn. 3:3; Rom. 14:17; 2

Tim. 4:1; 2 Pet. 1:11; Matt. 16:19), household of God (Eph. 2:19; 1 Tim. 3:15), the temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 6:15-16; Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Pet. 2:4-5), the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:16-18; Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:12-28), and the bride of Christ (Rom. 7:1-4; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:22-23).

6. The church is neither a physical building (Acts 17:24), a social club (Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 11:22), nor a denomination (1 Cor. 1:10-13; 3:1-4; Col. 2:20-23; cf. Matt. 15:8-9; Mk. 7:6-8).

## III. Organization of the Church

### A. Introduction:

1. The church (universally and locally) is an organized body (cf. 1 Cor. 11:34; Tit. 1:5). Therefore, we are commanded to do all things properly and in an orderly manner (1 Cor. 14:40).
  - a. The church is organized according to the doctrine and law of Christ (2 Jn. 1:9; 1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2) set forth in Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16-17; cf. Phil. 3:17; 2 Tim. 1:13).
2. It is important to understand the organization of the Lord's church so that we can conduct ourselves in an orderly manner according to the doctrine of Christ and not according to the doctrines of men.
  - a. Man-made religion is vain (Matt. 15:8-9; Mk. 7:6-8; Col. 2:2-23).
3. In this lesson we will study:
  - a. The organization of a church consists of Christ as the head, apostles, prophets, elders, deacons, evangelists, teachers, and saints.
    1. Christ is in heaven and exercises headship (rule) over the church through Scripture (2 Jn. 1:9; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
    2. The gift of prophesy is not given today (1 Cor. 13:1-13); therefore, there are no prophets today.
    3. Elders, deacons, evangelists, teachers, and saints all have present-day responsibilities on earth in respect to the church (Eph. 4:16).
  - b. Jesus is the head of every local church. Every local church is autonomous.

### B. Christ is the head of the church.

1. God put all things in subject to Christ and made Him to be head over all things to the church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). Jesus has all authority (Matt. 28:18-19).
  - a. The church is Christ's body (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18).
    1. We come in contact with Christ body, the church, when we are baptized (1 Cor. 12:13; Acts 2:47; cf. Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27).
    2. Christ is the Savior of the body (Eph. 5:23).
  - b. Jesus is in heaven (Heb. 8:1); therefore, the church's headquarters is in heaven.
    1. Any church claiming to have an earthly head or earthly headquarters cannot be the Lord's church.
2. The church is subject to Christ (Eph. 5:24), obeys Christ (Heb. 5:9), abides in the doctrine (teaching) of Christ (2 Jn. 1:9).
  - a. Any church not abiding in the doctrine of Christ (2 Jn. 1:9; 2 Tim. 3:16-17) is a man-made religious organization (Col. 2:20-23). It is not the Lord's church.
  - b. The doctrine and law of Christ are revealed in Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
    1. A church organized with creeds, professions of faith, bylaws, or catechisms cannot be the Lord's church.

### C. Apostles:

1. "Apostle" literally means *one sent forth*. It is used of two categories of men in the New Testament.
2. "Apostle" is primarily used of the twelve disciples of Jesus (Lk. 6:13; 9:10). Mathias took Judas' place and Paul was appointed after Pentecost (Acts 9:1f; 20:24; Rom. 1:1-6; Gal. 1:11-24).
  - a. This group of thirteen men had authority from Jesus Christ to communicate the doctrine and law of Christ orally, by written teachings, and by their example (Matt. 28:18-20; Jn. 16:7-15; 1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; 2 Th. 2:15; 3:6, 14).
    1. Paul was the last man to be appointed an apostle (1 Cor. 15:5-8).  
Therefore, there are no apostles on earth today.
  - b. The apostles were ambassadors of Christ. God spoke through them (2 Cor. 5:20; cf. 1 Cor. 2:10-16; 1 Th. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).
    1. God gave commands through the apostles (1 Cor. 14:37; 2 Pet. 3:2).
    2. If we have fellowship with the apostles by abiding steadfast in their doctrine, we have fellowship with Christ and with God (Acts 2:42; 1 Jn. 1:1-7; cf. 2 Jn. 1:9).
  - c. Qualifications for the office of apostle:
    1. They were appointed by the Lord (Matt. 10:1-6; Acts 1:23-26; 9:1-20; 26:16 cf. Gal. 1:1).
    2. They had to have seen Christ and witnessed His resurrection (Acts 1:21-22; 26:16; 1 Cor. 9:1; 15:5-8).
      - a. No one on earth can be qualified to be an apostle today (1 Cor. 15:8).
    3. They had to be inspired (Lk. 24:47-49; Jn. 16:7-15; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 2:10-13; Gal. 1:12; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).
      - a. Speaking in tongues was a sign of their inspiration (Jn. 16:7-15; Acts 1:8; 2:1f; cf. 1 Cor. 14:18).
    4. They had to have miraculous power consistent with that possessed by an apostle (Acts 2:43; 8:17-19; Rom. 1:11; 15:18-19; 2 Cor. 12:11-12; cf. Acts 19:11-12; Heb. 2:4).
      - a. Since there are no apostles on earth (1 Cor. 15:8), no one on earth can possess miraculous power (Acts 8:17-19; Rom. 1:11).
  - d. Work of the apostles:
    1. Testify of Jesus Christ and His resurrection (Jn. 15:26-27; Acts 1:6-8; 2 Pet. 1:16-21).
    2. Preach the gospel to the whole world (Matt. 28:18-19; Mk. 16:15-16; cf. Col. 1:6, 23).
      - a. They communicated the doctrine and law of Christ (Matt. 16:19; cf. 1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Jn. 1:9).
      - b. They convicted the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (Jn. 16:7-11).
      - c. They were ministers of the new covenant (2 Cor. 3:2-6).
    3. They, according to Christ's commands, formed the foundation of the church (Eph. 2:19-22).

3. "Apostle" is also used in a general sense of men like Barnabas (Acts 14:4, 14), Titus (2 Cor. 8:23), and James (Gal. 1:19) who were messengers.
  - a. Some people falsely claimed to be apostles (Rev. 2:2).

## D. Prophets:

1. "Prophet" denotes *one who speaks forth*. A prophet of God speaks forth the mind of God.
  - a. The gift of prophesy is not given to men today (1 Cor. 13:1-13); therefore, there are no prophets today. Anyone claiming to be a prophet must be a false prophet (cf. 2 Pet. 2).
  - b. The prophets ranked next to the apostles (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 2:20; 3:5; 4:11).
2. Qualifications for the office of prophet:
  - a. They were chosen and appointed by the Lord (Acts 2:17-18) through the laying on of the apostles' hands (Acts 19:6-7; cf. Acts 8:17-19).
  - b. Both men and women were prophets (Acts 2:17-18; 19:6-7; 21:8-10; 1 Cor. 11:4-5).
    1. Only men were permitted to prophesy in the church (1 Cor. 14:29-33).
      - a. Their heads were to be uncovered (1 Cor. 11:4).
    2. Women were only permitted to prophesy outside of the church (1 Cor. 11:5; 14:34-35).
      - a. Their heads was to be covered as a symbol of authority (1 Cor. 11:5-10).
3. Work of the prophets:
  - a. They spoke the word of God (Eph. 3:4-5).
  - b. They reveled God's counsel (1 Tim. 4:14).
  - c. They distinguished between the word of God and the doctrines of men (1 Cor. 14:37; cf. 1 Jn. 4:1-6).
  - d. They encouraged, strengthened, edified, exhorted, consoled, and taught the brethren (Acts 15:32; 1 Cor. 14:3-4, 31).
  - e. They foretold future events (Acts 11:27-28; 21:10-11; 1 Tim. 1:18).
4. False prophets:
  - a. Jesus warned the disciples of the coming of false prophets (Matt. 7:15; 24:11)
    1. They would perform signs and wonders to mislead, if possible, the elect (Matt. 24:24; cf. Acts 13:6-11; 2 Th. 2:6-12).
  - b. The signs and wonders false prophets performed (Acts 13:6-11; 2 Th. 2:6-12) were magic (Acts 13:6). They did not possess miraculous power from God, but used magic trying to convince people that they possessed miraculous power from God to deceive them (Rev. 2:20; 19:20; 20:10; cf. Acts 8:9-10; 2 Th. 2:6-12).

## E. Elders:

1. Three Greek words are used to identify a man holding this office.
  - a. *Presbuteros* is translated "elder" and "presbyter."
    1. This word identifies that a man holding this the office is advanced in age. Anyone qualified to hold the office will, by essence of the qualifications, be an older man (cf. 1 Tim. 3:2-7; Tit. 1:5-9).



- b. *Episkops* is translated "bishop" and "overseer."
    - 1. This word identifies that a man holding this office is responsible for overseeing the local church (1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Pet. 5:2).
  - c. *Poimēn* is translated "pastor" and "shepherd."
    - 1. This word identifies that a man holding this office will shepherd (pastor) the flock of God of which they are among (i.e., the local church of which they are a member and have been appointed to hold the office of elder) (Acts 20:29-31; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:1-2).
  - d. These words are used interchangeably identifying one office in the church, not three separate offices (Acts 20:17, 28; Eph. 4:11; 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:5-7; 1 Pet. 5:1-2).
2. A plurality of elders rule over a local congregation.
    - a. Appointment of a man as elder is contingent on a plurality of men holding the office (Acts 14:23; Tit. 1:5).
    - b. Every church in the Bible was overseen by a plurality of elders (Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2-6; 20:17, 28; Tit. 1:5; 1 Pet. 5:1-5).
    - c. As foretold by Paul, some elders became savage wolves and drew Christians away from God (Acts 20:28-30). Historical writings inform us that elders did this, in part, by departing from the New Testament pattern of a plurality of elders ruling over a local congregation. The result has been the establishment of many man-made religions.
  3. The office of elder is by appointment.
    - a. A man cannot be self-appointed to the office of elder (Acts 14:23; Tit. 1:5).
  4. Qualifications of elders (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:6-9):
    - a. aspires to (desires) the position.
      - 1. He desires to hold the office and to do the work.
    - b. above reproach (blameless).
      - 1. He has corrected his life and has a good record of walking according to the commands of God. He, therefore, is able to lead by example (1 Pet. 5:3).
    - c. the husband of one wife.
      - 1. He is in a lawful marriage.
    - d. temperate.
      - 1. He is self-controlled, not self-willed, and not quick-tempered (Tit. 1:7, 8).
    - e. prudent (sober-minded).
      - 1. He is a serious person who is a good decision maker.
    - f. respectable (of good behavior).
      - 1. He is a lover of what is good (Tit. 1:8).
    - g. hospitable.
      - 1. He is a lover of strangers. He enjoys having guests and treats them well.
    - h. able to teach.
      - 1. He is holding fast the faithful word that he may be able, by sound doctrine, to exhort and refute (convict) those who contradict (Tit. 1:9).
    - I. not addicted (given) to wine.

1. Wine was typically had 2-3% alcohol level and was drunk as we in the USA would drink water and medicinally. Addiction to wine would be improper use and thus disqualify a man from holding the office of an elder.
- j. not pugnacious (violent).
- k. not greedy for money (KJV).
- l. gentle.
- m. peaceable (not quarrelsome).
- n. free from the love of money (not covetous).
- o. just.
- p. holy.
- q. manages (rules) his own house well, keeping his children in control (submission) with all dignity (reverence).
  1. A man who does not know how to manage his own house well, does not have the ability to take care of the church of God (1 Tim. 3:5).
- r. has faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination.
  1. A man who is managing his house well will have children who are faithful Christians.
- s. has children who believe.
  1. "Believe" denotes a Christian (Acts 10:45; 16:1; 2 Cor. 6:15). An elder must have children who are Christians.
  2. An elder (singular) must have faithful children (plural) - more than one.
    - a. For similar language, see Tit. 1:5 (cf. Acts 14:23). Titus was commanded to appoint elders (plural) in every city (singular). Titus was to appoint a plurality (more than one) of elders or else appoint no elders.
    - b. A man who does not have a plurality (more than one) of faithful children does not possess the experience to take care of the church of God although he may be a very fine Christian man and qualified in every other respect.
  3. Some argue that since "children" is used in respect to a person having one child (Gen. 21:7; Acts 21:21; 1 Cor. 7:14; Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21; 1 Tim. 2:15; 5:4, 10), a man with one believing child is qualified. This position, in my view, is not supported by Scripture.
    - a. The word "children" is also used in respect to a person having no children (Gen. 30:1; Num. 3:4; 1 Sam. 1:2; Matt. 22:24, 25).
      1. If one interprets "children" in the qualifications of elders in a general sense to denote one child, it must also be interpreted to qualify a man without any children.
      2. In giving the qualifications, we have no evidence that Paul meant anything but a plurality ("children") in giving the qualification.
  4. The word "children" denotes one's offspring and is used both in a

literal (Matt. 15:26; 18:25; 19:29; 22:24) and figurative (Matt. 11:19; Rom. 9:8; Eph. 5:8; 2 Tim. 2:1; 1 Pet. 1:14; 1 Jn. 3:10) sense. Therefore, it would apply to one's natural and adopted (Rom. 8:15-17) children.

- t. not a new convert (novice).
  - 1. A new convert has not had time to grow spiritually (Heb. 5:11-14) and would easily become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil, if he were appointed to be an elder (1 Tim. 3:6).
- u. have a good reputation (testimony) among those who are outside the church.
  - 1. A man who does not have a good reputation among unbelievers is not above reproach (blameless) (cf. 1 Tim. 3:2).
  - 2. This qualification is necessary so that the man does not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil (1 Tim. 3:7).
- 5. Work and responsibilities of an elder:
  - a. He must take heed to himself (Act 20:28).
    - 1. An elder must carefully examine himself ensuring that he is faithfully serving God and discharging his office (cf. 2 Cor. 13:5; 1 Th. 5:21-22).
    - 2. He will give account for themselves and the discharge of their office (Heb. 13:17).
  - b. He oversees the flock, (local church, local Christians) (1 Pet. 5:2).
    - 1. He takes care of and rules over the church of God (1 Tim. 3:5; Heb. 13:17).
  - c. He shepherds the flock (local church, local Christians) (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-5).
    - 1. "Shepherd" figuratively denotes the complete authority a shepherd has over the sheep. Elders rule over the flock, care for the flock, and spiritually feed the flock according to the commands of the Chief Shepherd (Jn. 10:1f; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4) revealed in Scripture (2 Jn. 1:9; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
    - 2. Elders do not rule as lords, but they prove themselves to be examples to the flock (1 Pet. 5:3).
- 6. Christians' responsibility to the elders:
  - a. They should know and esteem the elders (1 Th. 5:12-13).
  - b. They should support them (1 Tim. 5:17-18).
  - c. They should not receive an accusation against them without two or three witnesses. And, they should openly rebuke them when guilty of sin (1 Tim. 5:19-20).
  - d. They should obey and submit to them (Heb. 13:7, 17; 1 Pet. 5:5).
  - e. They should call on them when in need (Ja. 5:14-20; cf. Gal. 6:2).

## F. Deacons:

- 1. "Deacon" means *servant, minister, attendant*.
- 2. "Deacon" is used in two senses.
  - a. In a general sense it is used in respect to anyone who serves (Jn. 2:5, 9; 12:26; Rom. 13:4; 15:8; 16:1; Eph. 3:7; 6:21).

- b. In a special sense, it is used in respect to men appointed to the office of deacon (Acts 6:1-7; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8-13).
- 3. Qualifications of deacons (1 Tim. 3:8-13):
  - a. men of dignity (reverent).
  - b. not double-tongued.
  - c. not addicted to much wine.
  - d. not fond of sordid gain (not greedy for money).
  - e. holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear (pure) conscience.
  - f. beyond reproach (blameless).
  - g. their wives must be dignified (reverent), not malicious gossips (slanderers), but temperate, faithful in all things.
  - h. husbands of one wife.
  - I. good managers of (ruling) their children and own households.
    - 1. A man must have a family with at least one child to be qualified.
      - a. Deacons (plural) must have children (plural). This is unlike the qualifications for elder whereby a man (singular) must have faithful children (plural). Correspondingly, a man with one child could be qualified as a deacon but not as an elder.
    - 2. A man must be managing his household well.
      - a. Unlike the qualifications for elders, a man does not have to have children who are Christians to be qualified. Therefore, it is possible for a man to be qualified as a deacon at a younger age.
- 4. Work of deacons:
  - a. The designation "deacon" refers to their works. They are servants of the church (cf. Acts 6:1-6).

## G. Evangelists:

- 1. "Evangelist" means *a messenger of good* and denotes a preacher of the gospel.
  - a. Philip was an evangelist (Acts 21:8) and preached the good news (Acts 8:12).
  - b. Timothy was an evangelist (2 Tim. 4:5) and preached the word (2 Tim. 4:2).
- 2. Necessary qualities of evangelists:
  - a. disciplined for the purpose of godliness (1 Tim. 4:7).
  - b. example to believers in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity (1 Tim. 4:12; cf. 1 Tim. 6:3-11).
  - c. paying close attention to himself and to his teaching (1 Tim. 4:16).
  - d. free from sin (1 Tim. 5:22).
  - e. diligent, accurately handling the word of truth, avoiding worldly and empty chatter (2 Tim. 2:15-16).
  - f. fleeing lusts and pursuing righteousness, faith, love, and peace (2 Tim. 2:22; cf. 1 Tim. 6:3-11).
  - g. gently correcting those who are in opposition (2 Tim. 2:25).
  - h. continuing in the things learned in the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:14-17).
- 3. Work of evangelists:
  - a. preach the word (Acts 8:5, 12, 35, 40).
    - 1. Preach in season and out of season (2 Tim. 4:2).

2. Reprove (convince), rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction (2 Tim. 4:2).
  - a. "Reprove" (convince) means to convict people of their error (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16; Tit. 2:15).
  - b. "Rebuke" denotes a sharp reprimand (cf. Jude 1:9).
    1. We rebuke people who do not repent after being patiently reprovved.
  - c. "Exhort" means to entreat or beseech (cf. 1 Tim. 4:13; Tit. 1:9).
    1. Exhortation calls for a person to make a change in conforming to God's will.
- b. baptize people who believe (Acts 8:12, 38).
- c. equipping the saints and building up of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:12).
- d. warn against apostasy (1 Tim. 1:3-4; 4:1-6; 1 Tim. 6:20-21; cf. 1 Tim. 6:3-5; 2 Tim. 3:1-17).
- e. entrust the gospel to faithful men who will be able to teach others also (2 Tim. 2:2).
- f. appoint elders (Tit. 1:5)
- g. teach sound doctrine (Tit. 2:1).
4. Support of evangelists:
  - a. The laborer is worthy of his wages (1 Tim. 5:18).
  - b. See, Lesson Four, work of the church regarding evangelism and teaching.

## H. Teachers:

1. "Teacher" denotes one who instructs and trains. It is used of God (Job 36:22), Christ (Matt. 8:19; 9:11; 10:24; 26:18), apostles (1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11), pastors (Eph. 4:11), and people who instruct others in the church (Acts 13:1; 1 Cor. 12:28; Heb. 5:12).
2. Parents teach their children.
  - a. As Christians, we bring our children up in the training and instruction of the Lord (Eph. 6:4; cf. Deut. 6:4-12).
3. Necessary qualities of teachers in the church:
  - a. not dull of hearing (Heb. 5:11).
  - b. learned the elementary principles of the oracles of God (Heb. 5:12; 6:1-2).
  - c. accustomed to (skilled in) the word of righteousness (Heb. 5:13).
  - d. senses trained to discern good and evil (Heb. 5:14).
  - e. faithful (2 Tim. 2:2).
  - f. able to teach (2 Tim. 2:2).
4. Work of teachers in the church:
  - a. equipping of the saints and building up of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:12).
  - b. older women teach younger women (Tit. 2:3-5).
    1. Women are not permitted to teach or have authority over a man (1 Tim. 2:11-15; 1 Cor. 14:34-35).
5. Teachers will have a stricter judgment (Ja. 3:1).
  - a. Christians must grow to be teachers according to their ability (Heb. 5:11-14).
  - b. Teachers will be held accountable for their teaching (cf. 2 Pet. 2).

6. False teachers bring swift destruction upon themselves (2 Pet. 2:1; cf. 1 Tim. 4:1-5; 6:3-5; 2 Tim. 3:1-13; 2 Pet. 2:1-22; Jude 1:4-19).
  - a. False teachers are accursed (Gal. 1:6-9).
    1. "Accursed" denotes a person doomed to destruction having no hope of salvation.
  - b. False teachers and their followers will be punished (2 Th. 1:8-10; 2 Pet. 2:3-10, 12, 17; 3:16; Jude 1:4-7, 15).

## I. Saints:

1. "Saint" denotes one who has been sanctified and is holy. A saint is one who will be saved at Christ's return (2 Th. 1:10).
  - a. Saints are people who believe (2 Th. 1:10).
2. All faithful Christians are saints (Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:2).
  - a. A Christian who strays from the truth is living in sin (Ja. 5:19-20). Since he is not sanctified or holy, he cannot be called a saint.
  - b. A brother who has strayed from the truth and is restored is again sanctified (Ja. 5:19-20; cf. Gal. 6:1). He is again a saint (sanctified and holy) and will be saved at Christ's return (2 Th. 1:10).

## J. Autonomy of the local church:

1. Jesus is the head of every local church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). Every local church is a part of His body (Eph. 1:22-23) and subject to Him (Eph. 5:24).
  - a. Jesus has organized local churches with elders, deacons, evangelists, teachers, and saints (see above). Any organization beyond what Jesus has authorized is sin (1 Cor. 4:6; Col. 3:17) and constitutes a man-made religion (Col. 2:20-23).
2. Jesus has not authorized:
  - a. Jesus has not authorized elders of one church to exercise authority over another church.
    1. Elders are only authorized to exercise authority over the church of which they are members (1 Pet. 5:2).
    2. In the sponsoring church arrangement (see below), the sponsoring church, with its elders, exercises authority over the participating churches. This is not authorized (cf. 1 Pet. 5:2).
  - b. Jesus has not authorized a group of churches to organize into a denomination.
    1. A denomination is a group of churches organized in a manner other than what is authorized in God's word wherein a church, man-made religious body, or human institution exercises oversight or influence over the group of churches.
      - a. Denominations usually employ bylaws, creeds, articles of faith, confessions of faith, and catechisms to set forth their human doctrines governing the denomination.
    2. Not only is denominationalism not authorized, but it is expressly forbidden (1 Cor. 1:10-13; 3:1-4; Col. 2:16-23; cf. Matt. 15:8-9; Mk. 7:6-8).
  - c. Jesus has not authorized local churches to work through human organizations

(e.g., missions, societies, conventions, institutions).

1. Missionaries are sent out by local churches (Acts 13:1-3) and report back to the local church (Acts 14:25-28).
  2. Churches contributing to the work of missionaries do so direct to the missionary and the missionary reports back to the church (Phil. 1:5; 4:10-18).
  3. Benevolence was sent from one church to relieve Christians in another church. In such cases, the money was delivered to the elders of the receiving church (Acts 11:29-30; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8:1-9:15).
- d. Jesus has not authorized local churches to work through a sponsoring church.
1. A sponsoring church is a church that organizes a group of churches together to accomplish a specific work (e.g., evangelistic, benevolent, etc.). The churches working with the sponsoring church are participating churches.
  2. In the sponsoring church arrangement (see below), the sponsoring church, with its elders, exercises authority over the participating churches. This is not authorized (cf. 1 Pet. 5:2).

## K. Review:

1. Christ is the head of the church. God put all things in subject to Christ and made Him to be head over all things to the church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). Jesus has all authority (Matt. 28:18-19).
2. The apostles were ambassadors of Christ. God spoke through them (2 Cor. 5:20; cf. 1 Cor. 2:10-16; 1 Th. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).
3. A prophet of God speaks forth the mind of God. The gift of prophesy is not given to men today (1 Cor. 13:1-13); therefore, there are no prophets today. Anyone claiming to be a prophet must be a false prophets (cf. 2 Pet. 2).
4. Elders are qualified men who have been appointed to oversee and shepherd the church of which they are members.
  - a. A plurality of elders rule over a local congregation.
5. Deacons are qualified men who have been selected to serve the church.
6. Evangelists are preachers of the gospel. They must have specific qualities.
7. Teachers are Christians who instruct and train other Christians. They must have specific qualities.
8. Saints are faithful Christians. The word "saint" denotes a person who is sanctified and holy.
9. Every local church is autonomous with Jesus as its head of every local church. A church cannot organize itself except in the manner prescribed in God's word.

## IV. Work of the Church

### A. Introduction:

1. The work of the church is limited in scope as ordained by God in His word (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3) from eternity (Eph. 2:10; 3:11-12).
2. In this lesson, we study the work of the church as ordained by God.
  - a. The work of the church is limited in scope. It is not necessarily the same as the work of individual Christians (e.g., 1 Tim. 5:16; cf. 1 Tim. 5:3-16).
    1. Some people have asserted that "the church can do anything an individual can do" attempting to justify involving the church in a variety of unauthorized religious works. This doctrine is false (e.g., 1 Tim. 5:16).
  - b. The limited scope of the work of the church is not unusual.
    1. Most human institutions, also, are limited in scope since it is virtually impossible for one organization to do everything.
    2. As a church, we must go to God's word and only do the things authorized in God's word (1 Cor. 4:6; Col. 3:17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).

### B. Assembly of the saints:

1. Saints are commanded not to forsake the assembly of themselves (Heb. 10:24-25).
2. When Christians assemble according to God's will, they are stimulated to love and good works (Heb. 10:23). The saints are edified (Eph. 4:11-16).
3. A work of the church is to assemble and do the things commanded by God.
  - a. See, Lesson Five, Worship of the Church.

### C. Evangelism and teaching:

1. See, Lesson Three, regarding evangelists and teachers.
2. Jesus commissioned the apostles to evangelize the world (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 24:44-49; Acts 1:6-8).
  - a. Carrying out the commission, the apostles taught the disciples to evangelize the world (Matt. 28:20; cf. Acts 8:1-4).
  - b. Christians are commanded to hold fast the word of life (Phil. 2:16) and contend earnestly for the truth (Jude 1:3).
  - c. The gospel had been preached throughout the entire world by Paul's writing of Colossians (Col. 1:6, 23).
3. The purpose of evangelism is to teach the saved (edify) (Eph. 4:11-16) and the lost (Acts 21:8; 8:5f).
4. The local church is the only missionary agency ordained by God.
  - a. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:14-15).
  - b. The wisdom of God is made known through the church to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places according to God's eternal purpose (Eph. 3:10-11).
  - c. Support of missionaries by local churches:
    1. The church in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1-4, 14; 11:22).
    2. The church in Antioch (Acts 13:1-3; 14:27-28).



3. The church in Corinth (1 Cor. 16:6, 10-11).
  4. The churches in Macedonia (2 Cor. 11:8-9).
  5. The church in Philippi (Phil. 1:3-5; 2:25-30; 4:14-20).
  6. The church in Thessalonica (1 Th. 1:8).
  7. The church in Crete (Tit. 3:13-14).
- d. Support of missionaries by individual Christians:
1. Gaius (3 Jn. 1:5-8; cf. Gal. 6:6).
- e. Financial support of evangelists went from a local church or individual Christian to an evangelist (2 Cor. 11:8-9; Phil. 1:3-5; 4:15-16; 3 Jn. 1:5-8).
1. There is no authority for a local church or individual Christian to send money to a missionary society, denomination, or other human institution that then forwards money to an evangelist.
  2. There is no authority for a local church or individual Christian to send money to a sponsoring church that then forwards money to an evangelist.

## D. Discipline:

1. Christians who do not repent of sin, thus no longer holding to the apostolic traditions revealed in God's word, must be delivered to Satan (1 Cor. 5:1-13; Rom. 16:17; 2 Th. 2:15; 3:6, 14; Tit. 3:10-11; 2 Jn. 1:9-10).
  - a. For the process of exercising discipline, see Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 6:1-11; Gal. 6:1-2; Ja. 5:19-20.
2. The purpose of delivering a Christian to Satan is:
  - a. for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 5:5; cf. Ja. 5:19-20).
    1. A brother who refuses to repent is delivered to Satan so that he might repent (cf. 1 Tim. 1:20).
  - b. so that sin would not spread throughout the church (1 Cor. 5:6-8).
  - c. so that he will be put to shame and admonished (2 Th. 3:14-15).
  - d. to restore and turn him back to the Lord so that he will be saved (Gal. 6:1; Ja. 5:19-20).
3. When a Christian is turned over to Satan, his brethren:
  - a. no longer associate with him - not even to eat with him (1 Cor. 5:9, 11, 13; 2 Th. 3:14).
  - b. do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother (2 Th. 3:15).
4. The result of exercising discipline is that:
  - a. the church remains pure (1 Cor. 5:6-13; cf. 2 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:27).
  - b. godly sorrow leading to repentance is produced (2 Cor. 2:1-11).
  - c. restoration (Gal. 6:1).
  - d. a sinner is turned from the error of his way, saving a soul from death, and covering a multitude of sins (Ja. 5:19-20).

## E. Benevolence:

1. Benevolence of the church is limited in scope.
  - a. We should not think that God has ordained an unusual work in limiting the scope of the church's benevolence. Man-made charitable organizations are also limited in their scope of benevolence.
  - b. Christians have a broader scope of benevolence than the church (1 Tim. 5:16; Gal. 6:8-10).
2. Benevolence of the church is limited to Christians.
  - a. Benevolence of the church in Jerusalem:
    1. Christians had all things in common. Some Christians sold their property and possessions to share with Christians who had need (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37).
    2. The church supplied food to widows of the congregation who had need (Act 6:1-6).
      - a. Men (deacons) were appointed to take care of this work (Acts 6:2-6).
  - b. Benevolence of the church in Antioch:
    1. The church in Antioch sent a contribution to the brethren living in Judea by Barnabas and Paul (Acts 11:27-30).
    2. It was delivered to the elders to be disbursed to the saints (Acts 11:30).
      - a. Whenever one church sends financial aid to Christians in another congregation, the money goes directly from the giving congregation to the receiving congregation.
        1. There is not a human institution or another church (i.e., sponsoring church) between the giving and receiving churches.
  - c. Benevolence of the church in Corinth:
    1. Contribution for the saints was taken up on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1-2).
      - a. Brethren were responsible for delivering the contribution (1 Cor. 16:3-4; 2 Cor. 8:19, 23). The local church did not abrogate its responsibility to a human organization or another church (i.e., a sponsoring church).
      - b. Churches in Galatia (1 Cor. 16:1), Macedonia, and Achaia (2 Cor. 8:1; 9:2) also sent a contribution.
    2. The contribution was for support of the saints (2 Cor. 8:4; 9:12).
      - a. The collection was not for the support of unbelievers.
      - b. "All" ("everyone else") (2 Cor. 9:13) denotes all the saints (2 Cor. 9:1, 12, 13-14) to whom the Corinthians had been benevolent.
        1. Only Christians could have glorified God and prayed on the Corinthians' behalf (2 Cor. 9:13-14).
    3. The result of a congregation being benevolent to other Christians is thanksgiving and glorification of God (2 Cor. 9:11-13).
  - d. Benevolence to widows by a congregation:

1. Widows who were put on the list (roll) had to meet specific qualifications (1 Tim. 5:3-16).
  - a. Widows who were put on the "list" ("roll") were widows permanently supported by the church.
2. Needy widows in Jerusalem received a daily distribution of food for which deacons were responsible (Acts 6:1-6).
3. Benevolence of individual Christians is not limited to the saints.
  - a. Individual Christians have a responsibility to care for their families (1 Tim. 5:8).
    1. The church is not to be burdened with the care of Christian widows if their families can care for them (1 Tim. 5:4, 8, 16).
  - b. Individual Christians are to do good to all, especially those who are of the household of the faith (Gal. 6:3-10).
    1. Christians must examine their "own" work (Gal. 6:4).
      - a. Here, Paul is writing concerning Christians' "own" personal responsibilities.
    2. Christians are to share (i.e., share in the financial responsibilities accrued by teachers; cf. Phil. 1:5; 4:15) with those who teach (Gal. 6:6).
    3. Christians are to not lose heart in doing good (Gal. 6:9).
  - c. Individual Christians are to "visit" orphans and widows in their distress (Ja. 1:27; cf. Matt. 25:36, 39).
    1. "Visit" (*episkeptomai*) means *to look upon or after, to inspect, to examine with the eyes in order to help*.
      - a. This command cannot be accomplished without personally seeing to their needs (cf. Matt. 25:36, 39).
      - b. An individual who does not personally see to the needs of orphans and widows (Ja. 1:27) as he has opportunity (Gal. 6:10) has an impure and defiled religion (Ja. 1:27; cf. Ja. 2:14-26).
        1. Dorcas is an example of a believer being charitable to widows (Acts 9:36, 39).

## F. The result of doing the work is edification.

1. "Edify" means *to build up*.
2. The result of doing the work of the church is edification (the building up of the saints).
  - a. Everything done in the church is for edification (1 Cor. 14:26).
  - b. Every word and action should be that which is lawful and good for edification (Rom. 15:2; 1 Cor. 10:23; Eph. 4:29).
  - c. The work of the church is edifying (building up) only when it is in accordance with God's word (Eph. 4:11-16; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Jn. 1:9).
    1. If a church's work is not in accordance with God's word, it is not edifying. Rather, it tears down the body of Christ.
3. When we assemble together, the saints are edified by being stimulated to love and good works (Heb. 10:24-25; 1 Cor. 14:26).

- a. Love edifies (1 Cor. 8:1; cf. 1 Cor. 13:1-13).
- b. We must obey God to love (1 Jn. 5:3) and edify others (Eph. 4:11-16).
  - 1. We cannot edify (build up) others by disobeying God. We can only tear them down.
- 4. When we teach God's word, the saints are edified (Eph. 4:11-16).
  - a. If we teach error, the saints are not edified (built up) (2 Pet. 2:1f). They are torn down and led into sin.

## G. Work of the church is not:

1. In this section, we consider a sampling of things that people have tried to justify as a work of the church.
  - a. These things are not works of the church because they are not authorized by God in His word.
  - b. Many of the heretical works with which men have tried to burden the church have been the result of greed, lust, and licentiousness (2 Tim. 3:1-9; 2 Pet. 2:1-22).
    1. Some men have perverted the gospel in creation of man-made religious organizations to influence governments and gain political power. Others have used their doctrines to rob God taking money from the treasury for support of their human institutions and for fulfilling the lust of the flesh.
2. **Human institutions:**
  - a. The church has no authority for financially supporting any human institution.
    1. Some churches take money from the treasury and make financial contributions to missionary, benevolent, political, and educational institutions.
    2. In contrast, the church has authority to purchase services from institutions such as utilities, postage, and printing as aids to accomplishing its word.
  - b. The church has no authority for receiving financial aid from a human institution (e.g., government) for providing services. The work of the church is funded by the saints making a contribution on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1-2).
    1. Some churches take money from human institutions to provide benevolent and educational services for the sponsoring institution. In such cases, the sponsoring institution often dictates the work to be accomplished in addition to religious policies which must be in place before receiving the finances.
3. **Recreation, social fellowship:**
  - a. Some churches build and maintain property for providing church-sponsored recreation.
    1. Some churches have structured their facilities and services to entertain its members. Some churches employ musicians, employ actors, and utilize props to provide entertaining services.
  - b. Some of the activities include camps (retreats), life centers, swimming pools, kitchens, bars for serving alcoholic beverages, and gymnasiums.

- c. Some of the activities include dancing, swimming, sports, parties, lunches, dinners, receptions, revelry while drinking alcoholic beverages.
    1. The facilities are sometimes rented out for hire.
    2. Members are sometimes charged to rent or participate in the activities.
  - d. Social fellowship among members is not a work of the church (Acts 2:46).
4. **Secular business:**
- a. Some churches profit by conducting business in and through their church.
    1. People who had made the temple a place to transact business had made it into a robber's den (Lk. 19:46).
  - b. There is no authority for using the facilities of the church for profit.
    1. Some churches rent out their facilities for meetings, beauty pageants, weddings, and receptions.
  - c. There is no authority the church to establish or conducting secular business of any type.
    1. There is no authority for raising money through ice cream socials, car washes, and bake sales. Churches have no authority to raise money through gambling activities such as raffles and bingo.
    2. There is no authority for the church to own business such as printing and publishing companies, farms, apartment houses, schools, retirement homes, and hospitals.
5. **Secular education, educational institutions:**
- a. The church has no authority for establishing, building, funding, or overseeing schools.
  - b. The church has no authority for making a contribution to a school.
6. **Politics:**
- a. The church has no authority for sponsoring political candidates.
    1. The church has not authority for financial support of political candidates.
    2. The church has no authority for using its facilities to aid political candidates in any fashion.
    3. The church has no authority for providing candidates with a forum or facility to politic.
  - b. The church has no authority for supporting political views through the disbursal of political literature.

## H. Review:

1. The work of the church is limited in scope as ordained by God in His word (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3) from eternity (Eph. 2:10; 3:11-12).
2. The work of the church is to assemble for worship, evangelism and teaching, discipline, and benevolence to Christians.
3. The result of doing the work is edification of the body of Christ.
4. Some things which are not included in the work of the church are the support of human institutions, recreation, social fellowship, conducting secular business, secular education, and politics.

# V. Worship of the Church

## A. Introduction:

1. The worship of the church is limited in scope as ordained by God in His word (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3) from eternity (Eph. 2:10; 3:11-12). Attempted worship of God according to the doctrines and commandments of men is vain (Matt. 15:8-9; Mk. 7:6-8; Col. 2:20-23).
2. In this lesson, we study the worship of the church as ordained by God.

## B. Worship:

1. "Worship" means *to make obeisance, to do reverence to*.
  - a. In a general sense, we worship God by reverently obeying Him in everything we do.
  - b. In a specific sense, in respect to the church, we worship God by reverently obeying Him in respect to the work and worship of the church.
2. We must worship in spirit and truth (Jn. 4:24).
  - a. "Spirit" denotes our heart and mind.
  - b. "Truth" denotes worship according to God's word (Jn. 17:17).
    1. Worship not according to God's word is vain (Matt. 15:8-9; Mk. 7:6-8). It is man-made (self-made) religion (Col. 2:20-23).
    2. Christians do not worship according to the ordinances of men (Matt. 15:8-9; Mk. 7:6-8; Col. 2:20-23) but in the name (by the authority) of Jesus Christ (Col. 3:17; cf. Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 5:24; Heb. 5:9; 2; 2 Jn. 1:9).
3. Worship of the church consists of prayer (Acts 2:42; Rom. 12:12), teaching and learning God's word (Acts 20:7, 11), singing (Eph. 5:18-20; Col. 3:16-17), taking up a collection (1 Cor. 16:1-2), and observing the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7).
4. Days of assembling:
  - a. Christians assemble on the first day of the week to observe of the Lord's Supper and take up a collection (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2).
    1. The first day of the week is Sunday, the day after the Sabbath (Matt. 28:1; Mk. 16:1-2; Lk. 24:1; Jn. 20:1).
    2. The only day authorized to observe the Lord's Supper or take up a collection is Sunday (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2).
    3. The only assembly authorized to observe the Lord's Supper and take up a collection is the assembly of the saints on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2).
  - b. Christians assemble to pray (Acts 2:42; 12:5; 16:25), sing (Acts 16:25; Eph. 5:19-20; Col. 3:16), and study God's word (Acts 5:42; 20:7; 2 Tim. 4:2) on any expedient day.

**C. Prayer:**

1. Christians (the church) devote themselves to prayer (Acts 2:42; Rom. 12:12).
2. Christians assemble together to pray (Acts 6:4; 12:5, 12; 13:3; 14:23; 20:36).
  - a. Prayer is necessary in observance of the Lord's Supper (Matt. 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 11:23-25).
3. Christians labored for one another in prayer (Col. 4:12).
4. Principles of prayer:
  - a. We do not pray to be seen of men (Matt. 6:5-6).
  - b. We do not pray vain (meaningless) repetitions (Matt. 6:7).
  - c. We address God in a reverent manner (Matt. 6:9).
  - d. We pray for daily necessities (Matt. 6:11).
  - e. We pray for the forgiveness of our sins (Matt. 6:12, 14-15; cf. Acts 8:22-24; 1 Jn. 1:9-2:2).
  - f. We pray to be led away from temptation and delivered from evil (Matt. 6:13).
  - g. We must be persistent in our prayers (Lk. 11:5-9).
  - h. We are confident that God will hear and answer our prayers (Lk. 11:9-13; 1 Jn. 5:14-15).
  - i. We pray in the name of Jesus (Jn. 14:13; 16:23-26).
  - j. We are devoted to prayer (Rom. 12:12; Acts 2:42).
  - k. We pray all the time (Eph. 6:18-19; 1 Th. 5:17).
  - l. We give thanks in our prayers (1 Th. 5:18).
  - m. We make our requests known to God in prayer and have the peace of God (Phil. 4:6-7).
  - n. We pray for the sick (Ja. 5:16).
  - o. We humbly cast all our care upon God in our prayers (1 Pet. 5:6-7).
  - p. We pray for brethren who have repented of their sins (Acts 8:22-24; 1 Jn. 5:16).

**D. Teaching:**

1. Christians assemble together to teach and learn God's word (Acts 20:7, 11).
2. The purpose of teaching in the church is edification (Eph. 4:11-16).
  - a. See, Lesson Three, Evangelism and teaching.

**E. Music:**

1. Christians are commanded to sing (Eph. 5:18-20; Col. 3:16-17).
  - a. God has been specific regarding the music of the church. No other type of music is authorized (see, Lesson One, Authority).
  - b. Examples of music in the church:
    1. Acts 16:25; 1 Cor. 14:15, 26; Ja. 5:13; cf. Rom. 15:9; Heb. 2:12; 13:15.
2. We are commanded to sing making melody with our heart to the Lord (Eph. 5:19).
  - a. "Making melody" means to *play strings, pluck strings*.
    1. The strings that we are to play are the strings of our heart. We sing with grace in our hearts (Col. 3:16).
  - b. God has been specific regarding the "instrument" with which we are to accompany our singing - our heart. We are not authorized to accompany our

- singing with any other instrument (see, Lesson One, Authority).
3. Authorized types of songs (psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs) (Eph. 5:19):
    - a. Psalms are songs of praise.
      1. In the New Testament, the Greek word is used in reference to the Old Testament Psalms (Lk. 20:42; 24:44; Acts 1:20; 13:33) but is not limited to them (1 Cor. 14:26; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).
    - b. Hymns are sacred songs of praise.
      1. The Old Testament Psalms are sometimes referred to as hymns in secular Jewish writings. Therefore, the difference between "psalm" and "hymn" is difficult to comprehend in Eph. 5:19.
      2. It is probable that Paul uses "psalms" to specifically denote the Old Testament Psalms and "hymn" to denote other songs of praise.
    - c. Spiritual songs are songs of a spiritual nature in contrast to songs of a secular nature.
  4. Mechanical instrumental accompaniment is not authorized.
    - a. We are commanded to do the things God has authorized in His word (Col. 3:17; 1 Cor. 4:6; 2 Jn. 1:9; Rev. 22:18-19).
      1. The apostle Paul and the Jews understood that God's silence is not authoritative (Heb. 7:11-14; cf. Acts 15:24).
    - b. God has not authorized instrumental accompaniment in the church. He has only authorized us to sing, accompanied by the string of our heart.
      1. Mechanical instruments in worship were authorized by the Mosaic Law and the Prophets (Num. 10:1-8; 1 Ch. 16:1-6; 2 Ch. 5:11-14). But God changed the law (Heb. 7:12-14); we live under the law of Christ today (1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2; Heb. 5:9; cf. 2 Jn. 1:9).
      2. God has not authorized mechanical instruments in the worship of the church (Eph. 5:18-20; Col. 3:16-17).
        - a. If we try to worship God as prescribed under the Mosaic Law and use mechanical instruments in the church, our worship is vain (Gal. 5:4; cf. Matt. 15:8-9; Mk. 7:6-8; Col. 2:20-23).
        - b. E.g.: Moses disobeyed God by striking the rock at Meribah as prescribed by God in a previous command (Num. 20:8-12; cf. Ex. 17:1-7).
          1. Moses disobeyed God because He did not believe (Num. 20:12).
          2. Moses was punished for his disobedience (Num. 20:12).
          3. If we use mechanical instruments in the church based on the Mosaic Law, we are disobeying God as a result of our disbelief.
      - c. See: *Authority*, by Allan McNabb.
    5. History from the second century forward:
      - a. Early Christians:
        1. **Justin Martyr (ca. 110-165 A.D., philosopher who converted to Christianity)**
          - a. "Simply singing is not agreeable to children, but singing with



the lifeless instruments and dancing and clapping; on which account the use of this kind of instrument and others agreeable to children is removed from the songs in the churches, and there is left remaining simply singing" (*Justin's Questions and Answer to the Orthodox*, Ques. 107, pg. 462).

2. **Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150-200 A.D.)** taught that the use of instrumental music which aroused carnal passions was sinful not only in the church but in everyday activities.
  - a. "Let Revelry keep away from our rational entertainments, and foolish vigils, too, that revel in intemperance. For revelry is an inebriating pipe, the chain of an amatory bridge, that is, of sorrow. And let love, and intoxication, and senseless passions, be removed from our choir. Burlesque singing is the boon companion of drunkenness. A night spent over drink invites drunkenness, rouses lust, and is audacious in deeds of shame. For if people occupy their time with pipes, and psalteries, and choirs, and dances, and Egyptian clapping of hands, and such disorderly frivolities, they become quite immodest and intractable, beat on cymbals and drums, and make a noise on instruments of delusion; for plainly such a banquet, as seems to me, is a theater of drunkenness. For the apostle decrees that, "putting off the works of darkness, we should put on the armor of light, walking honestly as in the day, not spending our time in rioting and drunkenness, in chambering and wantonness." Let the pipe be resigned to the shepherds, and let the flute to the superstitions who are engrossed in idolatry. For, in truth, such instruments are to be banished from the temperate banquet, being more suitable to beasts than men, and the more irrational portion of mankind. For we have heard of stags being charmed by the pipe, and seduced by music into the toils, when hunted by the huntsmen. And when mares are being covered, a tune is played on the flute - a nuptial song, as it were. And every improper sight and sound, to speak in a word, and every shameful sensation of licentiousness - which, in truth, is privation of sensation - must by all means be excluded; and we must be on our guard against whatever pleasure titillates eye and ear, and effeminates. For the various spells of the broken strains and plaintive numbers of the Carian muse corrupt men's morals, drawing to perturbation of mind, by the licentious and mischievous art of music" (Edited by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson; Revised and arranged with notes A. Cleveland Cox, *Ante-Nicene Fathers; Volume 1; The Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus*; Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishing, Inc., 1994; p. 248-9).
  - b. The Catholic Encyclopedia, commenting on Clement's

teaching in respect to music in the early church, says, "Clement of Alexandria severely condemns the use of instruments even at Christian banquets" ("Ecclesiastical Music," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*).

3. Music of the early church was distinctly different from other religions. Pagan religions employed mechanical instruments to drown out the squeals of dying animals being sacrificed and to soothe their gods.
  - a. "Musical instruments were frequently played at sacrifices. Sculptured scenes depicting Roman and Greek sacrifices normally show a musician playing the *aulos*. The loud wailing of the pipe may have served the practical function of drowning out the squeals of the dying animal, as the incense did of sweetening the odor of the sacrifice. In origin, however, the practice is usually understood as apotropaic magic, to frighten evil spirits away. Another suggestion is that the music soothed the gods and made them more favorably disposed toward the worshiper. Regardless of its purpose, instrumental music normally accompanied animal sacrifice in the ancient world" (Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993; p. 181-2).
  - b. Roman Catholics:
    1. For almost a thousand years Gregorian chant, without any instrumental or harmonic addition, was the only music used in connection with the liturgy. The organ, in its primitive and rude form, was the first, and for a long time the sole, instrument used to accompany the chant ("Musical Instruments in Church Services," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*).
    2. The organ, in the sense of a particular instrument (which dates from the time of St. Augustine), is a development of the Syrinx or Pandean pipe, and in its earliest form consisted of a small box with a row of pipes in the top, which were inflated by the performer with the mouth through means of a tube at the end. It has in the course of time undergone considerable improvements. The use of organs in churches is ascribed to Pope Vitalina (657-672). Constantine Copronymos sent an organ with other presents to King Pepin in France in 767. Charlemagne received one as a present from Caliph Haroun al Rashid, and had it put up in the cathedral of Aix-la-Chapelle. The art of organ building was cultivated chiefly in Germany. Pope John VIII. (872-882) requested Bishop Anno of Freising to send him an organ and an organist (Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, IV:439).
    3. "At all events, a strong objection to the organ in the church service remained pretty general down to the twelfth century ..." ("Organ," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*).
  - c. Leaders of Reformed denominations:
    1. **Calvin (architect of the Presbyterian church):** "*Praise Jehovah*

*upon the harp.* It is evident that the Psalmist here expresses the vehement and ardent affection which the faithful ought to have in praising God, when he enjoins musical instruments to be employed for this purpose. He would have nothing omitted by believers which tends to animate the minds and feelings of men in singing God's praises. The name of God, no doubt, can, properly speaking, be celebrated only by the articulate voice; but it is not without reason that David adds to this those aids by which believers were wont to stimulate themselves the more to this exercise; especially considering that he was speaking to God's ancient people. There is a distinction, however, to be observed here, that we may not indiscriminately consider as applicable to ourselves, every thing which was formerly enjoined upon the Jews. I have no doubt that playing upon cymbals, touching the harp and the viol, and all that kind of music, which is so frequently mentioned in the Psalms, was a part of the education; that is to say, the puerile instruction of the law: I speak of the stated service of the temple. For even now, if believers choose to cheer themselves with musical instruments, they should, I think, make it their object not to dissever their cheerfulness from the praises of God. But when they frequent their sacred assemblies, musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting up of lamps, and the restoration of the other shadows of the law. The Papists, therefore, have foolishly borrowed this, as well as many other things, from the Jews. Men who are fond of outward pomp may delight in that noise; but the simplicity which God recommends to us by the apostle is far more pleasing to him. Paul allows us to bless God in the public assembly of the saints only in a known tongue, (1 Corinthians 14:16.)" (*Calvin's Commentary on Psalm 33:2*).

2. **John Wesley (founder of the Methodist church):** "I have no objection to instruments of music in our chapels provided they are neither heard nor seen" (quoted, Adam Clarke's *Commentary*, Vol. 4, p. 686).
3. **Adam Clarke (Methodist):** "I am an old man, and an old minister; and I here declare that I never knew them productive of any good in the worship of God; and have had reason to believe that they were productive in much evil. Music as a science, I esteem and admire; but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor. This is the abuse of music; and I register my protest against all such corruptions in the worship of the Author of Christianity" (Adam Clarke's *Commentary*, Vol. 4, p. 686).
4. **Martin Luther (Lutheran):** "Martin Luther called the organ an 'ensign of Baal'" (McClintock & Strong's Encyclopedia).
5. **Charles Spurgeon (Baptist):** "We might as well pray by machinery as praise by it" (*The Treasury of David*, comment on Ps. 42:4).

**F. Collection:**

1. Christians assemble to take up a collection every first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1-2) to finance the work of the church.
  - a. See, Lesson One for frequency of taking up a collection and observing the Lord's Supper.
  - b. See, Lesson Four, for work of the church.
  - c. No other means of financing the work of the church is authorized by God except the collection of free will offerings of the saints on the first day of the week.
2. Principles of giving:
  - a. We are to give on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1).
    1. This is the only day authorized for the church to take up a collection.
  - b. We are to give as we have prospered (1 Cor. 16:2). Our giving is to be in proportion to our income.
  - c. We are to give as we have purposed (2 Cor. 9:7). We must predetermine the amount to give so that our giving will not be grudgingly and not affected by covetousness (2 Cor. 9:5).
  - d. If we sow sparingly, we will reap sparingly, And if we sow bountifully, we will reap bountifully (2 Cor. 9:6-11).
    1. If we do not give abundantly (relative to that which we have prospered), we will not receive abundantly from God.
    2. We should give liberally and sacrificially (Rom. 12:8; 2 Cor. 8:2).
    3. God provides seed to the sower (2 Cor. 9:8-10; cf. Phil. 4:19) enriching us in everything for all liberality (2 Cor. 9:11).
  - e. We should give cheerfully (2 Cor. 9:7).
    1. It is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35).
  - f. Our giving is an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God (Phil. 4:17-18).
    1. We lay up treasure in heaven when we give (1 Tim. 6:17-18; cf. Matt. 6:19-21).
  - g. Our giving results in thanksgiving and glorification of God (2 Cor. 9:12-15).

**G. Lord's Supper:**

1. Christians assemble to observe the Lord's Supper every first day of the week (Acts 20:7).
  - a. See, Lesson One for frequency of observing the Lord's Supper.
  - b. No other day or assembly is authorized for observing the Lord's Supper except the assembly of the saints on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7).
2. Manner of observing the Lord's Supper:
  - a. The emblems are unleavened bread and fruit of the vine (Matt. 26:26-29; 1 Cor. 11:23-26).
  - b. The bread representing Jesus' body is eaten and then the fruit of the vine representing Jesus' blood is drunk. A prayer proceeds each (Matt. 26:26-29; 1 Cor. 11:23-26).
  - c. Each person must examine himself to see that he partakes of the supper in a worthy manner (1 Cor. 11:27-32).
3. Purpose for observing the Lord's Supper:

- a. We partake of the supper to obey Jesus (Matt. 26:26-30; Mk. 14:22-26; Lk. 22:14-30; 1 Cor. 11:23-26).
- b. We commune (i.e., share) when partaking of the supper (1 Cor. 10:16).
- c. We partake of the supper in remembrance (i.e., as a memorial) of Jesus (1 Cor. 11:24-25).
- d. We proclaim Jesus' death until he comes (1 Cor. 11:26).
- e. We are spiritually strengthened by partaking of the supper (1 Cor. 11:27-32).

## H. Review:

1. The worship of the church is limited in scope as ordained by God in His word (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3) from eternity (Eph. 2:10; 3:11-12). Attempted worship of God according to the doctrines and commandments of men is vain (Matt. 15:8-9; Mk. 7:6-8; Col. 2:20-23).
2. Worship of the church consists of prayer (Acts 2:42; Rom. 12:12), teaching and learning God's word (Acts 20:7, 11), singing (Eph. 5:18-20; Col. 3:16-17), taking up a collection (1 Cor. 16:1-2), and observing the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7).
3. "Worship" means *to make obsequence, to do reverence to*.
  - a. We must worship in spirit and truth (Jn. 4:24).
  - b. Christians assemble on the first day of the week to observe of the Lord's Supper and take up a collection (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2). Christians are authorized to assemble to pray (Acts 2:42; 12:5; 16:25), sing (Acts 16:25; Eph. 5:19-20; Col. 3:16), and study God's word (Acts 5:42; 20:7; 2 Tim. 4:2) on any expedient day.

# VI. Unity of the Church

## A. Introduction:

1. Christ is not divided and Christians should not be divided (1 Cor. 1:10-13).
  - a. Division is a result of carnality (1 Cor. 3:1-4) and is condemned as a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-20; cf. 1 Cor. 11:17-18).
  - b. We must be diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:3) being unified in the same mind (Phil. 2:1-4; Rom. 15:6; Eph. 5:21).
2. In this lesson, we study the unity of the church as ordained by God.

## B. Jesus prayed for unity.

1. Jesus prayed for unity the evening before being crucified (Jn. 17:13-23).
2. We are perfected in unity (Jn. 17:23) by being sanctified in truth (Jn. 17:17, 19).
  - a. God's word is truth (Jn. 17:17).
  - b. The only basis for unity is God's word (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Jn. 1:9; cf. Rom. 2:8; 1 Cor. 3:1-4; Gal. 5:19-20).
3. Unity among Christians is necessary for the world to believe that God sent Jesus to earth (Jn. 17:21).
  - a. Christians must be unified to successfully evangelize their community.
  - b. When factious Christians assemble, it is not for the better but for the worse (1 Cor. 11:17-19).
  - c. Factions are necessary when brethren do not obey the truth (1 Cor. 11:19; cf. Jn. 17:17, 19).
    1. Faithful brethren cannot assemble with those who have strayed from the truth and live in sin (Ja. 5:19-20).

## C. First Corinthians: Unity cannot be compromised.

1. Unity commanded (1 Cor. 1:10).
  - a. Division and wearing other religious names (denominationalism) is forbidden (1 Cor. 1:10-13).
  - b. Division is a result of carnality (1 Cor. 3:1-4).
2. Brethren are unified by speaking the same things (agreeing) (1 Cor. 1:10; cf. Col. 3:17).
  - a. The church is composed of individual members unified in a single body by love (1 Cor. 12-13).
3. The result of unity:
  - a. The congregation is made complete in the same mind and judgment (1 Cor. 1:10).
  - b. The congregation's assemblies are for the better (1 Cor. 11:17-19). They are edifying (1 Cor. 14:26; Eph. 4:11-16; Heb. 10:24-25).
4. Faithful Christians cannot be unified with unfaithful Christians (1 Cor. 11:17-19).
  - a. Factions must exist between faithful Christians and everyone who does not abide in the doctrine of Christ (1 Cor. 11:17-19; 2 Jn. 1:9-11).
    1. Factions must exist so that those who are approved may become evident (1 Cor. 11:19; cf. 1 Tim. 3:15).

2. Factions must exist so that the church remains pure (1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Cor. 11:2-4).

#### **D. Ephesians: There is one unified body. We must be members of the body to be saved.**

1. To live in a worthy manner, we must preserve the unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:1-3).
2. To preserve the unity of the Spirit, we must be (Eph. 4:2-3; cf. Col. 3:12-14):
  - a. humble (cf. Phil. 2:5-8).
  - b. gentle.
  - c. patient.
  - d. showing tolerance for one another in love (cf. Tit. 3:9-11; cf. 1 Cor. 13).
  - e. diligent (cf. 2 Pet. 1:5-11).
3. The result of unity is the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3).
  - a. Brethren preserving the unity of the Spirit have a bond of peace.
  - b. A congregation that is not at peace is not unified.
4. Unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:4-6):
  - a. one body.
    1. There is one body, church (Eph. 1:22-23). The church is unified based on its oneness.
    2. Anyone who is not a unified member of the Lord's body (church), is not saved (Eph. 4:4; 5:23-24).
  - b. one Spirit.
    1. All Christians are baptized into the body by one Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13). The church is unified based upon the oneness of the Spirit.
  - c. one hope.
    1. The one hope is eternal life (Tit. 1:2; 2:13; 3:7). The body is unified based on the oneness of hope.
    2. Anyone who is not a unified member of the Lord's body (church) does not have the hope of eternal life (Tit. 1:2; 2:13; 3:7).
  - d. one Lord.
    1. We cannot serve two masters (Matt. 6:24).
    2. Anyone who is not a unified member of the Lord's body (church), is not saved (Eph. 4:4; 5:23-24).
  - e. one faith.
    1. There is one faith which is based on God's God (Rom. 10:17; Tit. 1:4; Jude 1:3).
    2. Anyone not obedient to the one faith (Acts 6:7; Rom. 1:5; 16:26) is not a unified member of the Lord's body and will not be saved (Eph. 4:4; 5:23-24).
  - f. one baptism.
    1. Baptism into Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:11-14) is the only baptism through which our sins are forgiven (Acts 2:38; 22:16) and we are saved (1 Pet. 3:21).
    2. Baptism into Christ is the only way we can come into contact with the body, church (1 Cor. 12:13).
      - a. Without being a member of the Lord's body (church), we

cannot be saved (Eph. 4:4; 5:23-24).

- g. one God and Father of all.
  - 1. The one body came from a single unified source, God the Father. The body is unified based on God's oneness (cf. Jn. 17:17-23; Col. 3:9-10).

## E. Philippians: Principles of unity.

1. A congregation's conduct is worthy of the gospel of Christ as the group strives together for the faith of the gospel (Phil. 1:27).
  - a. Therefore, unity is based solely on God's word since faith comes from hearing God's word (Rom. 10:17).
2. Paul's appeal for unity is based upon (Phil. 2:1):
  - a. encouragement (consolation, exhortation) in Christ.
    1. Christ's example of humble service (Phil. 2:5-8) teaches us humble like-minded service to our brethren (Phil. 2:2-4).
  - b. consolation (comfort) of love.
    1. The result of love (agape, doing good from a mental conviction) is comfort, consolation.
  - c. fellowship of the Spirit.
    1. Fellowship is sharing, joint-participation. Christians jointly participate in the Spirit (cf. Eph. 4:1-6) as they walk in the Spirit thus bearing the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-26; Rom. 8:1-17).
  - d. affection and compassion (mercy).
    1. God and Jesus have affection and compassion for us (cf. Phil. 1:8); therefore, we should have affection and compassion on one another with like-minded love (Phil. 2:2; 2 Pet. 1:7).
3. Characteristics of a unified church are (Phil 2:2):
  - a. being of the same mind (like-minded).
    1. Literally the phrase means, "think the same thing." A group of Christians think the same thing by having the same love for one another and being of one accord (one in spirit). Once a lawful decision is made by a congregation, each member abides by the decision without murmuring and disputing (Phil. 2:14).
  - b. maintaining the same love.
    1. Love, here, is agape (doing good from a mental conviction). Our conviction must be goodness toward each brother while watching out for each others' interests (Phil. 2:4; cf. Rom. 12:9-16; Ja. 2:1f).
  - c. united in spirit (of one accord).
    1. The congregation, as a whole, acts as a single body and spirit (cf. 1 Cor. 1:10).
  - d. intent on one purpose (having one mind).
    1. Brethren who think the same thing are of one mind. They are unified in love and spirit; therefore, they work together with singularity of mind.
4. Characteristics of individual Christians who are unified with their brethren (Phil. 2:3-4):



- a. not selfish (selfish ambition, strife, faction).
  1. "Selfish" literally denotes a person employing factious methods to meet his personal desires. Therefore, this person is selfish, willing to divide the body of Christ for the sake of getting his way. Brethren cannot be selfish and be unified.
- b. not conceited (empty conceit).
  1. "Conceited" literal means *vainglory*. A person employing factious methods to meet his personal desires is motivated by bringing glory upon himself. Such glory is vain and sinful. Christians strive to glorify God, not themselves (Phil. 1:11; 2:11; 4:20).
- c. having humility of mind, regarding (esteeming) other Christians as more important than self.
  1. Humility is the attitude Christ possessed in coming to earth and dying on the cross (Phil. 2:5-8).
- d. looking out not only for personal interests, but also for the interests of others.
  1. A Christian with the humility of Christ will look out for the interests of his brethren (Eph. 4:1-3; Col. 3:12-15; cf. Rom. 15:1-3; 1 Cor. 9:19-23; Phil. 2:5-8).

## F. How do we avoid divisions?

1. We obey God. We only do the things authorized by Christ (Acts 6:7; Rom. 10:17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Col. 3:17; 2 Jn. 1:9).
  - a. We obey our leaders (Heb. 13:17; cf. Col. 3:17).
  - b. We retain the standard (hold fast the pattern) of sound words (2 Tim. 1:13).
2. We exercise church discipline (1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Th. 3:6, 14; Tit. 3:10-11; 2 Jn. 1:9-11).
3. We teach and preach God's word:
  - a. pointing out false doctrines (1 Tim. 4:1-6).
  - b. reading the Scriptures (1 Tim. 4:13).
  - c. exhorting and teaching (1 Tim. 4:13).
  - d. accurately handling the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15).
  - e. preach in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort (2 Tim. 4:2).
  - f. exhort in sound doctrine and refute those who contradict (Tit. 1:9).
4. We do not preach human doctrines:
  - a. myths, genealogies and strife, speculation, disputes about the Law (1 Tim. 1:4; Tit. 3:9).
  - b. doctrines of demons (1 Tim. 4:1-3).
  - c. worldly fables (1 Tim. 4:7).
  - d. wrangling about words leading to the ruin of the hearers (2 Tim. 2:14).
  - e. worldly and empty chatter leading to further ungodliness (2 Tim. 2:16).
  - f. tickling ears in accordance to human desires (2 Tim. 4:3).
5. We contend earnestly for the faith (Jude 1:3).

## G. Review:

1. Christ is not divided and Christians should not be divided (1 Cor. 1:10-13). We must be diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:3) being unified in the same mind

- (Phil. 2:1-4; Rom. 15:6; Eph. 5:21).
2. Jesus prayed for unity the evening before being crucified (Jn. 17:13-23). We are perfected in unity (Jn. 17:23) by being sanctified in truth (Jn. 17:17, 19). The only basis for unity is God's word (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Jn. 1:9; cf. Rom. 2:8; 1 Cor. 3:1-4; Gal. 5:19-20).
  3. Unity cannot be compromised. Unity commanded (1 Cor. 1:10).
    - a. Faithful Christians cannot be unified with unfaithful Christians (1 Cor. 11:17-19).
  4. There is one unified body. We must be members of the body to be saved (Eph. 4:1-6; 5:23-24).
  5. A congregation's conduct is worthy of the gospel of Christ as the group strives together for the faith of the gospel (Phil. 1:27).
  6. To avoid divisions, we must obey God and only do the things authorized by Christ (Acts 6:7; Rom. 10:17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Col. 3:17; 2 Jn. 1:9).
    - a. We must exercise church discipline (1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Th. 3:6, 14; Tit. 3:10-11; 2 Jn. 1:9-11), teach and preach God's word, and not preach human doctrines.

## VII. God Desires Mercy and Not Sacrifice

### A. Introduction:

1. Jesus teaches that God's law is tempered with mercy (compassion). Many Christians understand this principle, although they may not understand the Scriptural background of the principle.
  - a. Laws (religious or secular) are not written to deal with every possible exception which may arise in an emergency situation. For this reason, God has always given His people a law that is tempered with mercy (compassion).
2. The principle of God's desire for mercy (compassion) above sacrifice is obvious in the following commonsense examples.
  - a. If unbelievers were in a car wreck outside the church building, we would use the church's first-aid kit and telephone to help the injured people. Although it is not the church's work to provide medical aid to unbelievers, the necessity of the situation requires us to act out of mercy and use the church's resources to help those who were injured in the accident.
  - b. If we had an unbeliever visiting the church assembly who had a severe sugar problem and needed a drink of grape juice to avoid going into shock, we would give him some of the church's grape juice purchased for the Lord's Super to medically attend to his emergency needs. Although it is not the work of the church to feed grape juice to unbelievers, the necessity of the situation requires us to act out of mercy and use the church's resources to help the person.
3. These examples do not authorize us to change the worship or work of the church.
  - a. Because mercy demands us to act in an emergency situation, we cannot change the worship or work of the church. As in the examples above, we could neither take money from the treasury to build a hospital for unbelievers nor could we take money from the treasury to build a food bank for unbelievers. We will learn more about this as we study Jesus' teachings.

### B. Jesus teaches this lesson on two separate occasions:

1. **Matt. 9:9-13** It was **necessary** for Jesus to associate with sinners since His mission was to call sinners to repentance.
  - a. The Pharisees did not understand the principle of mercy (compassion) above sacrifice (Matt. 9:13; Hos. 6:6).
    1. Bible teaching on mercy:
      - a. The merciful will obtain mercy (Matt. 5:7).
      - b. Mercy is a weightier matter of law than tithing (Matt. 23:23).
      - c. Judgment is without mercy to those who have shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment (Ja. 2:13).
  - b. Jesus could not fulfill His God-given mission without associating with sinners.
    1. The Jews were not merciful. Their human traditions prevented them from associating with the lost to call them to repentance.

- c. This principle in respect to teaching the lost is extended to Christians (Gal. 6:1-2). The spiritually strong are to call the lost to repentance because they are strong enough to associate with sinners (in order to teach them) without being tempted (cf. 1 Tim. 3:6-7; Tit. 1:7-9; 1 Cor. 15:33).
    1. Babes in Christ cannot allow themselves to be in positions where they may be tempted. Spiritually mature Christians could place themselves in the position for a short time to teach the lost.
  - d. The necessity for Jesus to associate with sinners in order to call them to repentance did not justify His association with them for other reasons that would have been sinful.
2. **Matt. 12:1-8** (cf. Mk. 2:23-28) Jesus' disciples were in a position where they found it **necessary** to pluck grain on the Sabbath.
- a. The Pharisees did not understand the principle of mercy (compassion) above sacrifice (Matt. 12:7; Hos. 6:6).
  - b. Jesus gives two examples:
    1. David (and his men) ate the consecrated bread (Matt. 12:3-4; 1 Sam. 21:1-6). But, the law specified that the consecrated bread was to be eaten by the priests (Lev. 24:9).
      - a. David was in a situation where it was necessary for him and his men to eat the consecrated bread.
        1. Note that the necessity of this one situation did not authorize David and his men to eat the consecrated bread under normal circumstances.
          - a. The same thing is true today. If we do something based on mercy (compassion) in an emergency situation, the same thing is not necessarily authorized in normal situations.
      - b. Likewise, Jesus' disciples were in a similar situation where it was necessary for them to pluck grain in order to eat (Matt. 12:1) although the law forbid this work on the Sabbath.
        1. The necessity for Jesus' disciples to pluck grain on the Sabbath one time, did not authorize them to pluck grain on the Sabbath under normal circumstances.
        2. Today, whatever is done in an emergency situation because of mercy (compassion) does not authorize the same thing to be done in normal circumstances.
    2. Priests were commanded to work on the Sabbath in violation of the Sabbath law itself (Matt. 12:5).
      - a. The disciples (when plucking grain) were obeying God just as the priests were obeying God on the Sabbath. The disciples (in this situation) were excused from keeping the Sabbath law as were the priests.
      - b. Similarly today, we give unleavened bread and fruit of the vine which has been purchased from the church's treasury to unbelievers in our assembly wishing to partake of the Lord's Supper. It is not the normal work of the church to provide

food to unbelievers. But because of mercy (compassion), God allows this exception.

- c. Jesus cites His authority:
    1. Jesus is greater than the temple (Matt. 12:6). The temple was the dwelling place of Jehovah. Therefore, Jesus declares Himself to be equal to God (cf. Jn. 1:1).
    2. Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath (Matt. 12:8; Mk. 2:27-28). Therefore, He has authority over the Sabbath.
  - d. Jesus, healing a man on the Sabbath, exemplifies the principle that God desires mercy over sacrifice (Matt. 12:9-14; Mk. 3:1-6).
    1. The Jews understood this principle when doing good to a sheep on the Sabbath. But, their blinding hypocrisy prevented them from understanding that it was lawful to do good to men on the Sabbath.
3. Application to Christians:
- a. **"Mercy"** as used in Matt. 9:13 and Matt. 12:7 defined:
    1. ". . . is the outward manifestation of pity; it assumes need on the part of him who receives it, and resources adequate to meet the need on the part of him who shows it" (Vines).
    2. The principle Jesus teaches is that providing the **necessary needs** of people takes president over sacrifice.
  - b. **"Sacrifice"** as used in Matt. 9:13 and Matt. 12:7 defined:
    1. ". . . primarily denotes the act of offering; then, objectively, that which is offered" (Vines).
    2. The word "sacrifice" represented the ceremonial portion of the Mosaic Law which aided the people in their spiritual and moral service to God.
      - a. The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath (Mk. 2:27).
      - b. To obey is better than sacrifice (1 Sam. 15:22).
      - c. I desire mercy (compassion) and not sacrifice (Matt. 9:13; 12:7).
  - c. Applying this principle today (*I desire mercy and not sacrifice*):
    1. **"Sacrifice"** represents the things we use and employ in service to God.
      - a. These would include the church building and all its furnishings, the treasury, and the expedient means of accomplishing God's will.
    2. **"Mercy"** demands that the things we use and employ in service to God be used to meet the emergency needs of people which cannot be met in any other authorized way.
      - a. If the only way we can meet the emergency needs of people involved in an auto accident is to use the church's first-aid kit, telephone, and building, we must use them to meet the emergency needs. The emergency medical needs of people are of greater importance than a first-aid kit, telephone, or church building. But, this does not authorize us to change the

worship or work of the church to fund, build, and oversee a hospital to care for unbelievers.

3. The word "**sacrifice**" does not represent the religiously moral precepts commanded in Christ's law (Gal. 6:2; 1 Cor. 9:21; 2 Jn. 1:9).
  - a. For example, we could not deny Christ before men to save our own life or the life of another person (Matt. 10:32-33; 1 Tim. 6:11-14; Rev. 2:10).
  - b. For example, we could not observe the Lord's Supper on a monthly basis rather than a weekly basis attempting to reach lost souls (Acts 20:7).
  - c. For example, we could not add mechanical instruments of music to try and attract unbelievers to the assembly (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

### **C. Secular examples of *mercy (compassion)* above sacrifice:**

1. Our civil law allows for judicial discretion in cases of necessity. These are situations in which the necessities of a situation deem it necessary to not follow the letter of the law.
2. Secular examples of driving automobiles:
  - a. Speeding in a car to rush someone to the hospital could be a necessary action in light of the circumstances. But, endangering other people by driving recklessly in this situation would not be considered lawful.
  - b. Speeding in a car to enter a lane on the freeway to safely move into traffic could be considered a necessary and appropriate action unless the driver is reckless. Likewise, speeding to pass a car on a highway to avoid a head-on collision could be considered an appropriate action unless the driver is reckless.
  - c. Speeding to get to church, work, or school on time is not considered necessary. Getting up on time and diligently preparing for church, work or school is necessary - not fast driving.

### **D. Religious examples of *mercy (compassion)* above sacrifice:**

1. We live in a prosperous country where there are few situations requiring necessary action as was the case with David eating the consecrated bread. But, we must be prepared if we are called to live in adverse situations.
  - a. The following are some real examples brethren have experienced. After the examples are some questions to help us think about situations we may face one day.
2. Religious examples:
  - a. A congregation accidentally ran out of communion cups one Sunday morning. They called a brother from another congregation who gave them some of the communion cups from the neighboring congregation.
  - b. Hurricane Andrew devastated parts of Florida. Churches could not contact the Christians and churches in the devastated area to send relief. A congregation near the devastated area collected the benevolent funds and distributed them to needy congregations.

3. Questions:
  - a. In times of utter devastation, could a congregation use their building and treasury to help Christians? Could the congregation share with unbelievers? Why?
  - b. If all our homes and our neighbors' homes were destroyed, could the members live in the church building? Could the members invite their neighbors to live in the church building? Why?
  - c. If all our homes were destroyed and we lost all our money, could we buy food for Christians from the treasury? Could we buy food for our neighbors living with us in the church building? Why?
    1. In this situation, should we invite unbelievers into the assembly on Sunday morning and serve them the Lord's Supper and then turn them out hungry into the elements while we gather to eat? Why?

## E. Review:

1. Jesus teaches that God's law is tempered with mercy (compassion).
  - a. God's laws are not written to deal with every possible exception which may arise in an emergency situation. For this reason, God has always given His people a law that is tempered with mercy (compassion).
2. In emergency situations, it may be necessary to meet the emergency needs with the things we use and employ in service to God.
  - a. But, this does not authorize us to change the worship or work of the church.
3. In emergency situations, it may be necessary to meet the emergency needs by employing civilly moral methods that are not authorized by God under normal circumstances.
  - a. But, this does not authorize us to change the worship or work of the church.
4. There are no situations wherein we may set aside the religiously moral precepts commanded in Christ's law (Gal. 6:2; 1 Cor. 9:21; 2 Jn. 1:9).
  - a. We can never deny Christ, change the frequency of observing the Lord's Supper, or add instrumental music to the worship of the church.