

Lesson 4 of 8: What is the church and how is it organized?

- I. The Lord adds to the church those who have believed in Him, acted on that belief by repenting and changing their mind to live according to the will of God, and been obedient to His will by confessing that Christ is the Son of God and are then baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- Only through full submission and obedience to the commands of Christ can one be saved.
 - **John 3:18** ¹⁸ *“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*
 - **James 2:19-20, 24** ¹⁹ *You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! ²⁰ But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?(...) ²⁴ You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.*
 - **Hebrews 5:9** ⁹ *And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,*
 - **Luke 13:3** ³ *I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.*
 - **Matthew 10:32-33** ³² *“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. ³³ But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.*
 - **Mark 16:16** ¹⁶ *He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.*
 - **1 Peter 3:21** ²¹ *There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,*
 - The Lord adds those who are saved to the church.
 - **Acts 2:40-41, 47** ⁴⁰ *And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.” ⁴¹ Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. (...) ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.*
- II. What makes up the church?
- Christ is the head of the church.
 - **Matthew 16:18** ¹⁸ *And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*
 - **Colossians 1:18** ¹⁸ *And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.*
 - Christians are members of the “the church of Christ” and are individuals who are a part of the body of Christ.
 - Those who have become Christians through obedience to Christ are members of the “the church of Christ”. The “church of Christ” is the body of Christ.
 - **Acts 2:47** ⁴⁷ *praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.*
 - **1 Corinthians 12:27** ²⁷ *Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.*
 - **Ephesians 1:22-23** ²² *And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*
 - **Romans 16:16** ¹⁶ *Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you.*
 - Christians worldwide make up the church; however, each local congregation of Christians is also Biblically referred to as the church.
 - **Acts 11:22** ²² *Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch.*
- III. The New Testament authorizes specific organization within the church.
- Christ is the head of each local congregation and the head of the church worldwide. He is the ultimate authority.
 - **Matthew 28:18** ¹⁸ *And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.*
 - **Ephesians 1:22** ²² *And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church,*
 - Who has Christ authorized to oversee each local congregation?
 - Elders who are also Biblically defined as pastors, overseers, and bishops are to shepherd the church.
 - An elder is a pastor. The definition of pastor as defined in the dictionary is “a shepherd, one who tends to sheep”.
 - **1 Peter 5:1-4** ¹ *The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: ² Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; ³ nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; ⁴ and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.*
 - **Acts 20:17, 28** ¹⁷ *From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. (...) ²⁸ Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.*
 - Should elders be appointed over multiple congregations or within each local church? As noted above, Christ is the authority over each individual congregation and the head authority over the church worldwide; however, elders are the overseers within each local church.
 - **Acts 14:23** ²³ *So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.*
 - Who has Christ authorized as appointed servants for each local congregation?
 - Deacons are appointed men who serve within each congregation.
 - **Acts 6:2-3** ² *Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. ³ Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business;*
 - **1 Timothy 3:8-10** ⁸ *Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, ⁹ holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. ¹⁰ But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless.*
 - We have seen that Christ has authorized each congregation of Christians to have appointed leadership who serve as elders and deacons.
 - **Philippians 1:1** ¹ *Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:*
 - Based on the authority of Christ through the New Testament, what are the qualifications of elders?
 - **1 Timothy 3:1-7** ² *A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; ³ not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; ⁴ one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence ⁵ (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the*

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church of God?); ⁶ **not a novice**, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. ⁷ Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

- **Titus 1:6-9** ⁶ if a man is blameless, **the husband** of one wife, **having faithful children** not accused of dissipation or insubordination. ⁷ **For a bishop** must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, ⁸ but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, ⁹ **holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.**

- Based on the authority of Christ through the New Testament, what are the qualifications of deacons?

- **1 Timothy 3:8-13** ⁸ **Likewise deacons** must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, ⁹ holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. ¹⁰ But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. ¹¹ Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. ¹² **Let deacons be the husbands** of one wife, **ruling their children** and their own houses **well**. ¹³ For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

- Preachers also fulfill an important role in Christ's church.

- **Romans 10:14** ¹⁴ How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? **And how shall they hear without a preacher?**
- **1 Timothy 2:7** ⁷ **for which I was appointed a preacher** and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.
- Preachers are not mediators between people and God.
- **1 Timothy 2:5-6** ⁵ For there is one God and **one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus**, ⁶ who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,

IV. Each member of the Lord's church has his or her individual purpose.

- The combination of members make up the body of Christ

- **1 Corinthians 12:12** ¹² For as the body is one and has many members, **but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.**
- **Romans 12:4-5** ⁴ For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, ⁵ so we, being many, **are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.**

- Each member has his or her own function.

- **1 Corinthians 12:12-27** ¹² For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. ¹³ For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. ¹⁴ **For in fact the body is not one member but many.** ¹⁵ If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁷ **If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling?** ¹⁸ **But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.** ¹⁹ And if they were all one member, where would the body be? ²⁰ **But now indeed there are many members, yet one body.** ²¹ **And the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you”; nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.”** ²² **No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary.** ²³ And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, ²⁴ but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, ²⁵ **that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.** ²⁶ **And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.** ²⁷ **Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.**

- All those serving in the Lord's church must do so in accordance with His word in order to be acceptable to God.

- **Romans 12:1-2** ¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, **acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.** ² **And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**
- **Colossians 3:17** ¹⁷ And whatever you do in word or deed, **do all in the name of the Lord Jesus**, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

- What has the doctrine of Christ declared in regards to the role of a woman?

- **Titus 2:1, 3-5** ¹ But as for you, **speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine:** ³ the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, **teachers of good things**— ⁴ that they **admonish the young women** to love their husbands, to love their children, ⁵ to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.
- **1 Timothy 2:11-14** ¹¹ **Let a woman learn in silence with all submission.** ¹² **And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man**, but to be in silence. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve. ¹⁴ And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.

V. In order to be considered a church in the sight of God, a congregation must follow only the doctrine of Christ.

- Christ is the true vine and all Christians must abide in His word.

- **John 15:1-5** ¹ **I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.** ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ **Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.** ⁵ **I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.**

- Christians must not follow doctrines of men.

- **Ephesians 4:14-16** ¹⁴ **that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,** ¹⁵ **but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—** ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.
- **2 John 9** ⁹ **Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God.** He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.