

## Organization of the Church

### ➤ Intro:

- **short series** on the church:

What is the church? – 2 lessons, complete

What is the organization of the church? – this lesson

What is the work of the church?

What is the worship of the church?

How is the church unified?

- **importance of series:** young people, new members, reminder to all

- **in this lesson on organization of the church:** Christ, apostles, prophets, elders, deacons, evangelists, teachers, saints, autonomy of local church

### ➤ Why is this topic important? – soul, salvation

- **Phil. 3:17** must walk according to the apostolic pattern (example) in the Bible

➤ - **1 Cor. 4:16** must **imitate** the apostles – **not add man-made religious offices to a church**

➤ - **2 Th. 2:15** must keep apostolic **traditions** revealed in God's word

➤ - **Tit. 1:5; 1 Cor. 14:40** church (assembly) must be orderly – **organized as God ordains**

➤ - **1 Cor. 11:34** if not, we bring **judgment** upon ourselves – **resulting in condemnation**

➤ - **Mk. 7:6-9** if not organized as God ordains, worship is **vain – sin**

➤ - **1 Cor. 11:17** assembly **not for better but for worse**

➤ - **2 Jn. 1:9; 2 Tim. 3:16-17** church must be organized according to God's word, to be congregation of Christ's church, saved

➤ - **1 Cor. 9:21** must be organized according to **Christ's law** – **Gal. 6:2; Col. 3:17**

- **summary: we must be organized as a church as commanded in God's word, or we are not a congregation of Jesus' church, and we are lost — Is it a big deal?**

- **Christ is head of the church.** – Christ is in heaven, He rules over the church through His word
  - **Matt. 28:18-20** Jesus has all authority, heaven and earth
- - **Col. 1:18** Jesus is **head** of the church – **as one with all authority**
- - **Eph. 5:22-24** we are **subject to Jesus in everything as a congregation of His church – or a man’s church**
- - **Heb. 5:9** must obey Jesus
  - **2 Jn. 1:9** abide in teaching (doctrine) of Christ
- - **2 Tim. 3:16-17** revealed in God’s word – **Jn. 1:1**
- - **if a church is organized with any other document** other than the word of Christ, it’s a man-made church
  - creed, profession of faith, bylaws, or a catechism is not organized according to the law of Christ, these things are not authorized – **if must have a legal doc as church, simply state that organized and governed entirely by NT**
  - **Mk. 7:6-9; Col. 2:20-23; 2 Jn. 1:9** man-made religions are of no value against the flesh – result, damnation
  - **illus.: some ask. . . .**
    - What profession of faith does your church (web site) go by? – the New Testament
    - What is your church’s creed? – New Testament
    - What are your church’s bylaws? – New Testament
  - **illus.: when church filing for tax exempt status** must send document of church bylaws, rules of organization, etc
    - sent New Testament and granted tax exempt status
- - **Test: Where is the church headquarters?**
  - **Col. 1:18** Jesus is the head of the church – **Heb. 8:1** Jesus is in heaven – **church “headquarters”** in heaven
  - **Google search: church headquarters**, find many churches advertising their headquarters located on earth
  - **headquarters of the Lord’s church is in heaven – that’s where the head is**
- **summary:**
  - **Jesus** has all authority, we must obey Him in everything to be a congregation of His church
  - **organized** by the New Testament – nothing else
  - **church headquarters** in heaven

- **Apostles: – apostles no longer on earth, teachings are authoritative, word**
  - **Eph. 4:11** **apostle:**
    - **define:** “apostle” literally means *one sent forth*, used of two categories of men
- - **general sense:** men who were sent forth as messengers – below: four e.g. in NT, not all
  - **Heb. 3:1** Jesus, a messenger sent by God
  - **Acts 14:4, 14** Paul and Barnabas on 1<sup>st</sup> missionary journey called apostles, sent out by Holy Spirit and church in Antioch
  - **2 Cor. 8:23** Barnabas and Titus as evangelists, messengers
    - **Greek word for apostle, translated messenger or representative in modern translations**
  - **Gal. 1:19** James, a messenger of the gospel (also an elder in Jerusalem), wrote epistle *James*
- - **the fourteen apostles selected by Jesus:**
  - original twelve, Matthias who took Judas’ place, Paul – more info later about these
- - **false apostles:**
  - **Rev. 2:2** **apostles tested** in the first century, some found to be false – **today**
    - **today, no one is qualified to be an apostle – everyone claiming to be an apostle is false (below)**
  - **2 Cor. 11:3-4, 12-15** info, description, false apostles
- - **qualifications for the office of apostle:**
  - **Matt. 28:18-20; Gal. 1:1** **ordained by Jesus** – original twelve, Matthias by Lord through casting of lots, Paul out of die time by Jesus
  - - **Acts 1:21-22** saw Christ, witness of His resurrection
  - - **1 Cor. 9:1-2; 15:5-8** Paul, all apostles – **last man qualified to be apostle**
  - - **2 Cor. 12:11-12; Rom. 15:18-19** possess **miraculous power and performs signs** of apostleship
  - - **Acts 2:43** from Pentecost forward
  - - **Acts 8:17-19** to **impart miraculous power to people** by laying on of their hands
  - **application: since no one can meet these qualifications today, no one can be an apostle**
    - **since no one can be an apostle, no one can receive power to do miracles**

➤ 5 - begin Part II: intro, review

➤ - work of the apostles:

- 2 Cor. 5:20 ambassadors of Christ – acted on Christ's behalf and in His stead, given authority

- Matt. 28:18-20 commissioned by Jesus to preach, convert, teach

- 1 Jn. 1:1-7 fellowship with the apostles (word) = fellowship with Christ, God

➤ - Jn. 15:26-27; Acts 1:6-8 testify of Jesus, witness, resurrection

➤ - Mk. 16:15-16 preach the gospel

➤ - Matt. 16:19 communicate law of Christ (Gal. 6:2) – Bible

➤ - Jn. 16:7-11 convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgment – Bible

➤ - 2 Cor. 3:2-6 ministers of the new covenant – Bible

➤ - Eph. 2:19-22 the foundation of the church with Christ, household and temple of God – Bible

➤ Prophets: – no prophets today (review: Christ, apostles)

- Eph. 4:11 prophet:

- define: *one who speaks forth*, not necessarily future events – speaks forth the mind of God

➤ - qualifications:

- Deut. 18:15, 20-22 prophecies come true – context Jesus – cf. false prophets today, end of world

➤ - Matt. 7:15-20 judge by fruits

- illus.: Joseph Smith, founding prophet Mormon church

- said that there are men living on the moon who dress like Quakers and live to be nearly 1000 years old (The Young Woman's Journal, Vol. 3, pp. 263-264. See reprint in Mormonism -- Shadow or Reality? by Jerald and Sandra Tanner, p. 4)

- in 1835, Joseph Smith prophesied that the Lord would come in fifty six years (History of the Church, Vol. 2, p. 182)

- illus.: Ellen White, founding prophet of Seventh-day Adventist Church

- predicted the end of the world in 1843, and again in 1844

➤ - Acts 2:17-18 appointed by the Lord – He poured out His Spirit on them

➤ - Acts 8:17-19; 19:6 by laying on of an apostle's hands – method Spirit poured out

➤ - male and female prophets:

- 1 Cor. 14:29-33 only men permitted to prophesy in the assembly

- 1 Cor. 11:4 their heads had to be uncovered

➤ - 1 Cor. 11:5; 14:34-35 women permitted to pray outside of the assembly – Philip's daughters

- 1 Cor. 11:5-10 their heads had to be covered

➤ - work of prophets:

- Eph. 3:4-5 spoke the word of God

➤ - 1 Tim. 4:14 revealed God's counsel

➤ - 1 Cor. 14:37 distinguished between the word of God and the doctrines of men

➤ - Acts 15:32; 1 Cor. 14:3-4, 31 encouraged, strengthened, edified, exhorted, consoled, and taught the brethren

➤ - Acts 11:27-28 foretold future events – illus.: Matt. 24; Rev.

- - **false prophets:**
- - **2 Th. 2:8-12** use **fake miracles** (magic tricks) to **deceive** people
- - **illus.: R - Acts 13:6-11 Elymas**
- **illus.: Peter Popoff (televangelist)**, proven to be fraud by magician James Randi, aired on TV, employees secretly pried info from people before the service which his wife relayed during the service via a radio hidden in his ear and disguised as a hearing aid – **YouTube.com**
- - **2 Pet. 2:1-3, 10, 12-15, 18-19** use **sin and lust to lure** Christians away from God
- **illus. Polygamy Mormon Church:** sanctioned fornication, Joseph Smith is reported to have had twenty-seven wives, Brigham Young had twenty-five wives
- **illus. Warren Jeffs:** prophet of the offshoot sect known as the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, sanctioned polygamous marriages of men with girls as young as 14, against their will
- - **Gal. 1:6-9** **must reject God's word to believe** a present-day prophet
- **present-day prophets preach a different gospel, or they wouldn't be prophets**
- **Acts 8:17-19; 19:6** no one can receive miraculous power
- **anyone claiming to be a prophet today in a false prophet**
- **religion today:** anyone hold the office of prophet, anyone who says "God told me. . . ."

➤ 10 - begin Part III: intro, review

➤ Elders: (review: Christ, apostles, prophets)

- Eph. 4:11 elder (pastor, bishop):

➤ - words referring to the office of men who have spiritual oversight of a local congregation:

- Acts 11:30 elder, older man, spiritually mature man – 1 Tim. 3:6 “not a new convert (novice)”

- 1 Tim. 3:2 bishop / overseer, denotes the work of the office — oversee, take care of the church

- Acts 20:17, 28 pastor / shepherd, denotes the work, and method of accomplishing the work

- all three designations appear - three terms for one office

➤ - a plurality of elders rule over a local congregation:

- Acts 14:23 every church in the Bible with elders had a plurality (Acts 14:23; 15:2-6; 20:17, 28; Tit. 1:5; 1 Pet. 5:1-5)

- illus.: two elders, one dies, no eldership

- one heartbeat from having no elders

➤ - Tit. 1:5; Acts 14:23 appointment of a man as elder is contingent on a plurality of men holding the office

- can't be self-appointed – Acts 6 example of congregation selecting, and then being appointed

➤ - Acts 20:28-30 apostasy of elders: 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.

➤ - qualifications:

- 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:6-9 qualifications – not intent to analyze each qualifications

- summarize: strong Christian men, married with children who are Christians, able to teach, with a good track record of being spiritual leaders in their homes

- qualities all should have – marriage and procreation not required by God

- men who don't meet the qualifications not less a Christian: capable, qualified, has life skills that equip him to serve in other areas – e.g., Paul – elders can't do everything – everyone has important role (Eph. 4:16)

➤ - work and responsibilities of an elder:

- Acts 20:28a on guard for self and whole flock – must have self in order before help others

➤ - Matt. 7:3-5 basic principle – correct self first – church, home, work

➤ - 1 Pet. 5:2 shepherd, oversee (exercise oversight) (pastor, bishop) the flock – voluntarily

- elders not effective if members not like sheep

- "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).

➤ - 1 Tim. 3:5 take care of the church

- put into to hands to care for

- parent gives child animal to care for

➤ - 1 Pet. 5:3 not rule as lords, but examples to the flock

- illus.: not like driving cattle, but leading sheep

- all believers examples: church, home, business, community

➤ - Heb. 13:17 will give account for themselves and the discharge of their office – souls of congregation

- illus.: judgment, giving account for each one – pretend watching elders give acct for you

- - **Christians' responsibility to the elders:**
  - **1 Th. 5:12-13** appreciate and esteem the elders – **lit., to have regard for, cherish, pay attention to**
  - - **1 Tim. 5:17-18** double honor, financially support as appropriate
  - - **1 Tim. 5:19-20** not receive an accusation against them without two or three witnesses; **openly rebuke** them when guilty of unrepentant sin – **careful what you say, not listen to gossip or pass on**
  - - **Heb. 13:7** imitate their faith – **follow example – sheep following shepherd**
  - - **Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:5** obey and be subject to them – **why some not appoint – if ask to. . . .**
  - - **Ja. 5:14-15** call on them when in need - **Gal. 6:2 – resp. of each to call on them - not wait**
  - - **2 Cor. 5:10** judged regarding our sheep-like attitude toward to elders – **obey, submit**

- prayer for elders

➤ review through elders - **begin Part IV: intro, review**

➤ **Deacons:** (review: Christ, apostles, prophets, elders)

- Greek, *diakonos* (dee-ak'-on-os): *servant, minister, attendant* – **used two ways in Bible**

- **Rom. 16:1; 1 Tim. 4:6 general sense:** servant, minister – anyone who serves

- **all Christians serve God, brethren (Col. 3:24; Gal. 5:13) – illus.: Phoebe (Rom. 16:1)**

- **Do you have a servant attitude?** toward God, toward brethren in need

- **great servants our congregation** – serve without being told, think for selves, committed

➤ - **Phil. 1:1 special sense:** deacon, man ordained in local congregation

- **great deacons our congregation** – dependable, responsible, work hard, committed, give time

➤ - **qualifications:**

- **1 Tim. 3:8-12 not intent to analyze** each qualifications

- **summarize:** strong Christian men, married with children, with a good track record of being good managers in their homes

- **qualities all should have** – marriage and procreation not required by God

- **men who don't meet the qualifications** not less a Christian: capable, qualified, has life skills that equip him to serve in other areas – **illus.: deacons can't do everything – everyone has important role (Eph. 4:16)**

➤ - **work of deacons:**

- **Acts 6:1-4 servants of the church** – word for “serve” used of deacons (Acts 6:2; 1 Tim. 3:10)

- **What was their job?**

- **Acts 6:3b “put in charge”** their job not to specifically take over job from other Christians, but to **manage (1 Tim. 3:12)**

- **note:** there were already people serving the food doing things necessary to feed widows

- **mistaken idea about deacons in some congregations today** – slaves rather than managers

- **churches suffer spiritually:** elders do deacons' work (manage physical activities) rather than attend to spiritual matters

- **Acts 6:2b apostles realized the importance** of handing management of physical activities over to others



- **Evangelists:** (review: Christ, apostles, prophets, elders, deacons)
  - **Eph. 4:11 evangelist:**
    - **define:** *a messenger of good* and denotes a preacher of the gospel
    - **illus.:**
      - **Philip** was evangelist (**Acts 21:8**), preached the good news (**Acts 8:12**)
      - **Timothy** was evangelist (**2 Tim. 4:5**), preached the word (**2 Tim. 4:2**)
- - **1 Tim. 5:18 support of evangelists** - laborer worthy of hire – **thanks**
  - **illus.:** Paul, who was supported
- 2 - **PP review** - **qualities of evangelist**
- 2 - **PP review** - **work of evangelist**
- **Teachers:** (review: Christ, apostles, prophets, elders, deacons, evangelists)
  - **Acts 13:1a teacher:**
    - **define:** *one who instructs and trains*
    - **word used of** God, Christ, apostles, pastors, people who instruct others in the church, parents
    - **great teachers here:** just look at class rooms and listen to kids talk about class
  - - **Responsibility**
    - **Ja. 3:1 teachers receive stricter judgment** - **held accountable for teaching**
      - **illus.:** teacher, baby Bible class
  - - **Heb. 5:11-14 held accountable, grow** – **can't shirk duty to teach**
    - **hard some congregations to get people to teach** – **judgment**
  - - **False teachers**
    - **2 Pet. 2:1 false teachers** bring swift destruction upon themselves
  - - **Gal. 1:6-9 false teachers accursed:** doomed to destruction having no hope of salvation
- 2 - **PP review** - **qualities of teachers**
- 2 - **PP review** - **work of teachers**

➤ **Saints:** (review: Christ, apostles, prophets, elders, deacons, evangelists, teachers)

- **saint:** one who has been sanctified and is holy

- **2 Th. 1:10** saints, believes

- **2 Th. 1:8** they know God and obey gospel

- **All Christians are saints**

- **Eph. 1:1** saints, all who are “in Christ”

- **Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27** baptized into Christ

- **prayer for deacons, evangelists, teachers, all saints** by one of the elders — last time member led congregation in prayer for elders

➤ **Summary / Inv.**

- **important thing is be a saint, as such we will assemble and organize ourselves according to the gospel which we obey**

- **inv.:** become a saints “in Christ” – baptized into Christ