

ECCLESIOLOGY

Grace Bible Institute
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INTRODUCTION

There is a song used by some to teach young believers about the Church. The content of the song, though trite, goes a considerable ways in teaching some fundamental truths about the Church. Several of the verses went this way:

“On Pentecost some people;
Received the Holy Spirit;
And told the good news of the Word;
To all who would hear it...

Chrous

I am the church,
You are the church,
We are the church together,
All who are believers all around the world,
Yes we're the church together.

“And when the Church is gathered,
There's fellowship and praying,
There's teaching of God's holy Word,
All of it saying...

“We're many different people,
From many different places,
All colors and all ages too,
And all kind of faces...

The Church is not a building;
The Church is not a steeple;
The Church is not a resting place;
The Church is the people....

As simplistic as the aforementioned song is, it communicates a truth lost on many in the Church today. God created an entity on the Day of Pentecost that had not previously existed. Before the Church began, God was previously occupied with the nation of Israel. God turned to Israel after all of mankind rejected Him at the Tower of

Babel.¹

God chose Israel, not upon the basis of their being larger than any of the other nations but because they were the smallest of nations.² God wanted to use Israel to prove to the rest of mankind that the God of Israel was greater than their gods. God allowed the rest of mankind (the Gentiles) who rejected Him to walk In their own ways. Yet, He did not leave them without a “witness” in that He did good to them.³ The nation of Israel rejected Christ, their Messiah, however. Consequently, God turned to the Gentiles to take for Himself a people for his “Name”.⁴ After the rapture of the Church, God will again turn to the nation Israel. Until that time, the Church is the object of God’s attention. The Church is a union of both Jew and Gentiles into one Body.⁵ God’s purpose for the Church is illustrated in the epistle of first Peter when the apostle stated:

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a people of His own, that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”⁶

God has a purpose for the Church that is totally distinct from His dealings with the nation Israel. The Israelites fought physical battles against physical enemies. Today, believers are engaged in fighting spiritual battles against spiritual enemies for the purpose of bringing glory to God.

I. ECCLESIOLOGY IS THE STUDY OF THE CHURCH.

A. There are several names used in Scripture to describe the Church.

1. Ekklesia is a called out assembly.

a) Ek is the Greek preposition that notes the origin of a person or thing.

b) Klesia -- assembly.

“A body of people, not so much assembling because they have chosen to come together, but assembling because God has called them to Himself; not so much assembling to share their own thoughts and opinions, but assembling to listen to the voice of God.” -- William Barclay -- New Testament Words⁷

¹ Rom. 1:21-32

² Deut. 7:7-8

³ Acts 14:15-17; Eph. 2:11-12

⁴ (character cf. Matt. 27:15-23; Rom. Chapter 11)

⁵ Eph. 2:14-18

⁶ 1st Peter 2:9

⁷ New Testament Words (pg. 68-72)

2. "That way"⁸
3. Body of Christ -- all regenerate believers from the Day of Pentecost to present.⁹
4. "The Christ" -- the body of Christ with Christ as the head.¹⁰
5. "Christians"¹¹

B. The Apostles laid the foundation of the Church, it is being built upon by others, and will be completed at the Rapture.

1. The apostle Paul states that it was he who was the *architect*¹² used to lay the foundation of the Church.¹³
2. Other apostles participated in laying the foundation.¹⁴
 - a) The word "another" is *another of the same kind* (apostle).¹⁵
 - b) "Buildeth there upon" is *epoikodomei – to build upon*.¹⁶
 - c) Others are building upon the foundation laid by the apostles.¹⁷
 - d) The word for other means someone of the same kind –other saints.
 - e) The works of other saints are built upon the foundation already laid by the apostles.¹⁸
 - f) The works of the saints will be judge as to their value at the Bema Seat judgment.

C. The structure of the Church is distinct from any earthly institution.

1. The Church is spiritual in nature.¹⁹
2. Believers who comprise the Church are seen in Scripture as "living" stones. Believers as living stones are being built into a *spiritual* (*pneumatikos spiritual, pertaining to the spirit, suited for the spirit*) house.
3. The Church is varied in nationalities and genders.²⁰
4. The Church is comprised of dead and living saints.²¹

⁸ Acts 19:9,23; 24:22

⁹ Rom. 7:4; 1st Co. 10:16; 12:27; Eph. 4:12

¹⁰ 1st Co. 12:12

¹¹ Acts 11:26

¹² *arxitektn* – *architect, master worker, skilled craftsman* -- Reinecker/Rogers

¹³ 1 Co.3:10; Eph. 3:1-8

¹⁴ 1 Co. 3:10

¹⁵ Eph. 2:20

¹⁶ 1 Co. 13:9

¹⁷ 1 Co. 3:11-15

¹⁸ 1 Co. 3:12-15

¹⁹ 1 Pet. 2:5

²⁰ Gal. 3:28

²¹ 1 Thess. 4:16-17

5. The Church comprised of those who are local.²²

D. A distinction exists between the Universal Church and the Local Church.

1. The Church is universal -- meaning that it constitutes regenerate believers all over the world -- all those baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ when they believe the gospel.²³
 - a) The Body of Christ includes all believers from all over the world who have believed from the Day of Pentecost up to the present.
 - b) Every member of the Body of Christ is a believer, but not every member of a local church is a believer.²⁴
2. The local Church is a group of regenerated, baptized believers, organized and meeting.²⁵
3. The local church is a limited manifestation of the Body of Christ.²⁶
4. The local church is an independent, autonomous and congregational government which has the authority to:
 - a) Discipline and exclude members.²⁷
 - b) Judge grievances between members.²⁸
 - c) Appoint time and place of the Lordian Table.²⁹
 - d) To appoint time and place of meeting.³⁰
 - e) To appoint their own deacons.³¹
 - f) To appoint their own missionaries.³²
 - g) To appoint their own messenger.³³
 - h) To consider charges properly brought against their own pastor.³⁴
 - i) And to appoint their own pastor.³⁵
 - j) For the exercising of spiritual gifts³⁶.
 - k) For the observance of two ordinances:

²² 1 Thess. 2:14; Rev. 2:1,8,12

²³ 1 Co. 12:13

²⁴ Eph. 5:23,24,25,27

²⁵ Heb. 10:24-25

²⁶ Eph. 1:1; Phil 1:1; Rev. 2:1,8,12,18; 3:1

²⁷ 1Co. 5:1-13

²⁸ 1 Co. 6:1-5

²⁹ 1 Co. 11:17-18; 26

³⁰ 1 Co.11:17-18

³¹ 1 Tim. 3:10

³² Acts 13:1-4

³³ 1 Co. 16:3; 2Co. 8:19

³⁴ 1 Tim. 5:19-21

³⁵ Acts 14:23

³⁶ 1 Pet. 4:10

- The Lordian Table
- Baptism by Immersion³⁷

E. The Church is one of the three distinct groups of people that God recognizes in the world today. Every man, woman or child is considered by God to either be Jew, Gentile or in the Church of God.³⁸ It is unbiblical to refer to a church in terms of ethnicity. In God's reckoning there is no such distinction as the "black church"; "Asian Church" or any other ethnic church. There is but one Church, the Body of Christ.

F. The Church belongs to God.³⁹

1. He is the energy behind the Church.
2. The Church is the entity that He established to glorify Himself in the world today. Christ is the Head⁴⁰ of the Church.⁴¹

G. The Church is an institution established for believers.

1. The teaching of the Church is for believers.⁴²
2. The spiritual gifts (with the exception of evangelist) are for believers.
3. The time of fellowship is for believers. There was not an expectation in the early Church of accommodating the structure of the Church for unbelievers.⁴³
4. The mission of the Church is to edify believers in order that they can live a life to impact unbelievers. The use of the word *exo* indicates a distinction made between believers in the Church and unbelievers outside the Church.
 - a) Believers are instructed not to judge those on the outside of the Church.⁴⁴
 - b) Believers are instructed to walk in wisdom towards those "without".⁴⁵
 - c) Believers are instructed to walk "honestly" toward those "without" (on the outside).⁴⁶
5. The one who fills the office of pastor/teacher should be one who has a good reputation among those who are on the "outside".⁴⁷

³⁷ 1 Co. 10:15-17; Acts 10:46-48

³⁸ 1 Co. 10:32

³⁹ 2 Thess. 1:4; 2:14

⁴⁰ *kephlee – head; the word speaks of authority and direction*—Reinecker/Rogers

⁴¹ Eph. 5:23

⁴² 2 Tim. 3:16-17

⁴³ 1st Co. 14:23

⁴⁴ 1 Co. 5:12-13

⁴⁵ Col. 4:5

⁴⁶ 1 Thess. 4:12

⁴⁷ 1 Ti. 3:7

6. Satan energizes certain unbelievers for his purposes.⁴⁸
7. The walk of the unbeliever is different from that of the believer.
 - a) Unbelievers are children of wrath by nature. Nature, according to Vines lexicon is *the natural powers or constitution of a person or thing*.⁴⁹
 - b) Unbelievers are spiritually dead.⁵⁰
 - c) Unbelievers are dead in trespasses.
 - d) Unbelievers are dead in sins.
 - e) The walk of the unbeliever is manipulated. The word walk (peripatao) means *to take deliberate steps*.⁵¹ Satan manipulates the world system to deceive the unsaved.⁵²
 - f) The unbeliever's walk is according to the age of this world system.⁵³
 - g) The unbeliever's walk is according to the ruler of the "authority of the air".⁵⁴
 - h) The sin nature manipulates the walk of the unsaved man.⁵⁵
 - i) The manner of life of the unbeliever is adverse to the life of the Grace Believer.
8. Paul explains the differences between the manner of life of the unbeliever versus that of the Grace Believer.⁵⁶
 - a) The unbeliever is *senseless (anaetoi –without understanding, foolish, folly*.⁵⁷) in matters of importance.
 - b) Some unbelievers can be unpersuadable (apeitheias⁵⁸).
 - c) The unbeliever is being deceived (planomenoi – *being lead astray*)⁵⁹
 - d) The unbeliever presents himself for servitude to various lusts and pleasures.
 - e) The unbeliever leads a life of envy, being hateful (stugeetoi –*being detestable*), hating (misountes – *silently hating*) one another of the same kind.

⁴⁸ Eph. 2:2; Matt.13:38

⁴⁹ Rom. 1:26

⁵⁰ Eph. 2:1

⁵¹ Eph. 3:7; 5:15

⁵² Rev.18:23

⁵³ Eph.2: 2

⁵⁴ Eph. 2:2

⁵⁵ Rom. 7:11

⁵⁶ Titus 3:3

⁵⁷ Gal. 3:3; 1 Ti. 6:9; 2 Ti. 3:9

⁵⁸ Eph. 2:2

⁵⁹ Rev.12:9

II. THE BOOK OF ACTS BRIDGES THE GAP BETWEEN CHRIST'S EARTHLY MINISTRY AND THE CHURCH.

- A. The Body of Christ began on the Day of Pentecost with the baptism of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁰
1. The Holy Spirit was resident in Heaven⁶¹ prior to Pentecost.
 2. The Holy Spirit's arrival on Pentecost began a ministry that will not cease until the rapture of the Church.⁶²
- B. The Church did not exist before the Day of Pentecost.
1. The first mention of the term "Church" in the book of Acts occurs in the 5th Chapter.
 2. The Lord Jesus prophesied in the last days of His ministry that He would build an organization called the Church.⁶³ In the Matthew passage, the Lord told Peter that you are Peter⁶⁴ and upon this Rock⁶⁵ (Christ) I will build my Church and the gates of Heaven will not prevail against it. Two things are evident in this passage:
 - a) The future verbs denote that the Church was not in existence at the time of the Lord's speaking. Also, The foundation of the Church is not Peter, as some believe, but the Lord.
 - b) The statement that gates of hell shall not prevail against it can be translated: "*The gates of hades*" will not overpower it; have strength against, gain mastery over it. The Church would become the first group of people who would not be enclosed by hades when they died. Old Testament saints went to hades upon death.⁶⁶ Believers who die today go immediately into the presence of the Lord in the heavenly kingdom.⁶⁷
- C. Israel's rejection of the kingdom offered by Christ opened the door to the establishment of the Church.
1. The nation of Israel was offered a literal earthly kingdom during the Lord's earthly ministry which they rejected.
 2. The kingdom was preached by John the Baptist.⁶⁸

⁶⁰ Acts 2:1-4; 10:30-39; 1st Co. 12:13

⁶¹ John 16:7-8,13

⁶² Acts 1:4-5; 11:15-17; 1 Co. 12:13; Eph. 1:22-23

⁶³ Matt. 16:8;

⁶⁴ petros — *a small detachment of the massive ledge* — Reinecker/Rogers

⁶⁵ petra — *a foundational rock, a boulder* — ill Matt. 7:24-25; 27:60.

⁶⁶ Ps. 139:8; 86:13

⁶⁷ cf. 2 Co. 5:8; 2 Tim. 4:18

⁶⁸ Matt. 3:1-3; cf. Acts 13:25; Is. 40:1-5

3. Christ presented Himself as King of the Jews.⁶⁹
4. Israel's rejection of the kingdom led to the change of the kingdom.
 - a) The nation rejected John's baptism.⁷⁰
 - b) Some in the nation wanted to make Christ king on their term.⁷¹

D. The kingdom that would have been in place has entered into a mystery form.

1. The kingdom has been changed similar to one sowing seed.
 - a) One stage of the change during Christ's earthly ministry affected the reception of the word concerning the kingdom.⁷²
 - b) Another stage of change affects the infiltration of the kingdom by the enemy.⁷³
2. The kingdom has been changed to the point it is not visible.
 - a) The kingdom is compared to a mustard seed.⁷⁴
 - b) The kingdom is made similar to leaven hid in meal.⁷⁵
3. The kingdom is made similar to a treasure hidden in a field.⁷⁶
4. The kingdom is made similar to a man seeking fine pearls.⁷⁷

E. The Lord charted a new course in the Upper Room Discourse.⁷⁸

1. It was a message outlining God's plan for His people after Christ's departure.⁷⁹
2. It was a message preached to the disciples, minus Judas.⁸⁰
3. It was preached in an upper room during the Passover meal, the night Christ was betrayed.⁸¹
4. The upper room was ***a room on the level above the ground floor (second story in American usage and first story in most other languages) may refer to the kind of rooms often built on the flat-roofed Middle East housetops.***⁸²

⁶⁹ Matt. 2:2; Lk. 23:2; John 18:37; 19:12; 27:37

⁷⁰ Acts 13:25; Mk. 11:27-31

⁷¹ Matt. 11:12; John 6:15

⁷² Matt. 13:3-9

⁷³ Matt. 13:24

⁷⁴ Matt. 13:31-32

⁷⁵ Matt. 13:33

⁷⁶ Matt. 13:44

⁷⁷ Matt. 13:45

⁷⁸ John Chap. 13-17

⁷⁹ John 13:19; 31-36

⁸⁰ John 13:27-30

⁸¹ John 13:1 cf. Lk. 22:14-16

⁸² – Louw-Nida lexicon

5. It is significant because it laid the foundation for the doctrine of the Dispensation of Grace.
- a) The Lord gives a new⁸³ kind of commandment to the disciples.
 - (1) Love is the purpose of the new commandment.⁸⁴
 - (2) The standard of Love was to be “just as” Christ loved the disciples.⁸⁵
 - (3) The love was to be directed at “one another” (reflexive pronoun that indicates those of the same kind – other believers).⁸⁶
 - (4) Love for one another provides an experiential knowledge of legitimate birth to those who witness it from the outside.⁸⁷
 - b) The Lord reveals a veiled reference to the rapture in His plan to return for His disciples.⁸⁸
 - (1) The Lord tries to settle the disciple’s anxiety over the announcement of His departure.
 - (2) The word “let” is better translated “stop letting” your hearts be *troubled*.⁸⁹ vs. 1
 - (3) The disciples were believing in (literally into) the Father. Christ told the disciples to also be believing into Him.
 - (4) The Lord informs the disciples of why they should be believing into Him.
 - (a) In His Father’s house are many “mansions”⁹⁰
 - (b) The Lord states the reason He’s “going” (*to go on a journey for a particular purpose*) away is to “prepare” a “place” for the disciples.⁹¹
 - c) The disciples are promised a future understanding concerning the changes that God would make that would be glaringly different from that which they had with the Lord during His earthly ministry.⁹²

⁸³ *Something previously non-existent, begin to be far different from what they were before; cf. 2 Co. 5:17 (of the New Creation)*

⁸⁴ John 13:34a

⁸⁵ John 13:34b

⁸⁶ John 13:34c

⁸⁷ John 13:35

⁸⁸ John 14:1

⁸⁹ *To be frightened due to some horrific news or event – cf. Matt. 14:26; Lk. 1:12; Lk. 24:48) vs.1*

⁹⁰ *Dwelling places – cf. John 14:23)*

⁹¹ vs.2; Prepare has the idea of to make ready; “Place” is used in Scripture to denote a *specific and defined area district, territory, land, region – Friberg Lexicon cf. Rev. 12:8*

⁹² John 14:20

- (1) The phrase “*in that day*” goes back to vs.14 concerning the day that the disciples would see the Lord.
 - (2) Because of their sight they would “*know*” (*have an experiential knowledge*) that the Son was *in the Father (share the same nature as the Father)*.⁹³
 - (3) Because of their sight they would “*know*” that they would be *in the Lord*.⁹⁴
 - (4) Because of their sight they would “*know*” that Christ would be *in them*.⁹⁵
- d) The Lord reveals that there will be future changes in communication to the members of the Godhead.⁹⁶
- (1) “*In that day*” clearly looks toward a future time from the point of the Lord’s speaking.
 - (2) The phrase coincides with the statement that the Lord made concerning a change in relationship with those who belonged to Him.⁹⁷
 - (3) The Lord revealed to the disciples that in that day they would not be able to communicate with Him in the way they did during His earthly ministry.⁹⁸
 - (4) The Lord makes it clear that the type of communication the disciples would do in his absence had not occurred before.⁹⁹
 - (5) The Lord gives further revelation about asking communication “in that day”.¹⁰⁰

III. THE FUNCTION OF THE LOCAL CHURCH IS DIFFERENT FROM THE BODY OF CHRIST.

- A. The local Church has men who serve as under-shepherds, pastors.
 1. Scripture teaches that the pastor, or bishop, is one of two officers of the local church.¹⁰¹

⁹³ cf. John 14:10; John 10:29-30

⁹⁴ cf. Eph. 1:3-4; 2:6

⁹⁵ cf. Col. 1:28; Gal. 2:20; 1 John 5:11-12

⁹⁶ John 14: 23-26

⁹⁷ cf. 14:20

⁹⁸ John 14:23; The word used for ask is the Greek word *erotao* which means to *ask someone something as an equal* to be on an equal footing with someone. It different communication than that of a subordinate talking to one in authority.

⁹⁹ John 16:24

¹⁰⁰ John 16:26; The word “ask” here is a future middle voice meaning to ask something for oneself; The Lord states that He will not ask the Father *as an equal* concerning the disciple’s communication to the Father in that day.

¹⁰¹ 1 Tim. 3:1

2. The office of pastor can be occupied by one or more elders.¹⁰²
3. The pastor's realm of includes:
 - a) The preaching of the Word of God as the Holy Spirit leads.¹⁰³
 - b) To set spiritual objectives for the flock.¹⁰⁴
 - c) To oversee that Scripture is followed in the church's activity.¹⁰⁵
 - d) To warn of false doctrine and spiritual dangers.¹⁰⁶
 - e) To lead by example.¹⁰⁷
 - f) And to seek a pastorate.¹⁰⁸
 - g) The pastor has no authority to be dictatorial over the flock.¹⁰⁹
 - h) The pastor should meet and maintain the Biblical qualifications to pastor .¹¹⁰

- B. The office of deacon is the other office of the Church listed in Scripture.
 1. A man must meet the Biblical qualifications of a deacon before he can be appointed deacon.¹¹¹
 2. The wife of the candidate for the office of deacon must also meet certain qualifications for one to hold the office.¹¹²

IV. SCRIPTURE PROVIDES SEVERAL PURPOSES OF THE CHURCH.

- A. The perfecting of the saints.¹¹³
 1. The word perfecting is the Greek word "kartismon" -- to adjust.¹¹⁴
 - a) Believers in a "fault" need "perfecting" (restoration).¹¹⁵
 - b) Believers with "divisions" need "perfecting".¹¹⁶

¹⁰² Acts 20:17-18; Phil. 1:1

¹⁰³ 2 Tim. 4:2; 1 Tim. 5:17

¹⁰⁴ Heb. 13:7, 17

¹⁰⁵ Heb. 13:17; 1 Tim. 3:2; 6:20-21; 2 Tim. 2:14-26

¹⁰⁶ Acts 20:28-31; 1 Tim. 4:1-6

¹⁰⁷ 1 Pet. 5:3; 1 Tim. 4:12

¹⁰⁸ 1 Tim. 3:1

¹⁰⁹ 1 Pet. 5:3

¹¹⁰ 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:7-9

¹¹¹ 1 Tim. 3:8-13

¹¹² 1st Tim. 3:11

¹¹³ Eph. 4:12-13; William Barclay – *to adjust, to put in order, to restore*; Reinecker/Rogers – *the "setting of a bone"*. *The noun describes the dynamic act by which persons or things are properly conditioned.* Context of Scripture – *fit, complete, capable, sufficient, able to meet all demands.* The word "perfecting" is used in Scripture of restoring a rent, or a split. The disciples "perfecting" (*mending*) their fish nets. Matt. 4:21

¹¹⁴ Gal. 6:1

¹¹⁵ Gal. 6:1

¹¹⁶ 1 Co. 1:10

- c) The word “perfecting” also carries the connotation of spiritual adjustment that promotes proper spiritual development and growth.¹¹⁷
 2. The Word of God is one of the mechanisms used to perfect the saints.
 - a) Accurate teaching of the word of God leads to the “building up of the body”.¹¹⁸
 - b) Believers edify one another by the use of spiritual gifts.¹¹⁹
- B. To spur one another one to love and good work.¹²⁰
 1. The term “consider” is the Greek word katanowmen.¹²¹
 2. Believers are to consider “one another”.¹²²
 3. Believers consider one another for the purpose of “provocation”.
 4. The word “unto” is the preposition eis which should be translated *towards or facing*.
 5. Believers assembling together have the opportunity to give consideration to spurring one another on to love.¹²³
 6. Believers assembling together have the opportunity to give consideration to spurring one another on to good works.¹²⁴

¹¹⁷ 1 Thess.3:10

¹¹⁸ Eph. 4:12 Reinecker/Rogers – *building up, edify; the word is an expression of development*. Abbott & Smith – *the act of building; building up, edifying*. When believer’s are “perfected” by the Word of God they have the capacity to build up one another. Rom. 15:2

¹¹⁹ The temporary gifts of tongues and prophecy were used to edify those in the early Church. 1 Co. 14:3,5 Believers are urged to be zealous in the use of all spiritual gifts. 1 Co. 14:12; 1 Pet.4: 10 The use of spiritual gifts among believers develops the Body of Christ. Eph. 4:16

¹²⁰ Heb. 10:24-25

¹²¹ Kenneth Weust – *speaks of attentive continuous care. The exhortation is to take careful note of each other’s spiritual welfare*. Joseph Thayer – *to perceive, remark, observe, understand; consider attentively; fix one’s eyes or mind upon*. The term “consider” is used in Scripture to denote a *focus with discernment*. It is used of Abraham concerning his body. Rom. 4:19 It is used of the Lord Jesus’ consideration of the craftiness of the Pharisees. Lk. 20:23 It is used by Peter as he considered the work the Holy Spirit was doing with Cornelius and statements the Lord had made previously. Acts 11:6

¹²² *allelous – one another of the same kind*. cf. John 13:34; 15:12; Acts 4:15 (of members of the council); Acts 21:4-6 (of believers who didn’t previously know each other); Rom. 1:27 (of men who had relationship with men); Gal. 5:15 (of believers fighting each other); 1st Thess. 5:15 (distinguished from unsaved)

¹²³ Love is a fruit of the Spirit Gal. 5:22 Love is self-sacrificing for the benefit of another. ill. 1 John 3:16 Believers can spur one another into directing agape love among each other when assembling together. Love was evident among believers in the early Church. Col. 1:4; Eph. 1:15 Love produces ministry (service) to the saints. Gal. 5:13; Heb. 6:10; 1 Thess. 1:3; Philemon 1:7

¹²⁴ The word “good” is kalos – *that which is beautifully, finely, excellently, well* – Joseph Thayer Works that are kalos good are often used with sight words that emphasize the effect they have upon men. (ill. Matt. 5:16; John 10:32; 1Tim 5:25; 1 Pet.2: 12) God purchased believers to be zealous of good works. Tit. 2:14. Assembling together with other believers allow believers to organize good works. Tit. 3:8,14; Exercising of spiritual gifts are a part of the organizing of good works. 1 Tim. 3:1; Tit. 2:7 The evangelist is one of the 11 permanent gifts listed in the New Testament. The other 10 include: faith - the ability to do the impossible through believing God, teacher - has an ability to teach the proper use of Old Testament Scriptures, helps- that gift one uses to encourage believers, administration - the ability to coordinate, seeing that all parts fit together, organization - the ability to organize functions in the church, mercy - an ability to show pity to those suffering because of Adam’s sin; ministry - an ability to do the menial task that allows the pastor-teacher gift to teach, and the pastor-teacher is that ability one has where he shepherds the flock by feeding and by his example (1 Co. 12:8-9, 28; Eph. 4:11). Some temporary gifts, including tongues, knowledge and prophecy, ceased with the canonization of Scripture (1 Co. 13:8-12).

C. To share in common the ordinances of the Church.¹²⁵ Mutual identification is one thing that bonds people together. For example, Siblings share a common identity in parents; teammates share a common identity of a particular team; and believers share a common identity of salvation. Believers are identified together with Christ at initial salvation and also share a common identity in present tense salvation. Baptism and the Lordian table are two ordinances given by the Lord to commemorate this shared identification. The Church provides an opportunity for believers to share in common the ordinances. Participation in the ordinances also identifies the believer with others in the Body of Christ. There are two ordinances that the Lord instructed believers to observe in His absence.

1. The Lord, before His departure, commanded all who believe in Him through the disciples to be water baptized.¹²⁶
 - a) The instruction to be water baptized is repeated in the epistles.¹²⁷
 - b) Baptism was to be done in the *name* of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.
2. The Lord, before His departure, commanded believers to participate in the Lordian Table in remembrance of Him.¹²⁸
 - a) The Lordian table is done in *remembrance* of Christ.¹²⁹
 - b) The term “remembrance” is used in Scripture to denote recall a remembrance of sins.¹³⁰
 - c) The Lordian table is done to *declare* the death of the Lord until He comes.¹³¹
 - d) The Grace Believer’s participation in the Lordian Table “declares” the Lord’s “death”¹³² until He comes.
 - e) The Lord, before His departure, commanded all who believe in Him to participate in Lordian Table.

D. To evangelize the lost.

1. The primary means of evangelizing the lost is accomplished by providing one who has the gift of evangelism to reach the lost.¹³³

¹²⁵ 1st Co. 11:23-26

¹²⁶ Matt. 28:19

¹²⁷ 1st Pet. 3:20

¹²⁸ 1 Co. 11:25-26

¹²⁹ 1 Co. 11:25

¹³⁰ Heb. 10:3

¹³¹ 1 Co. 11:25; The term “*declare*” emphasizes the acknowledgement of a matter. Reinecker/Rogers – *to proclaim -- it is used in the sense of making a solemn announcement by word of mouth*; Herman Cremer – *to publish, to proclaim*.

¹³² Qanatos – *the death of the body* – Joseph Thayer– ill. Rom. 5:10; Death is the separation of spirit and soul from the body, a reality not possible until Adam’s sin. Rom. 5:12,14; Christ died for the sins of mankind so that men would not have to die

¹³³ Acts 1:8; Matt. 28:19-20

2. Every believer has the opportunity to present the gospel for salvation at different times.¹³⁴
3. The gift of evangelism is the spiritual gift that God uses to provide a direct witness to those who are lost.
 - a) The term evangelize means to proclaim good news.
 - b) Evangelism was one of the foundational gifts given to the Church.¹³⁵
 - c) The gift of evangelism is illustrated in Phillip “the evangelist”.¹³⁶
 - (1) He has the capability to speak to a complete stranger.¹³⁷
 - (2) He has the capability to take an unsaved man from what knowledge he possesses and leads him into the facts of the gospel for salvation.¹³⁸
 - (3) He has the capability to proclaim the good news.¹³⁹
4. The average believer is used by God to provide a witness to the world.
 - a) A witness is ***one who authenticates the reality of a statement, behavior or event.***¹⁴⁰
 - b) “The utmost part of the earth” can be better translated “up to the edge of the last of the earth”.¹⁴¹
5. The purpose of the Church is for the use of spiritual gifts.¹⁴²

V. THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH.

A. One of the characteristics of the last days of the Church is that men would not endure “sound doctrine”. Instead of enduring sound doctrine, it was said they would “*after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears*”.¹⁴³ Paul also warned Timothy in that passage that they would “*turn away their ear from the truth, and will have turned aside to fables*”. Myths are seen in and outside of Scripture as legendary stories.

1. The King James translation of the Greek word for myths is “fables”.¹⁴⁴
2. “***A story or belief that attempts to express or explain a basic truth; an allegory or parable.***” -- Random House College Dictionary

¹³⁴ cf. Eph. 6:15

¹³⁵ Eph. 4:11

¹³⁶ Acts 21:8

¹³⁷ Acts 8:26-29

¹³⁸ Acts 8:30

¹³⁹ Acts 8:35

¹⁴⁰ Acts 1:8 (ill. Tit. 1: 1 Tim. 3:7; Acts 14:3) Acts 1:8

¹⁴¹ Acts 1:8

¹⁴² 1st Pet. 4:10

¹⁴³ 2 Tim. 4:3; 2Tim. 4:4

¹⁴⁴ 1st Tim. 1:4; 4:7; 2 Tim. 4:4; Tit. 1:14; 2 Pet. 1:16

3. ***“In each instance it signifies the fiction of a fable as distinct from genuineness of the truth.”*** -- Evangelical Dictionary of Theology
4. ***“The reducing of the literal (interpretation of Scripture) to a merely figurative expression for a generalized life force that inhabits the universe.”*** -- John Oswalt (Customs in the New Testament)
5. ***“Tends to consist of tales decked with variegated lies which lead people astray; Thucydides mentions the story-telling propensity of the Chroniclers who preceded him, whose aim was to please the ear rather than to speak the truth; by contrast, he allowed the readers might be put off by the lack of this feature in his own work, but claimed that his aim was to provide an everlasting possession rather than a passing pleasure.”*** -- Dictionary of New Testament Theology

B. Many of the aforementioned see doctrine as outdated as irrelevant. However, sound doctrine was the essential element that drove the direction of the early church. A church without healthy doctrine is like a boat without a rudder.

- C. The apostles focus from Pentecost forward was the teaching and preaching of doctrine.¹⁴⁵
1. Believers continued steadfastly in the apostle’s doctrine.¹⁴⁶
 2. Doctrine concerning the grace of God is what men desired to hear.¹⁴⁷
 3. Inaccurate teaching of grace doctrine was seen by the apostle Paul as a means for separation.¹⁴⁸
 4. Some spiritual gifts prevent believers from being deceived by wrong doctrine.¹⁴⁹

- D. The apostle Paul left Timothy behind in Ephesus to straighten out problems of doctrine in Ephesus.
1. Timothy’s job was to charge teachers to cease teaching a different type of Old Testament doctrine¹⁵⁰
 2. Timothy’s job was to *charge them*¹⁵¹ to stop *giving heed to myths*,¹⁵²

¹⁴⁵ Acts 5:28

¹⁴⁶ Acts 2:42

¹⁴⁷ Acts 13:12

¹⁴⁸ Rom. 16:17; 1st Tim. 6:3

¹⁴⁹ Eph. 4:14

¹⁵⁰ (*eterosdidaskalein*). (1 Tim. 6:3; Rom. 15:4)

¹⁵¹ (to order or command *paraggello* Acts 15:5; 2 Thess. 3:4)

¹⁵² (*prosecein*, to give oneself up to, to be addicted to; preoccupied with—Green); 1Tim. 4:7; 2 Tim. 4:4; Tit. 1:14, 2 Pet. 1:16); Myths --Abbott and Smith -- ***a story, a true narrative.*** -- *Liddell and Scott, a classical greek lexicon’s definition of myths* --“*a poetic or legendary tale, as opposed to the historical account.*”

3. Timothy's job was to charge some to stop giving heed to, **genealogies**.¹⁵³
4. The teaching myths and genealogies rob the Grace believer of the right frame of mind.
5. Myths and genealogies give rise to *speculations*.¹⁵⁴
6. Myths and genealogies undermine the **Dispensation from God**, the one in faith.¹⁵⁵

E. Doctrine was the essential element in the early church.

F. Scripture is the source of doctrine for the church.¹⁵⁶

G. Doctrine is a source of correction for the church.¹⁵⁷

H. Healthy doctrine is rejected in the last days of the church.¹⁵⁸

I. Sound doctrine leads to a consistent life.¹⁵⁹

J. Grace is the focus of New Testament doctrine.

1. The apostles Paul and Barnabas exhorted the believers in Antioch to continue in the grace of God.¹⁶⁰
2. Paul chided the believers in Galatia for turning from the grace of God.
3. Paul emphasized that Titus emphasized the Grace of God at Crete.¹⁶¹
4. Peter emphasizes to the believers under persecution from Nero to grow in grace.¹⁶²
5. Grace has the capacity to produce in the character in the life of the believer that cannot be obtained by any other means.
 - a) Grace builds the believer up.¹⁶³

¹⁵³ (the counting of one's descent, deriving one's origin -- Green) Phil.3: 4-5; Heb. 7:6

¹⁵⁴ (a seeking, search; to seek by thinking -- Green 1 Tim.6: 4; 2 Tim. 2:23; Tit. 3:9)

¹⁵⁵ Four different translations translate this Scripture differently: a. "promote controversies rather than God's work -- which is by faith. (NIV); b. "rather than godly edifying which is in faith." (King James); c. "rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith." (NAS); d. "rather than [further] God's dispensation, which [is] in faith." (Darby)

¹⁵⁶ 2 Tim. 3:16

¹⁵⁷ 2 Tim. 4:2

¹⁵⁸ 2 Tim. 4:3

¹⁵⁹ Tit. 2:10

¹⁶⁰ Acts 13:43

¹⁶¹ Tit. 2:11-13

¹⁶² 2 Pet. 3:18

¹⁶³ Acts 20:32; The phrase "build up" in vs. 32 is the Greek word *epoikodomesai*; Joseph Thayer -- **the act of one who promotes another's growth in Christian wisdom, piety, holiness, happiness.** (Ill Rom. 14:19; 15:2); Reinecker/Rogers -- **to build up**; The phrase "build up" is used in Scripture to denote the construction process. (Ill. Lk.12:18; Acts 7:47); Grace provides several means for building believers up; Believers are "built up" through living their position in Christ. Col. 2:7; Believers use their spiritual gifts to "build up" each other. Eph. 4:12,16; Believers

- b) Grace empowers the believer.¹⁶⁴
- c) Grace equips believers by establishes the heart.¹⁶⁵
- d) Grace causes the believer to be able to “stand”.¹⁶⁶

K. The doctrine given to the church for spiritual maturity. The believer can grow and mature in this dispensation. This was not possible before the Day of Pentecost. In fact, the apostle Paul in his letter to the Hebrews pointed out the impossibility of spiritual maturity under law. (Hebrews 7:19). *“For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by which we draw nigh unto God.”* Because of Christ’s indwelling of the believer (*which was not possible before the Dispensation of Grace*) the believer can show forth God’s quality of life (Gal.2:20). As the believer grows and matures he is transformed. Transformation refers to the action of ***an individual giving outward expression of his true inward nature – Weust.*** The believer under Grace has the potential to mature and be transformed in ways that were not possible during the earthly ministry of Christ.

1. Today, the believer is given doctrine to overcome the sin nature (Rom 6:17-18, 6,11,13).
2. The believer is given doctrine whereby he is able to be victorious over the World System (1 Co. 7:31).
3. And, the believer is given doctrine whereby he is able to be victorious over Satan (Eph. 6:10-17). None of these doctrines were possible before the Day of Pentecost.

Peter told the believers displaced from Rome due to Nero’s persecution that they had been given:

“all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue. Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” –2 Peter 1:3-4

“build” each other up through proper speech. Eph. 4:29

¹⁶⁴ The word *empowerment* emphasizes the result of what happens to the believer who put his confidence in the Grace from God. -- Analytical Greek Lexicon – ***to invigorate, to summon up vigor, put forth energy to acquire strength, be invigorated;*** Dictionary of New Testament Theology – ***the inherent capacity of someone or something to carry something out, whether it is physical, spiritual, military or political;*** Empowerment is contrasted in Scripture with spiritual or physical weakness. Heb.11: 34; Weakness is the word *asthenias* which means ***to be feeble or without mental or physical strength or power;*** Some believers can be weak spiritually. Rom. 15:1; 4:19; Some believers can be weak physically. 1 Cor. 11:30; The believer’s empowerment comes from one’s position. 2 Tim. 2:1; Eph. 6:1

¹⁶⁵ Heb. 13:9; The word “established” in Hebrews 13:9 is the contrast of *paraphero*. -- Dictionary of New Testament Theology – ***That which is based, or still, to be fixed or anchored to a foundation, assumed to be unshakeable. Hence bebaios becomes a predominantly legal term, used to refer to a position or guarantee which is subject to no risk or alteration;*** Herman Cremer – ***to make firm or reliable, so as to warrant security and inspire confidence, to strengthen.***

¹⁶⁶ Rom. 5:2