Study # 3

The Church

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Lesson Commenced: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Lesson Completed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\* This study looks at one of the most supposedly confusing and misunderstood doctrines of the word of God. However, when studied (“sola scriptura”) “The Scriptures alone” there is nothing confusing about this truth at all. The Bible is very clear about who, what, when, where, and why the church is. People have all kinds of ideas as to what the church really is. Some people think it is a building (a cathedral, or some “place” of worship.) Others think of the church as a denomination (a human organization) and speak of the “Catholic church,’ the “Presbyterian church,” the “Baptist church,” etc. Let us put aside all ideas for a moment and see exactly what the Scriptures say the church is. After all it is the Bible that is the final authority of the

Christians faith, so we can trust and believe what it tells us to be the truth. Amen!

First thing First

“And to our beloved *Apphia*, and *Archippus* our fellowsoldier, andto t \_ \_ c \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ i \_ t \_ \_

h \_ \_ \_ \_:” ***Philemon 1:2***

“Salute *the brethren* which are in Laodicea, and *Nymphas*, and t \_ \_ c \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ w \_ \_ \_ \_ i \_

i \_ h \_ \_ h \_ \_ \_ \_.” ***Colossians 4:15***

“The c \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ o \_ A \_ \_ \_ s \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ y \_ \_. *Aquila* and *Priscilla* salute youmuch in the Lord, with t \_ \_ c \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ t \_ \_ \_ i \_ i \_ t \_ \_ \_ \_ h \_ \_ \_ \_.” ***1 Corinthians 16:19***

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that arein earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, ordominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And h \_ i \_ t \_ \_ h \_ \_ \_ o \_ t \_ \_ b \_ \_ \_, t \_ \_

** c \_ \_ \_ \_ \_: ***who*** is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.” ***Colossians 1:14-18***

“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ***ye*** are called i \_ o \_ \_ b \_ \_ \_; and be ye thankful.” ***Colossians 3:15***

***1 Corinthians 12***

***vs 25***“…no schism i \_ t \_ \_ b \_ \_ \_;” ***vs 27*** “…ye are the b \_ \_ \_ o \_ C \_ \_ \_ \_ \_,”

***vs 28*** “…God hath set some i \_ t \_ \_ c \_ \_ \_ \_ \_,”

ABCs of Christian Growth Page 1

The *church* is a New Testament Institution

*\* Institution* - An organization founded and united for a specific purpose; The act of starting something for the first time; introducing something new.

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Look up: ***Matthew 16:18*** This is the first mention of the church in the Bible.

1. Who founded the church? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Who is building the church? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Who does the church belong to? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Who was Jesus identifying as “this rock?” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Look up: ***John 1:42***

What is the meaning of Peter’s name? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Note*: Peter’s full name is Simon Peter Bar Jona.

1. Look up: ***1 Peter 2:3-8***

Who did Peter identify upon which the church would be built? (“…stone of stumbling, and rock of offence,”) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*\* Note*: The Old Testament is primarily addressed to the “nation of Israel.” The New Testament is mainly addressed to the “churches,” but also to “the Jews” in places. Let us not confuse the two but be “…rightly dividing the word of truth.” ***2 Timothy 2:15*** The Scriptures do make the distinction in ***1 Corinthians 10:32***. Remember this. Though all the Bible is written for you, all the Bible is not written to you.

The *church* is an Assembly

\* The word “church” or “churches” is found 114 times in the New Testament and is rendered from the Greek word “*Ekklesia*.”

\* The word “*Ekklesia*” has only one meaning. It means, “A company of people called out for a specific purpose.” It has its roots in the democracies of the Greek city-states, when the Town Crier would call out the citizens to a meeting to conduct business.

\* In ***Matthew 16:18***, the Lord Jesus did not change the meaning of *Ekklesia*, but He distinguished it from other assemblies of the day with the personal pronoun “MY.”Thus, a New Testament church is the “Lords Assembly.”

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Four Important Facts concerning an “*Assembly*”

1. **An Assembly *must be Local***
2. People cannot “come together” and yet be all over the world! For example, an automobile is an “assembly” of many various parts. How absurd to think of it as being everywhere - a “universal car!!!
3. In all but about 15 instances, where it is uses in a “generic” or “institutional” sense (that is any church in general, no church in particular), the word “church” or “churches” is always used in connection with definite, geographic localities.
4. Look up the following Bible references and write down the actual cities or regions where some real churches were located.

***Romans 16:1***; ***1 Corinthians 1:2***; ***1 Corinthians 16:1,19***; ***2 Corinthians 8:1***; ***Colossians 4:16***; ***1 Thessalonians 1:1***; ***1 Peter 5:13***; ***Revelation 2:1,8,12,18***; ***Revelation 3:1,7,14***.

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1. For these reasons the Bible knows nothing of a universal (catholic), world-wide “church.” The New Testament speaks of many churches which were all meeting in different localities.
2. **An Assembly *must be Visible***
3. People cannot “come together” and not be seen! Many like to talk about the “invisible church” (which allows them to move around in Christian circles), but all the churches mentioned in the New Testament were “see-able.”
4. Look up ***Philippians 1:27*** and ***1 Thessalonians 2:17*** and ***3:6***. The Apostle Paul, writing to the churches at Philippi and Thessalonica, desired to come and \_ \_ \_ these assemblies.
5. **An Assembly *must be Organized***
6. An assembly is not a rabble (disorderly, mob). The word “assembly” implies organization.

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1. Look up: ***Colossians 1:18***. A church is likened figuratively to a \_ \_ \_ \_.

The human body is an “assembly” of many parts, but does a pile of skin, flesh, organs, bones, etc. constitute a body? Of course not! They must be put together according to a plan. ***Psalms 139:14***

1. Look up: ***1 Timothy 3:15***. Here a church is likened figuratively to a

\_ \_ \_ \_ \_. The house you live in is also an “assembly” but does a pile of bricks, timber, plaster, nails, etc. constitute a house? Of course not! These things must be put together according to a plan or blueprint. Also, in

***1 Corinthians 3:9,11,16*** the church at Corinth was likened to a temple.

1. A New Testament church is to be organized. The blueprint is found in the New Testament.
2. **An Assembly must be *Constituted***
3. By this we mean it must be made from the right components. How absurd to assemble a motor vehicle out of milk, leaves, and uranium! How foolish to build a house out of paper, bandages, and meat!
4. So too, a New Testament church is not to be made up of just anything or anyone. God specifies the correct components in the New Testament.***Acts 2:41; Acts 2:47; 5:14***

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you t \_ \_ g \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ which I preached unto you, which also y \_ h \_ \_ \_ r \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_, and wherein ye stand; By which also y \_ a \_ \_ s \_ \_ \_ \_, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ d \_ \_ \_ for our sins according to t \_ \_ s \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_; And that he was b \_ \_ \_ \_ \_, and that he r \_ \_ \_ a \_ \_ \_ \_ the t \_ \_ \_ \_ d \_ \_ according to t \_ \_ s \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_:” ***1 Corinthians 15:1-4***

“I \_ w \_ \_ \_ y \_ also t \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_, after that y \_h \_ \_ \_ \_ the w \_ \_ \_ o \_ t \_ \_ \_ \_,

t \_ \_g \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ of y \_ \_ \_ s \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_: in whom also a \_ \_ \_ \_ that y \_

b \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_, y \_w \_ \_ \_ s \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ with that h \_ \_ \_ S \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ of promise,Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of thepurchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.” ***Ephesians 1:13,14***

“He t \_ \_ \_ b \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ and is baptized s \_ \_ \_ \_ b \_ s \_ \_ \_ \_; but he that

b \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ n \_ \_ shall b \_ d \_ \_ \_ \_ \_.” ***Mark 16:16***

1. We know that baptism is an ordinance of the Lord and not part of our salvation in any way. It symbolically shows a picture of *what* saved us.

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1. This is the only Scriptural way by which people are to become members of a local New Testament church. Believing unto Salvation, Obedience by baptism, joining a local assembly of believers.

***A local, visible, organized, constituted New Testament church is***

***“an organized assembly of baptized believers.”***

The New Testament *church* has a Head

\* Man-made religious organizations have their heads. Presidents, popes, moderators, superintendents, etc. Each New Testament church also has a Head. He is vastly different from any of the others.

Look up: ***Colossians 1:18*** and ***Ephesians 5:23-25***

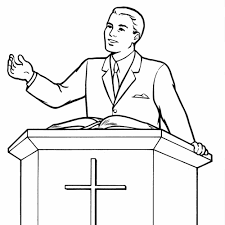
1. Who is the Head of each local New Testament church?

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1. Each local New Testament church is to be s \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ to its Head.
2. Look up: ***Galatians 3:1*** and ***5:7***. In what way is a local church to be subject to its Head?

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*Note*: Jesus Christ is not a “figure head.” Any local church which is not subject to Him and His word is out of control.

No local church has a right to make laws - it may only obey the laws already given by the Head (the Lord Jesus Christ) through His word.

A local church without a living Head is dead.

The local *church* has Officers

1. Look up: ***Philippians 1:1*** What are the two offices in a local New Testament church?

\_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ (Elders, Pastors) and \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_.

1. Look up: ***1 Timothy 3:1-13*** These Scriptures give the target qualifications required for these two offices. Name them.

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*Note*: These terms “Bishop,” “Elder,” and “Pastor” are used interchangeably in the New Testament and are all Scriptural to use. We prefer to use the term “Pastor” because the other two have been given non-Biblical ecclesiastical connotations. But all are Scriptural if used rightly before the Lord.

What the church is for:

The church is not a gallery for the exhibition of eminent Christians but a school for the education of imperfect ones, a nursery for the care of weak ones, a hospital for the healing of those who need assiduous care.

~Henry Ward Beecher~

1. My Pastor
2. Look up: ***1 Peter 2:25*** and ***5:4***. Who is the Chief Pastor of my church?

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1. The word “**pastor**” means **shepherd**. Look up ***1 Peter 5:2*** and ***Acts 20:17,28-31***.

What does the Bible call the church in relation to its pastor? The f \_ \_ \_ \_.

1. According to ***1 Peter 5:2***, what is the duty of the pastor?

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1. According to ***Ephesians 4:12-15***, why has the Lord given my church a pastor?

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1. According to ***Acts 20:17,28-31***, how will my pastor protect me?

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1. According to ***Hebrews 13:7***, I am to r \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ my pastor and f \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ him.
2. According to ***Hebrews 13:17***, I am to o \_ \_ \_ my pastor and s \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ to his leadership in the church.

How should I address my pastor?

\* Many feel unsure as what they should call their pastor in conversation. There is no God-given title for a pastor, and it is unwise to refer to him as “Reverend” or “Father.” (***Psalms 111:9*** and ***Matthew 23:9***)

\* However, just as we train children not to call their parents by their first names out of respect for their place of authority, and thus with their teachers and policemen, etc., it is right to show similar respect to the man God puts over you in your church that watches for your soul.

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\* Give your pastor your confidence, love, encouragement, and constant prayers. Be his co-worker. Go to him in your difficulties; call him when in need. He is best able to help you with counsel from the word of God. Never make him your idol - keep your eyes and trust on the Lord, but neither harshly criticize your pastor or be a party to scheming against him.

***1 Thessalonians 5:12,13*** and ***1 Timothy 5:17-19***

\* Love and appreciate the wife of your pastor also. She holds no office in the church and has no authority - yet she is so important to her husband’s ministry.

The local *church* makes decisions

\* A true local New Testament church never makes laws - it simply follows its Lord’s commands as set forth in His word. In a practical sense, a church often needs to make decisions in keeping with this principle. Unlike the hierarchical systems of many religious bodies, local churches practice what is known as congregational church government, where God the Holy

Ghost decides through a congregational vote.

1. Look up: ***Acts 6:1-5***. Who chose the seven deacons?

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1. Look up: ***Acts 1:15-26***. What preceded the vote of the whole church in electing a successor to Judas Iscariot? P \_ \_ \_ \_ \_.
2. According to ***Matthew 18:17***, what is the highest decision-making body in spiritual affairs? T \_ \_ C \_ \_ \_ \_ \_.
3. According to ***Matthew 18:18***, the decisions of a church congregation are ratified (formally approved with legal authority) in H \_ \_ \_ \_ \_.

The local *church* is an independent institution

1. **Each local New Testament church is independent**

In ***Acts Chapter 15,*** men from the church at Antioch came to the church at Jerusalem to consider a matter of extreme doctrinal importance. After they determined the teaching of God’s word on the matter (***verses 15-18***), the issue was resolved. Even then, the church at Jerusalem HAD NO AUTHORITY over the church at Antioch. Their sentence was that “…we trouble not them…” and they simply wrote a letter making a request. (***vs 19***)

This is a far cry from hierarchical religious systems of man where various congregations within a denomination are controlled and dictated to by “higher authorities.”

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1. **Local New Testament churches are to be separate from governments**
2. The word of God teaches a **complete** separation between the spiritual and the secular. ***Matthew 22:21b***
3. Christians are to be law-abiding citizens. ***Romans 13:1-7***
4. Christians may obey a civil law **only** in the case where they are compelled to disobey God’s law. ***Acts 5:29***
5. Governments should not involve themselves with the establishment or support of any particular religious group, except to offer security and protection as it would for all citizens of the land.
6. **Local churches may Scripturally co-operate with other local churches**

Independence does not mean isolationism. Local churches may Scripturally co-operate in certain areas with other local churches of like faith and order - provided such co-operation is voluntary, and does not violate the sovereignty, independence, and autonomy of each church.

1. Local New Testament churches worked together to support missionaries.

***1 Corinthians 16:1-3***; ***Acts 11:22-26***; ***2 Corinthians 8:9***

1. Local New Testament worked together in social relief. ***Acts 11:27-30***;

***Romans 15:25,26*** (this financial assistance was a gift, not a loan)

1. Local New Testament churches were involved in regional fellowship.

***Galatians 1:2*** churches (plural) of \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

***1 Corinthians 16:19*** churches (plural) of \_ \_ \_ \_

***Galatians 1:22*** churches (plural) of \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

See also: ***Colossians 4:16***, where two churches were to share the Scriptures and other Apostolic writings.

The local *church* is a commissioned organization

1. The Lord Jesus Christ established His churches to continue His work on earth. This is not a social ministry, but a spiritual one. Just before the Lord returned to heaven, He left His church with what is known as the “Great Commission.”

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1. Look up: ***Matthew 28:19,20***. List below the verbs (action words) in these verses.
2. \_ \_ ye
3. \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ all nations
4. \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ them
5. \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ them to observe
6. The Great Commission is repeated in all the Gospels and in the Book of Acts. Let’s read them and see exactly what the mission of a local church is.

***Mark 16:15***; ***Luke 24:47***; ***John 20:21***; ***Acts 1:8***; ***1 Corinthians 15:58***

The local New Testament *church* has ordinances

1. *Immersion (Baptism)* We will learn about it in Study #9
2. *The Lord’s Supper* We will learn about in Study #12

The local New Testament *church* is to be financed

1. *Tithing and Stewardship* We will learn about in Study #20

The local *church* and me

\* Having learned these many things about the New Testament church, how should it all be applied?

\* Listed below are some practical suggestions for you to receive great blessings from your church.

1. **Join it**
2. It is Gods will for every born-again believer to be a member of a sound, Bible-believing, New Testament local church.
3. Look up: ***Acts 2:47***.

“The L \_ \_ \_ added to the \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ d \_ \_ \_ \_ such as should be saved.”

1. Look up ***1 Corinthians 12:18***.

God has \_ \_ \_ the \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ in the \_ \_ \_ \_.

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1. **Love it**

A Christian ought to love the things the Lord loves. Look up: ***Ephesians 5:25***

Christ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ the \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ and \_ \_ \_ \_ Himself for it.

1. **Support it**
2. Your church is the place where you will grow, find comfort and fellowship, and serve the Lord. Write out ***Hebrews 10:25***.

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1. Plan now to attend as many of the services and meetings of your church as you can. Decide in your heart never to miss a service unless providentially hindered.

This concludes our study on Study #3 The Church. Thank you for studying Gods word.

***1 Timothy 3***

I think I shall never see

A church that’s all it ought to be:

A church whose members never stray

Beyond the Strait and Narrow way:

A church that has no empty pews,

Whose Pastor never has the blues,

A church whose Deacons always deak,

And none is proud, and all are meek:

Where gossips never peddle lies,

Or make complaints or criticize;

Where all are always sweet and kind,

And all to other’s faults are blind.

Such perfect Churches there may be,

But none of them are known to me.

But still, we’ll work, and pray and plan,

To make our own the best we can.

Book 53.tif

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