

Institutionalism

Lesson 4 ñ The Organization of the Church

TEXT: Eph. 3:20-21

INTRODUCTION:

A. THE CHURCH IS A WONDERFUL BLESSING FROM GOD.

1. An instrument of glory for God.
2. Must be perfect to glorify him.

B. IT IS SUFFICIENT TO DO GOD'S WORK(**1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 4:11-12**)..

I. THE CHURCH IS A DIVINE PLAN DIVINELY EXECUTED.

A. **Heb. 8:1-5**. THE TRUE TABERNACLE(**vs. 5; 1 Cor. 3:9-11**).

B. A PART OF GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE(**Eph. 3:10-11; Matt. 16:18**).

D. TO DENY ITS SUFFICIENCY IS TO IMPEACH GOD'S WISDOM(**Isa. 55:8-9; Rom. 11: 33-36**).

E. ARE WE WISE ENOUGH TO IMPROVE ON GOD'S PLAN?(**1 Cor. 3:18-20**).

F. A DIVINE REVELATION MAKES KNOWN ALL GOD'S WILL.

1. The H.S. revealed all truth to the Apostles(**John 14:26**).
2. Able to make us perfect or complete(**2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3**).

G. THE BIBLE SETS FORTH WHAT **GOD** WANTS.

1. **Matt. 28:18-20**. "Observe all things **I** command you."
2. **2 Pet. 3:15**. Paul's writings given by God(**Gal. 1:11-12**).

PERFECT REVELATION CAN'T SET FORTH IMPERFECT WAYS NOR AN IMPERFECT AND INSUFFICIENT INSTITUTION.

H. THE WEAKNESS OF HUMAN WISDOM(**Gal. 1:6-9; 1 Cor. 4:6**).

I. THE CHURCH FUNCTIONS UNDER DIVINE AUTHORITY AND SUPERVISION.

1. Jesus is the head of the body(**Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 3:17; 2 John 9**).
2. The apostles teachings are authoritative(**John 13:20; 1 John 4:6**).

II. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH.

A. NO SCRIPTURE FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH.

B. AS WE SEE THE LOCAL CHURCH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, IT IS A GROUP OF CHRISTIANS IN A PARTICULAR PLACE WHO HAVE **AGREED** TO WORK TOGETHER AS A UNIT UNDER A COMMON OVERSIGHT. IN THE LOCAL CHURCH, OR CONGREGATION, THERE IS **POOLING OF RESOURCES, ABILITIES, AND ACTION**.

C. THE **ORGANIZATION** OF THE LOCAL CHURCH:

1. All organization of the Lord's church is on a local basis. Each local church is **independent** and autonomous insofar as related to men and other churches.
2. Each church is to have its own officers(**Phil. 1:1; Acts 14:23; 20:28**).
3. The qualifications of bishops are found in **1 Tim. 3:1-14 and Titus 1:5-9**.
4. **ABUSES** ñ what is **not** in the **Pattern**.
 - a. **Pastor system** ñ The preacher becomes an administrator, the CEO. **It surprises many to know that preachers are not officers in the local church!**
 - b. **Unscriptural Terms** mean Unscriptural Jobs!
i.e.: Youth minister, Mission Coordinator, Event Manager, Women's Counselor, Music Director, Social Director, Education Wizard, etc.

D. WHAT IS THE WORK OF THE **DEACON**??

- a. **DEACON** *diakonos*, One who executes the commands of another, a servant.
- b. **Acts 6:1-6**. Were these men deacons?
- c. What happens to the appointment when the work is no longer needed?

E. **ELDER'S** WORK IS SEEN IN THE WORDS USED TO DESCRIBE HIS OFFICE.

1. presbuteros, elder, or presbyter.
2. episcopos, overseer, or bishop.
3. poimen, shepherd, pastor. Carries the idea of tending sheep.
4. ALL THREE WORDS USED INTERCHANGEABLY (**Acts 20:17-28**; **Titus 1:5-7**; **1 Pet. 5:1-3**).
5. The **Work** of the **Elder**:
 - a. **Acts 20:28-32**. 1. Take heed, 2. Bishop(**see footnote**), 3. Watch, 4. Commend to the word, 5. Laboring to help the weak.
 - b. **1 Pet. 5:1-5**. 1. Tend, 2. Exercise the oversight, 3. Willingly, 4. According to the will of God, 5. Nor for filthy lucre, 6. ready mind, 7. Not lording it over, 8. Setting an example.
 - c. **Titus 1:9**. 1. Holding to the faithful word, 2. Exhort in sound doctrine, 3. Convict the gainsayer.
 - d. **Heb. 13:17**. 1. Watch, 2. Give account, 3. Authority, Words(**Ez. 3:16-21**).
 - e. **1 Thess. 5:12**.

III. THE JURISDICTION OF THE ELDER IS LIMITED.

A. WHAT DID GOD PROVIDE CONCERNING ELDERS? (**Acts 14:23**; **Titus 1:5**).

B. THE **JURISDICTION** OF ELDERS IS **SPECIFIED** ñ WHERE THEY WERE MADE BISHOPS! (**Acts 20:28**; **1 Pet. 5:2**).

1. Where is the precept, example, or inference for jurisdiction over anything but the church?
2. When God specifies jurisdiction for the elders, all else is excluded.

C. THEREFORE, THEIR JURISDICTION IS LIMITED TO THE LOCAL CHURCH

WHERE THEY WERE APPOINTED!

E. THERE IS **NO AUTHORITY** FOR ELDERS TO OVERSEE ANY OTHER ORGANIZATION.

1. **God provided the local church as the only unit of organized and supervised action or work.** Individual Christians working together do not necessarily constitute the church working(**1 Tim. 5:16**). However, the church does nothing except through individuals who are members of it.
2. Where is the **Scripture** for **Human Institutions** like Missionary Societies, Orphan Homes, Colleges or Preacher Schools, Hospitals, Summer Camps, etc?
3. If there is no **Scripture**, then it is **wrong** and **sinful** for the church to involve itself in such.

CONCLUSION:

A. THE LORD HAS SET FORTH A **PATTERN** IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AS TO WHAT HIS CHURCH IS TO BE LIKE.

B. MOSES WAS GIVEN THIS WARNING CONCERNING THE TABERNACLE(**Heb. 8:1-5; 2 John 9**).

A. ANY EFFORT TO IMPROVE ON THE WAYS OF GOD DEMONSTRATE A **LACK OF FAITH** IN HIM.

B. **HUMAN INSTITUTIONS** - ORPHAN HOMES, MISSIONARY SOCIETIES, etc. INDICATE WE HAVE **TURNED AWAY FROM GOD'S WAYS**, THEREFORE FROM GOD.

2 Tim. 1:13-14