

# First Principles Of The Oracles Of God

## Lesson 9

### “I Will Build My Church...” (Mt. 16:18) Fundamental Truths Revealed About The Lord’s N.T. Church

#### Introduction

That God calls every person (whether man or woman...Jew or Gentile) to leave sinful living and be reconciled to Him through Jesus Christ is a truth easily established by the gospel. Judgment at the last great day will be individual (**Rom. 14:11; 2 Cor. 5:10**); therefore, primary obligations and responsibilities are personal. No matter to what “groups” one belongs, he/she is still individually accountable.

With that said, the Scripture also places a high premium on collective obligations. Examples of these include family, civil, and secular. Most notably among these are one’s duties and activities in the N.T. church of the Lord. One cannot become saved from sin and then ignore or bypass the church of the New Testament. When we are converted [*covered at length on pages 5-7*], we understand the Lord “adds us to the church” (**Acts 2:47**). Since we do not control this activity, we must respect the obvious importance the Lord is placing on the very institution He promised to build (**Mt. 16:18**). The Lord does indeed “know those who are His” (**2 Tim. 2:19**), and He alone manages the “candlestick” belonging to each church (**Rev. 2:5**). He maintains His own “registry” of faithful and active enrollees in His kingdom.

Therefore, since we do not control and cannot alter the universal church, our focus must be on the local church level. Christians need to possess not only a correct but also an appreciative view of the local church of Christ. It is through the local church where God organizes saints and commands them to employ themselves into the work of the kingdom and worship together each week. How each disciple feels about the church is a direct reflection of how he/she feels about God, and will also indicate to what degree he/she will engage in the work and activities of the church.

*“The church of God does not occupy the place in the hearts of men it should occupy until they realize that by staying on the outside of the church they rob themselves of life’s greatest blessings and of the hope of eternal life. The church is incomparably greater than all human institutions, sectarian or fraternal.”*

- Roy E. Cogdill  
*The New Testament Church*, p. 33

This lesson will focus on different aspects of the church’s importance.

#### *The Church Of The Lord – Its Origin*

Knowing when the Lord’s church began is important for the purposes of its identity. We must be able to distinguish it from all other agencies, from those of the Old Testament to modern-day groups founded by men [*see pages 8-11*].

- 1) How does **Heb. 9:11, 23; 10:1** show the church did not exist in O.T. days?

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- 2) Be able to relate the prophecies found in **Isa. 2:2-3** & **Mic. 4:1-2** to the origin of the church.
- 3) How does **Lk. 24:46-47** & **Acts 1:4-8** help us understand the church's origin?
- 4) Be able to connect the prophecy in **Dan. 2:31-45** with the origin of the church.
- 5) What do the statements in **Mt. 3:1-2** & **11:11** teach us about the beginning of the church?
- 6) What do the statements in **Mk. 1:15** & **Mt. 10:7** teach us about the origin of the church?

### *The Church Of The Lord – Its Nature*

The “nature” of the church of Christ is presented in multiple ways in the New Testament. With the use of each “metaphor” comes a different emphasis. We’ll notice 4 of them...

- 7) The church as a “called out” group => as seen in the actual meaning of the word “church”  
[Greek *ekklesia* is “church” - term literally means “to call out” (cp. **Acts 19:32, 39, 41**)]  
The New Testament portrays Christians as a “called out people” **universally** (**Mt. 16:18**) as well as **locally** (**1 Cor. 1:2**).

What aspect of this “calling” is emphasized in **2 Tim. 1:7-9** & **1 Pet. 5:10**?

What does **2 Thess. 2:13-14** & **1 Pet. 2:9** teach about this “calling?”

- 8) The church as the “household of God” => emphasis is on closeness as a family  
(**1 Tim. 3:15**; **Eph. 2:19**; **3:15**)

What aspect of this “house” is emphasized in **Eph. 3:14** & **1 Cor. 8:6**?

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What aspect of this "house" is emphasized in **Heb. 3:6**?

What aspect of this "house" is emphasized in **Rom. 8:14-17** & **Gal.4:7**?

How do the following passages illustrate the benefits for being in this "house?"

**1 Jn. 3:1** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mt. 6:6, 9** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mt. 6:8; Lk. 11:9-13** \_\_\_\_\_

**Heb. 12:5-11** \_\_\_\_\_

- 9) The church as a "kingdom" => emphasis on the imperial rule of Jesus Christ  
(**Mk. 1:15; 2 Sam. 7:12-13; Acts 2:30-31; Jn. 18:33-37**)

What do we learn about the "kingdom" from **Jn. 18:36, Rom. 14:17, & Lk. 17:20-21**?

Where is this "kingdom's territory?" (**Lk. 4:5-8; Mt. 28:18-20**)

What is this "kingdom's law?" (**Jn. 12:48; 1 Cor. 9:21**)

- 10) The church as a "body" => emphasis on the head and various parts that have functions  
(**Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18, 24; 1 Cor. 12:12-27**)

What does **Eph. 4:4** teach about this "body?"

What does **Eph. 5:24** teach about this "body" and its "Head?"

What does **Eph. 4:16** teach about the parts of this "body" working together?

What does **1 Cor. 12:15-19, 21** teach about the importance of the parts of this "body?"

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### The Church Of The Lord - Its Work

The work of the church of Christ is easily identifiable from the Scripture. It is here that many churches (*those built by men as well as churches of Christ who have a "liberal" view of the Bible*) go astray. These churches involve themselves in works for which there is **no** authority. One of the passages that comes to mind is one we've examined previously...Mt. 7:21-23.

The **main** point always to be remembered...the church is a Divine institution. Therefore, her work or her "mission" is equally Divine. The church is not a political or social institution; it is a spiritual one. Her concern is not the entertainment or physical needs of people but the saving of souls.

Simply put, the church's work is three-fold. All 3 of these important works can be established and substantiated by multiple passages from the Scripture.

11) EVANGELISM => the **primary** work of the Lord's church

How do the following passages show the universal need of salvation?

Rom. 3:9-10, 23 \_\_\_\_\_

Gal. 3:22 \_\_\_\_\_

Eph. 2:1, 12 \_\_\_\_\_

How does the gospel rectify this? (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 15:1-4)

Be able to connect Jn. 8:31-32 & 1 Tim. 3:14-15 with this work.

How do the following passages illustrate the church's involvement in evangelism?

Acts 13:1-3; 14:26-27 \_\_\_\_\_

2 Cor. 11:8-9 \_\_\_\_\_

Phil. 1:3-5; 4:14-16 \_\_\_\_\_

We need to understand **how** local churches support gospel preaching. It is in this area where departures from the Biblical pattern have occurred in the past & continue to occur.

Support of the gospel locally => 1 Cor 9:3-18; cp. Acts 18:1-3

Support of the gospel in other places => 2 Cor. 11:7-9; Phil 4:10-16

What is the pattern shown in these passages?

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Did 1st century churches cooperate in this work? (2 Cor. 11:8)

### Departures from this pattern

- "Missionary Society" (1800's)
- "Sponsoring Church" (mid 1900's & present-day)

What principle from 1 Pet. 5:2 helps us identify such "departures from the pattern?"

★ Be able to distinguish from "**cooperation**" and "**coordination.**"

12) EDIFICATION => how saints in a local church are strengthened

Define "edify" or "edification."

Use the following passages to define, understand, & illustrate "edification."

1 Cor. 14:2-5 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Cor. 14:12-19, 26 \_\_\_\_\_

Eph. 4:11-16 \_\_\_\_\_

Rom. 14:19 – 15:2 \_\_\_\_\_

Heb. 3:12-13; 10:24-25 \_\_\_\_\_

Referring back to material on page 31, how have some churches of Christ sought to "edify" their members through the church treasury?

How do other churches (both denominational & some churches of Christ) "socially" try to edify their members under the guise of religion?

How does the emphasis of the above passages compare to how you answered the previous 2 questions?

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13) BENEVOLENCE => how needy members of the church are cared for

Define "benevolence."

There are nine N.T. passages that instruct us on who may be helped benevolently from the treasury of the local church of Christ. In the blank beside each passage, write who it is that can be assisted.

Acts 2:44-45 _____	1 Cor. 16:1-3 _____
Acts 4:32-35 _____	2 Cor. 8:4 _____
Acts 6:1-6 _____	2 Cor. 9:1, 12-13 _____
Acts 11:27-30 _____	1 Tim. 5:16 _____
Rom. 15:25-31 _____	

How have some churches of Christ sought to relieve the needs of people? How do these compare with the pattern revealed in the passages cited above?

### *The Church Of The Lord – Its Organization*

To accept the word of God as Divinely-inspired also means we accept how He has organized and established the "government" of His church... universally and locally. How man-made churches organize themselves is another example of their overall failure to respect the teaching of the Scripture.

14) How has mainstream Catholicism organized itself?

15) How has mainstream denominationalism organized itself?

16) What one word would you use to describe these examples: *Dependent* or *Autonomous*?

17) What does Eph. 1:22-23 & Col. 1:18 teach about church organization? On what level?

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- 18) What does **Acts 14:23**, **Phil. 1:1**, & **Titus 1:5** teach about church organization? On what level?
  
- 19) What does **1 Tim. 3:1-7, 8-10, 12-13** & **Titus 1:6-9** teach about church organization? How do these passages harmonize with **1 Pet. 5:1-4**?