

What I Owe The Local Congregation

Lesson One

Introduction

Introduction:

1. The church of Christ is the culmination of God's plan of the ages.
 2. It is the blood bought body of Christ (Acts 20:28; Eph. 1:22-23).
 3. As such, it exists in two forms – universal and local.
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- I. The Divine Origin of the Church
 - A. The divine origin of the church teaches us of its universal nature.
 - B. The Plan for the church reveals its universal nature.
 1. The first prophecy of the Messiah is universal in nature (Gen. 3:15).
 2. Though God chose a specific man and nation for the seed line of the Messiah, the promise was still worldwide in its scope (Gen. 12:1-3).
 3. Isaiah foretold that all nations would come into the kingdom of the Christ (2:2-4; 66:18-21).
 4. Ezekiel prophesied that God would seek out His sheep from all parts of the world (34:11-13, 22-23).
 5. Daniel revealed that the church would consume all nations (2:44).
 6. Joel proclaimed that salvation was for all (2:32).
 7. Amos declared that the church would possess the faithful in every nation (9:11).
 - C. The Purchase of the church reveals its universal nature.
 1. The church was purchased with the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28).
 2. However, Jesus shed His blood for the whole world (Isa. 53; John 3:16; 1:29; 4:42; 2 Cor. 5:18-19; 1 John 2:1; 4:14).
 - D. The Purpose of the church reveals its universal nature.
 1. The purpose of the church is the salvation of the world (Mark 16:15-16).
 2. It is the only place of salvation (Eph. 5:23; 1:22-23).
 3. It is the body of Christ (Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 12:12-13).
 4. It is the household of God (1 Tim. 3:14-15; Gal. 3:26-29).
 5. It is the army of God (2 Tim. 2:3-4; Eph. 6:11-17).
 6. It is the kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 16:18-19).
 7. It is the temple of God (1 Cor. 3:9, 16-17; 1 Pet. 2:5-6).
 8. It is the vineyard of the Lord (Matt. 20:1).
 9. It is the bride of Christ (2 Cor. 11:2).
 - II. The Divine Organization of the Church
 - A. The divine organization of the church teaches us of its local nature.
 1. The church has no divine organization on the universal level.
{*Except, of course, Christ is the head of the universal church.*}
 2. It is organized only locally.
 - B. The local congregation is commanded to assemble together (Heb. 10:25; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:17-20; 14:23).

- C. The local church is overseen by elders (Acts 11:29-30; 14:21-23; 20:17, 28; Phil. 1:1; Titus 1:5; Jam. 5:14; 1 Pet. 5:1).
- D. The local church is served by deacons (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8-10).
- E. Each congregation is locally autonomous. {*Windowpane illustration*}

Conclusion: *An Example of the Dual Nature of the Church (Acts 8:26-39)*

- 1. Philip was told to meet the eunuch of Ethiopia in the wilderness (vs. 26).
- 2. After Philip preached the Gospel to him, the eunuch desired to obey (vs. 36).
- 3. He stopped the chariot and was baptized into Christ for the remission of his sins (vs. 37-38; Gal. 3:27; Acts 2:38).
- 4. Thus, the eunuch was added by the Lord to the church (Acts 2:41, 47).
 - a. Question: *To which church was the eunuch added?*
 - b. Answer: *To the universal church of Christ.*
- 5. The eunuch then continued on his journey (vs. 39).
 - a. Question: *Back in Ethiopia, to which church did he belong?*
 - b. Answer: *The local church.* (Cf. Acts 9:26)
 - c. The Lord's church has no "members at large."
- 6. Thus, the church of Christ is both universal and local.