The Universal Church
5001

Definition: Greek *ekklesia* = assembly (see Acts 19:32, 39, 41).
*More fully: “An assembly formed by *calling out* those who fulfill certain requirements.”*

I. Universal (“Catholic”)
A. Matt. 16:15–18—I will build *My* church
   1. Entrance into, and membership of, this universal church depends *solely* upon a
   personal relationship to Christ, made possible *only* by the Father through the Holy
   Spirit (compare Matt. 11:27).
   2. Thus entrance into the church involves a relationship with each person of the
   Godhead:
   a. Confrontation
   b. Revelation
   c. Acknowledgement
   d. Public confession (compare Matt. 10:32–33)
   3. *All* who are in this relationship to Christ *necessarily* belong to this universal church.
B. John 10:1–9
   1. The Father is the *owner* of all
   2. The Holy Spirit is the porter (doorkeeper)
   3. Jesus crucified is the door
   4. Jesus resurrected is the shepherd (see Heb. 13:20)
   5. The sheepfold is the assembly of God’s people on earth
      a. There are no thieves in heaven (See Matt. 6:20, 1 Cor. 6:10).
      b. Those who gain entrance by any other route are thieves and robbers.
C. This church is compared to:
   1. Eph. 2:20–22; 1 Pet. 2:4–6—*A house*, or *building*, of which Christ is the foundation
   and cornerstone, and in which all true believers are built together as “living stones.”
   In Scripture “church” is *never* applied to a material building of bricks, timber, etc.
2. Eph. 1:22–23—A body, of which Christ is the head, and all true believers are members.
   a. As a house, the church is God’s dwelling place (see 1 Cor. 3:16, 2 Cor. 6:16, Eph. 2:22).
   b. As a body, the church is God’s executive agent and personal representative (see Matt. 10:40; 28:18–20; John 20:21).
3. 1 Cor. 3:11—This church has only one foundation Jesus Christ (compare 1 Pet. 2:6; Is. 28:16; Ps. 62:1–2, 6–7).
4. Eph. 1:22—This church has only one Head: Jesus Christ.
6. Gal. 4:26—It is a free church (not bound by legalism, or human rules, titles or traditions).
7. Eph. 4:4—It is one body, controlled by one Spirit (compare Rom 8:14).
8. Rom. 12:4–5—Each believer is an individual member of the one body.
9. 1 Cor. 12:12–27—All the members need, and depend on, each other.
D. There are two official public attestations of membership
   2. 1 Cor. 12:13—Baptism in the Holy Spirit. A supernatural seal administered by Christ as Head (compare Eph. 1:13).
   3. Both baptisms are designed to emphasize and strengthen the unity of the body.

The Local Church
5002

I. Introduction
   A. Matt. 18:15–20—Basically: two or three “led together” into the name of Jesus Christ (compare Rom. 8:14).
   B. Deut. 12:15–18;16:2, 6, 11—In the Old Testament God only allowed Israel to meet for worship in one place (the temple in Jerusalem) where He chose to place His name.
   C. John 8:18–21—In the New Testament Christ and His name replace the Old Testament temple.
   1. This smallest group is the cell, out of which the whole body is built up. A healthy body can only be built up out of healthy cells. The basic requirement is harmony.
   2. Completely: the local church is that part of the universal church resident in any given locality.
   D. Uses of the word ekklesia (as translated in KJV):
   1. Church is a city 35 times
   2. Church is a house 4 times
   3. Churches in a province 36 times
   4. Church universal 20 times
   5. Church local, but not exactly defined 16 times
   6. Church in a province 0 times
   7. Old Testament church in the wilderness 1 time
8. Assembly
   (of a city of Ephesus)  3 times
   Total:  115 times

E. Thus, the only two defining areas of a local church are:
   1. A city
   2. A house
   3. It is unscriptural to speak of two or more churches overlapping one another in any given locality.

F. Col. 2:19—The New Testament church is held together by joints and bands (bonds).
   1. Joints = Personal relationships:
      a. To Christ
      b. To fellow believers
   2. Bands = Universal attitudes:
      a. Peace (Eph. 4:3)
      b. Love (Col. 3:14)
   3. All these joints and bands are invisible. In the Old Testament one constantly repeated error of Israel was to represent or replace the invisible God by some kind of visible image. In the present dispensation one constantly repeated error of Christians is to replace the invisible relationships within the true church by some kind of visible structure or organization. One common result of doing this is that the invisible relationships cease to be recognized and are often totally broken down.

G. The central purpose of the local church is fellowship
   1. 1 Cor. 1:9—We are called to the sharing together of Christ.
   2. 1 John 1:3—The New Testament was written to bring us into the fellowship of the apostles, sharing with them the fellowship of the Father and the Son.
   3. 1 John 1:4—This fellowship brings full joy (compare 2 John 12).
   4. John 3:6—Out of this fellowship the Holy Spirit brings to birth the purposes of God (compare Acts 2:1; 13:1–4). Without fellowship there can be no spiritual birth.

Mobile Ministries: Apostles

5003

I. Introduction
   A. Mobile ministries function within the universal church, and available to all sections of the church in all places.
   B. Eph. 4:11—Apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers. The end purposes of all three ministries:
      1. Perfecting (equipping) of the saints
      2. Building up of the body of Christ. They are to continue till we all come into unity and maturity.

II. Apostles
1. Before Pentecost:
   a. Heb. 3:1—Jesus
      (compare John 10:36; 20:21) 1
   b. Matt. 9:36–38; 10:1–2, 5—
      The twelve 12
   c. Acts 1:26; 2:14—Mattias 1
      14

2. After Pentecost: (see Eph. 4:8, 11)
   a. Acts 13:4; 14:4, 14—
      Barnabas and Saul 2
   b. Rom. 16:7—
      Andronicus and Junias 2
   c. 1 Cor. 9:5; Gal. 1:18–19;
      Matt. 13:55; Jude 1—
      James, Joses, Simon, Judas 4
   d. 2 Cor. 8:23; Tit. 1:5;
      Titus + 2 (?) 3 (?)
   e. Phil 2:25—Epaphroditus 1
   f. 1 Thess. 1:1; 2:6—
      (Paul), Silas, Timothy 2
      14

B. Matt. 10:1–5—“Disciples” become “apostles” when commissioned and “sent forth.”
C. Acts 13:1–4; 14:4, 14—“Prophets and teachers” become “apostles” when called and
   “sent forth.” Paul’s apostleship was set in motion by human instruments, but he always
   claimed divine authority for it (see Gal. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:1).
D. Judges 5:23—God identifies himself with his servants whom he calls to a special task.
   Our attitude towards those servants is our attitude towards God Himself.
E. Acts. 13:2—“The work whereunto I have called them”: basically, bringing churches into
   being (compare Acts 14:23).
   1. Apostles also give direction to churches that are not necessarily brought into being by
      their ministry.
   2. See Rom. 1:10–11; Col 2:1. (Compare also Gal. 1:1–2 and 1 Peter 1:1.)
F. Gal. 2:7–8—Peter had a general “apostleship” to the circumcision (the Jews). Paul had a
   general “apostleship” to the Gentiles.
G. 1 Cor. 12:28—Within a local congregation apostles are the senior ministry. (In this list
   the ministry of God’s Word has been preeminent over all other forms of ministry.)
H. Thus apostles have two main functions:
   1. To bring into being properly ordered churches.
   2. To set, and maintain in order churches already in being (see Tit. 1:5). Probably an
      apostle includes the other four main ministries.
I. 1 Cor. 9:2—Seal of apostleship: building a complete local church.
J. 2 Cor. 12:12—Signs of apostleship:
   1. Strength of character
   2. Miraculous attestation
K. 2 Cor. 11:5; 12:11—There are various levels of apostleship.
L. 2 Cor. 11:13–15—There are false apostles.
M. Rev. 2:2—Therefore claims of apostles must be tested.

Mobile Ministries: Prophets
5004

III. Prophets
A. Prophet = Literally, one who “speaks forth,” i.e. on behalf of God by inspiration of the Holy Spirit (not necessarily prediction of the future).
1. 1 Kings 17:1—The Lord God . . . before whom I stand. Essentially a prophet stands before God, receives His message, and delivers it.
2. 1 Kings 18:1—Go, shew thyself unto Ahab. The message cannot be separated from the man. (“God uses men, not methods.”)
3. Jer. 23:15–32—The true prophet “stands in the counsel of the Lord” and delivers the word of the Lord. The false prophet delivers a message out of the deception of his own heart.
4. Amos 3:7—God always shares His secrets with His prophets.
5. Jer. 15:15–19—Condition for being a mouthpiece of God.
6. Is. 55:11—God’s Word out of God’s mouth (i.e. given forth by God’s Spirit) never fails.
B. Prophets referred to in the New Testament:
2. Acts 13:1—Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen, Saul
3. Acts 15:32—Judas and Silas
C. Compare the following:
1. An apostle has a special task (establishing and ordering churches).
2. A prophet has a special message, individually received from God, to be delivered at a certain time and place.
3. A teacher expounds God’s truth generally, but has no special message individually received.
D. Examples of men with a special prophetic message:
1. Jonah 3:4—Jonah
2. Mark 1:6–8—John the Baptist
E. Eph. 4:11; 1 Cor. 14:31—He gave some prophets, i.e. men with the ministry of prophets (compare 1 Cor. 12:29).
1. Ye may all prophesy: i.e. exercise the gift of prophesying.
2. Not all who exercise the gift of prophesying necessarily have the ministry of prophets.
F. 1 Cor. 14:22—In the New Testament prophecy is normally directed to believers, not unbelievers.
G. 1 Cor. 14:29—Let the prophets (plural) speak . . . let the others (plural) judge.
H. In the New Testament prophets are normally members of a group, submitting their message and ministry to the judgment of the rest. This agrees with the New Testament picture of all believers as interdependent members of one body.

I. Zech. 4:2–3, 11–14—Prophets are like olive trees supplying the oil of fresh inspiration and revelation to the church (compare Rev. 11:3–4, 10).

J. Prov. 29:18—Without fresh revelation God’s people perish.

K. Luke 17:26; Heb. 11:7—As it was in the days of Noah:
   1. The wickedness of the unbelievers
   2. Direct divine revelation and warning for the believers

Mobile Ministries:
Evangelists And Teachers
5005

IV. Evangelist
   A. Evangelist = Literally, “a proclaimer of good news.” The noun is used only 3 times; Eph. 4:11; Acts 21:8; 2 Tim. 4:5. The verb “evangelize” is used about 50 times, e.g. Luke 4:18, 43; 9:6; 20:1; Acts 8:25; 14:7; 16:10; Rom. 1:15; 10:15; 15:20; 1 Cor. 1:17; 2 Cor. 10:16.
   B. Primary purpose: to introduce sinners to the Savior, bringing them into salvation and water baptism.
   C. 2 Tim. 4:5—As an apostle, Timothy needed at times to do the work of an evangelist (compare 1 Cor. 1:17).
   D. Acts 6:5; 21:8—Philip began as a deacon but developed into the pattern evangelist of the New Testament (see 1 Tim. 3:13). His evangelist ministry is described in Acts. Ch. 8:
      1. v. 5, 35—His message: “Christ,” “Jesus”
      2. v. 6–7—His attestation: supernatural (compare Mark 16:15–20, Heb. 2:3–4)
      3. v. 26, 29, 39—His direction: supernatural
      4. v. 12, 38—He saw his converts baptized in water (but not in the Holy Spirit)
      5. v. 40—he was continually on the move (compare Luke 4:43; 8:1)
   E. 1 Cor. 12:28—Within the local assembly the ministry of the evangelist is not listed, because his ministry is to be uncovered.

V. Teachers
   A. Teacher = Essentially “an interpreter of Scripture.”
   B. Two levels of teaching:
      1. Eph. 4:11—To the whole body in all places
      2. 1 Tim. 5:17—To the members of the local flock
   C. Example of a teacher to the whole body: Apollos
      2. The believers in Achaia had come to Christ through supernatural grace.
      3. Thereafter, their faith needed to be established through understanding of the Scriptures.
   D. Acts 18:28—Systematic, public exposition of Scripture
   F. An evangelistic ministry often comes forth rapidly after conversion, but a teaching ministry takes longer to develop
F. Often “teacher” is linked with one of the other mobile ministries:
   1. 2 Tim. 1:11—An apostle and a teacher.
   3. Luke 20:1—Jesus was teaching and evangelizing.

Resident Ministries:
Shepherds And Deacons
5006

I. Introduction
   A. Resident ministries function within a local church, and are restricted to a given locality
   B. Phil. 1:1—Two levels of local leadership:
      1. Bishops (also called Elder or Shepherd)
      2. Deacons

II. Shepherd (KJV “Pastor”)
   A. In New Testament three different Greek words are used for these local leaders:
      1. Presbuteros = Elder
      2. Episkopos = Overseer (sometimes in KJV “bishop”)
      3. Poimen = Shepherd (once in KJV “pastor”)
      4. These different words all denote one and the same office or ministry
   B. Acts 20:17, 28—Elders . . . made overseers over the flock . . . to feed (= shepherd) the church.
   C. Tit. 1:5, 7—Ordain elders . . . a bishop (overseer) must be blameless.
   D. 1 Pet. 2:25—Jesus is the Shepherd and Bishop (Overseer) of our souls.
   E. 1 Pet. 5:12—Elders . . . feed (shepherd) the flock . . . taking the oversight.
   F. Qualification = Elder; ministry = Shepherd, work = Oversight
   G. In New Testament “elders” are always mentioned in the plural:
      1. Acts 14:23—Ordained (chose) elders in every church. (The same Greek word for “choose” is used in Acts 10:41 and 2 Cor. 8:19).
      3. Tit. 1:5—Ordain (set) elders in every city.
      4. James 5:14—Call for the elders of the church.
   H. Note also the following passages where the leaders of the local church are mentioned in the plural: Phil. 1:1; 1 Thess. 5:12; Heb. 13:7, 17, 24
      1. Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22; 16:4—Often apostles are associated with elders.
      2. Acts 15:23—Apostles are elders and brethren: “Brethren” are probably all other mature men in the congregation.
      3. 1 Pet. 5:1–2—Where an apostle resides and is associated with a local church, within that church his position is that of a co-elder (compare 2 John 1; 3 John 1).
      4. Acts 13:1—In a local church there may also be resident prophets and teachers.
      5. 1 Cor. 12:28—In a meeting of the whole local church the three senior ministries are:
         a. Apostles
         b. Prophets
         c. Teachers
      6. 3 John 9–10—A local elder is required to acknowledge the ministry of an apostle.
7. Elders are the vital link between the mobile ministries and the resident personnel of a local church.

III. Deacons

A. Acts 6:1–6—Where added responsibilities make it necessary, elders are assisted in matters of practical administration by deacons (servers). Deacons are chosen from amongst the local congregation by the believers themselves, but their appointment must be confirmed by the leaders of the local church.

B. Phil. 1:1—The maximum total personnel of a local church consists of three groups:
   1. Elders (bishops)
   2. Deacons
   3. Saints (all remaining believers)

C. The principle of plurality of local leadership means that in any given locality there need never be more than one local church, even though there may be many thousands of believers. The number of leaders (shepherds) is simply multiplied in proportion to the number of believers.
   3. Acts 21:22—The multitude must needs come together. That is, one church, but 50,000 or more members.

D. There are two mutually exclusive alternatives:
   1. Many local churches each with one leader.
   2. One local church with many leaders.

E. Acts 14:23—When elders are appointed, “disciples” become “churches.” “Elders” are relative to a group. These men had only been converted a few months. Spiritual maturity is primary.

F. Tit. 1:5—Until elders are appointed, the order of the local church is incomplete.

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