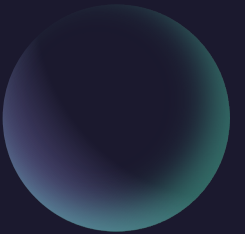




Acts 20:28-32

(and various texts)

The Church - Local, Visible,
and Advancing— Part 3



Review – Parts 1&2

The Church Universal and Invisible – *the mystery of Jew and Gentile brought together as one man by New Covenant gospel grace through the work of Jesus*

- Jesus is the True Shepherd of His Sheep (John 10:1-18)
 - A true-to-life illustration of a sheepfold (10:1-6)
 - Jesus describes Himself as the Door of the Sheepfold (10:7-10)
 - Jesus is the Good Shepherd who gives His life for sheep (John 10:11-15)
 - Jew and Gentile sheep become one flock in Jesus – The promise of a unified church by gospel grace (John 10:16-18)

Review – Parts 1&2

The Body of Christ was in embryonic form with the disciples and Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry

- The Church was then delivered and empowered on the Day of Pentecost after the Ascension of Jesus Christ (Cf. Acts 2:1-21, 38-47)

Jesus intends for His church to be an advancing army

- Matthew 16:17–18
- Gates are not offensive weapons but provide defense for a walled city
- Jesus is describing the power His Church will have, displayed through local churches

Review – Parts 1&2

Jesus intends for His church to be an advancing army

Matthew 16:13–18

- Gates are not offensive weapons but provide defense for a walled city
- Jesus is describing the power His Church will have, displayed through local churches
- The glorious work of Jesus advances as the gospel is shared and revealed to individuals, families, churches, societies, and nations

Churches are equipped with the power of Christ over the spiritual forces of darkness

Colossians 2:13–15

- Jesus Christ destroyed the power of demonic rule through His death, burial, and resurrection
- As the gospel transforms lives, churches, societies, and nations are being regathered under the authority of Jesus Christ

Review – Parts 1&2

Jesus gave His Church her marching orders

Matthew 28:18–20

- The church is commissioned to regather the nations under the authority of Jesus Christ
- Disciples are made one conversion at a time
- Eventually, the transformation of individuals, families, churches, and societies impacts the nations
- God uses churches to bring the nations to function under the Lordship of Jesus

The church is where the Christian religion functions for the glory of the Lord and the good of His people

- The local church is where the sacraments of baptism and communion are properly practiced
 - Matthew 28:18-20
 - 1 Corinthians 11:23-32
- The local church is where the rule and reign of the Lord Jesus is so essential church discipline occurs
 - Matthew 18:15–20
 - 1 Corinthians 5:1-13
 - Galatians 6:1–2

The local church is where corporate worship exalting the Lordship of Jesus occurs

- Teaching, preaching, training
- Spirit-filled singing
- Praying
- Fellowship
- Acts 2:42
- Colossians 3:15–17

The local church is where the gifted men given to the church equip the saints for ministry

- Ephesians 4:11–16
- Elders are shepherds who, with the whole counsel of God's word, guide the flock
- As shepherds, they also protect the church from false teaching and from divisive and destructive wolves
- Acts 20:28–32

People in the church are to be submissive to the shepherds of the church

- There have been overbearing, tyrannical leaders in churches
- Tyrants should repent or step away from leadership
 - 1 Corinthians 16:15–16
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:12–13
 - Hebrews 13:7
 - Hebrews 13:17
 - 1 Peter 5:1–4

Elders/Shepherds/Overseers and deacons are the only two offices in a local church

- The Deacons serve the church by serving the Elders as they shepherd the Lord's church
- Their role in serving and helping needs to be appreciated and supported
- Elders are not accountable as overseers and shepherds of the universal Church
- Elders are to oversee and shepherd a local church body (Acts 20:28, Heb 13:17)

The local church is to be a pillar and buttress of the truth

1 Timothy 3:14–15

- We are to be united in learning, applying, and upholding the truth
- We all represent our Lord and His ways in all of life
- As a local church, upholding and applying truth must be our priority

Membership in a local church is important

- All of the Lord's sheep should be covenant members of a local church
- The local church is a family of gospel warriors devoted to the Lord and one another, whose members respect and follow the Biblical leadership of their shepherds
- A church member is not someone whose name is on the membership role but one who is on board fishing or cutting bait
- Several passages in the NT indicate a form of accounting whereby people are acknowledged as part of a local church
 - Acts 2:41
 - Acts 2:47
 - Acts 5:14
 - 1 Corinthians 5:1-5,13
 - Hebrews 10:24-25
- May the Lord be glorified in our church
Ephesians 3:20-21

Questions to Consider

- According to the Biblical teachings about the Christian religion functioning in local churches, why are baptism and communion important sacraments?
- What is the purpose of church discipline, and how do you understand your role in its practice?
- What are some aspects of corporate worship, and what part do you have in keeping the focus of worship on exalting the Lordship of Jesus Christ?
- Why is submission to local church shepherds necessary, and how can you help promote it?
- What reasons can you give for why church membership is essential or optional?



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