

# The Lord's Church

## Lesson 1

### The Constitution and Dignity of the Church

#### Lesson Objective

Students should be able to identify when, how, and by whom the church originated and the Lord's great esteem for that church.

#### Lesson

##### I. The Constitution of the Lord's Church

1. Jesus Christ instituted the church during His personal ministry on earth. The first members were converted and baptized under the ministry of John the Baptist.
2. Baptism and church membership is for believers only.  
Matthew 3:7-9  
*But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:  
And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.*
3. Church members are united in faith and practice.
4. Christ was, is, and always shall be head of His church.  
Ephesians 1:22  
*And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,*  
Ephesians 5:23  
*For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.*  
Colossians 1:18  
*And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*
5. When Jesus left the earth He commanded His church to carry on His work according to instructions given in the New Testament and as led and empowered by the Holy Spirit.  
Matthew 28:19, 20  
*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:  
Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

## II. The Dignity of the Lord's Church

1. Christ purchased His church with His own blood.  
*Acts 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*
2. The church is the light of the world. The darkness of sin can only be overcome by heavenly light of truth through the Lord's church. The "Dark Ages" are aptly named because the church, through persecution, was not allowed to freely declare the truth.  
Matthew 5:14  
*Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.*
3. The church is the salt of the earth. Without a preserving agent (the church) the earth, societies, and mankind will spoil and become an abomination to God.  
Matthew 5:13  
*Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.*
4. The church is the body of Christ--Christ is the head (ruler and spiritual leader) and the church is His body (material substance) on the earth.  
Ephesians 1:22, 23  
*And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,  
Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*
5. The church is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit on earth. During the tabernacle and temple worship, there was a place "beneath the cherubim" that was God's place on earth. Today the place that Christ claims as His is in His church.  
2Corinthians 6:16  
*And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*  
John 14:16-18  
*And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;  
Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.  
I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.*
6. The church is a school for religious instruction. During His earthly ministry Jesus not only taught lost souls, but also His disciples. The church is perpetuated by each generation teaching the next.  
Matthew 28:20  
*Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

7. The church is a field of service. Every child of God has a place to fill in that field .  
1 Corinthians 3:9  
*For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.*
8. The church is the custodian of the faith. The Lord has entrusted the truth to His church to take to the world. No other entity has this responsibility.  
Jude 1:3  
*Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*
9. The Lord commissioned His church to bear witness for Him.  
Acts 1:8  
*But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*
10. The Word of reconciliation is committed to His church.  
2 Corinthians 5:19  
*To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*

## **Conclusion**

The Lord established, empowered and died for His church. He has commissioned her, and her alone, to preach the gospel to a perishing world. Though He died, He is "alive to die no more" and has promised to be with His church "alway even to the end of the world."

## Lesson 2

### Identifying the Lord's Church

#### Lesson Objective

Students should learn to look beyond a name and be able to identify the Lord's church by her beliefs and practices.

#### Lesson

##### I. A Name Does Not a Church Make

1. The Lord referred to His church simply as "the church" or "my church." The various churches in the New Testament were identified by their location. The Lord's churches have since been known by different names which include: Donations, Montanists, Novatians, Paulicans, Waldensens, Albigenians, Petrobrusians, Henricians, Arnoldists, Anabaptists, Baptists, etc. The Lord gave his forerunner the name of Baptist, so that name is scriptural in its origin.

Matthew 16:18

*And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

Revelation 1:11

*Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.*

2. A name alone cannot distinguish the Lord's church. Satan has often taken the name of the Lord's church (wolf in sheep's clothing).  
Isaiah 4:1  
*And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.*
3. Examination of a church's statement of doctrine, its practices, and evidence of the witness of the Holy Spirit are necessary to identify one of the Lord's churches.

##### II. Beliefs and Practices of the Lord's Church

1. The Lord's churches believe the Bible to be an all-sufficient rule of faith and practice.
2. The Lord's churches believe that the church of Jesus Christ (Baptist church) was founded, established or instituted by Christ during His personal ministry
3. The Lord's churches believe the order of New Testament commandments to be: (A.) Repentance (B) Faith (C) Baptism (D) The Lord's Supper.

4. The Lord's churches believe in a regenerated church membership.  
 Matthew 5:3-8  
*Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*  
*Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.*  
*Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.*  
*Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*  
*Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.*  
*Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*
5. The Lord's churches believe in equality of membership.
6. The Lord's churches believe in restricted communion.
7. The Lord's churches believe that the Lord's church has continuously existed since He established it during His earthly ministry, and that it will remain until the Lord returns to receive it unto Himself. Additionally, the Lord's church has been persecuted since its establishment but it has never persecuted anyone at any time.
8. The Lord's churches believe that the baptism administered by John the Baptist was Christian baptism, and beside it there is no other Scriptural Baptism.

## Conclusion

By whatever name, the Lord's church has continuously been in existence since the Lord established it, and will continue to exist until the Lord comes to receive it unto Himself.

Scriptures to assure this:

Matthew 28:20 (Church must exist for Him to continue with it.)

Matthew 16:18

John 14:1-3

*Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.*

*In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*

*And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

Ephesians 3:21

*Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.*

Hebrews 12:28, 29

*Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:*

*For our God is a consuming fire.*

## Lesson 3

### The Church Ordinances

#### Lesson Objective

Students should be familiar with the design and proper administration of the two ordinances.

#### Lesson

##### I. Scriptural Baptism

1. Scriptural baptism is a testimony of three things.
  - A. That the person being baptized has died to sin and was raised again in the newness of life. Therefore, it obligates that person to thereafter live in the newness of life. To not do so is hypocrisy.
  - B. It is a statement of the belief that Jesus was born "Emmanuel (God with us), died for our sins, was in the earth for three days and three nights, and rose again becoming the "first fruits of them that slept."
  - C. It is a statement of the belief that Jesus will come again to raise the perfect spiritual bodies of the dead in Christ, and change those alive in Christ to be like Him, and take them all to be forever with Him and His Father.
2. There are five requirements of a Scriptural Baptism.
  - A. A Scriptural Subject--A believer in Christ (a saved person who has "fruits meet for repentance.") The order must be salvation first then baptism and church membership.
  - B. A Scriptural Authority--The church commissioned by Christ. "Baptism" by any other than a scriptural church is considered "alien immersion."
  - C. A Scriptural Design or Motive--Out of a desire to follow the commandment of Jesus. Not to obtain salvation, but an expression of love for the Savior and His "unspeakable gift."  
1 Peter 3:21  
*The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:*
  - D. A Scriptural Administrator. Most churches grant standing authority for the pastor to administer this ordinance for the church. However, a church may authorize any scripturally ordained minister to do so, generally on a case by case basis.
  - E. Scriptural Place. This is a place with a sufficient amount of water for a complete immersion (the only MODE of baptism is burial.)

## II. The Lord's Supper

1. The Design of the Lord's Supper
  - A. The elements of the supper are unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine, which represent the broken body and shed blood of the Savior.
  - B. The Lord's Supper is observed within His church and He alone commands how it should be observed.
  - C. It is an act of obedience. It is included in the Great Commission. Matthew 26:26, 27  
*And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.*  
*And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;*
  - D. It is a Remembrance of the Lord's death. 1 Corinthians 11:23-25  
*For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:*  
*And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.*  
*After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.*
  - E. It silently, but powerfully, proclaims the Lord's second coming. 1 Corinthians 11:26  
*For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.*
2. Restrictions Regarding the Lord's Supper.
  - A. It is a church ordinance, observed by the church and in a church capacity.
  - B. Its elements are restricted--unleavened bread and fruit of the vine. No substitutes.
  - C. It is restricted as to design--remembering Jesus' death. It is not a social function, but a solemn occasion. It is to honor no one except our Savior.
  - D. It is restricted to proper subjects. Participants must be baptized believers. Unite with the church and then observe the Lord's Supper. Acts 2:41, 42  
*Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*  
*And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

Note: Some propose "open communion" where all believers are invited. Wrong--it is a church ordinance. Many churches practice "restricted or close communion" which means inviting members of any church of "like faith and order." Others, including this lesson writer, believe in a strictly "closed communion" which involves only the members of a local body or church.

- E. It is restricted to those who are in fellowship with one another.  
Acts 2:41-42 (above)  
1 Corinthians 5:11  
*But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.*

### **Conclusion**

The Lord has left his church two ordinances that testify of rich spiritual realities. Jesus became the Son of Man and died for man's sins, but He arose after three days and three nights becoming the "first fruits of them that slept." Baptists remember their Lord, His sacrifice for them, His resurrection, and His promise to return soon to receive them unto Himself by observing the ordinances.



## Lesson 4

### The Bride of Christ

#### Lesson Objective

Students should learn about the relationship between Christ and his church as illustrated by the analogy of a bridegroom and his bride.

#### Lesson

##### I. The Relationship Between Christ and His Church Today

1. God has greatly honored the institution of marriage (which He established in the Garden of Eden) by using it to illustrate the relationship between Christ and his church. In Ephesians 5:22-33 the Apostle Paul speaks explicitly about the obligations that husbands and wives have toward each other, but verse 32 indicates that he is actually speaking concerning Christ and the church.

Ephesians 5:32

*This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

2. The church is today the "espoused" bride of Christ. He is devoted to her and to her alone, and expects the same from her. Carnal marriage and this special relationship between Christ and his church has always been intended by God to be totally monogamous.

II Corinthians 11:2

*For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*

3. John the Baptist came preaching repentance and baptizing believers, thus preparing material for Jesus to use in making his church. John referred to himself as a "friend of the bridegroom."

John 3:29

*He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.*

##### II. The Relationship Between Christ and His Church in Heaven

1. Jesus will come again to receive unto himself that which He purchased with his own blood.

II Thessalonians 4:13-18

*But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.*

*For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.*

*For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.*

*For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:*

*Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

*Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

## **Conclusion**

While carnality cannot comprehend God's glory, the relationship between Christ and His church is somewhat revealed by comparing it to the relationship between a bridegroom and his bride.