

# A Study of God – God’s People

Aug 14-15, 2010

## Introduction

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- God’s Standard and Salvation, God’s People – John 1:12  
12 *Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God--*
- Doctrinal Statement {Church} = “*We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the church the primary task of giving the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world. We believe in the local church, consisting of a body of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, work, and fellowship.*”
- Doctrinal Statement {Ordinances} = “*We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. We believe that Christian Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water into the Name of the Triune God. We believe that the Lord’s Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death, the elements being symbolic. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.*”

## Exegesis

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### ➤ Nature and Composition

- **Universal Church**

- Nature = “*spiritual*”

- Matthew 16:18

18 *And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.*

- “*on this rock*” = Whether you believe that Peter or his confession is the “rock”, Christ didn’t build a physical church on either – the church is a spiritual reality (not found or bound by geography)

- Composition = “*regenerated*”

- 1 Corinthians 12:13

- 13 *For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body-- whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free-- and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.*
- “*baptized by one Spirit*” = The “one body” of believers (the universal church) is composed of those baptized by the Spirit (Ephesians 4; Romans 6)
  - All who, since Pentecost and the beginning of the Church, are saved (baptized by the Spirit) are part of the Church – the Body of Christ
  - Illustration: India Team report – brothers and sisters in Christ in India
- **Local Church**
    - Nature = “*associated*”
    - Acts 11:20-22, 25-26
 

20 *Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus.*

21 *The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.*

22 *News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch.*

25 *Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul,*

26 *and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.*

      - “*church at Jerusalem*” = There is an assembly in Jerusalem
      - “*Antioch...the church*” = Distinct assembly from the assembly in Jerusalem
    - Church is the assembly not the building = Russian “house of prayer”
    - Composition = “*believers*”
    - Ephesians 1:1
 

1 *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus:*

      - “*saints in Ephesus*” = Those of the assembly in Ephesus are believers
    - Revelation 2:13-15

- 13 *I know where you live-- where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city-- where Satan lives.*
- 14 *Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality.*
- 15 *Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.*
- “you remain true...did not renounce your faith” = In the assembly in Pergamum, there are those who are genuine (believers)
  - “You have people there...those who hold” = There are also those who are not genuine (unbelievers)
- The local church is called to be an assembly of regenerated people (believers)
  - Illustration (membership): 8-year fiancée
- **A Word on Israel**
    - Nature = “national”
    - Exodus 19:5-6
 

5 *Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine,*

6 *you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.*

      - “out of all nations” = Israel is a nation – a national entity = different from the Church which is not
    - Composition = “genetic”
    - Genesis 17:7
 

7 *I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.*

      - “your descendants after you” = Israel is composed of those who are genetically children of Abraham = different from the church which may or may not be related in such a way to Abraham
  - 1 Corinthians 10:32
 

32 *Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God--*

- “*whether...or*” = Distinction of Israel from the Church
  - The nation of Israel are also called the people of God. The Church is another people of God with a different nature and composition.
- ❖ **The Church (universal) includes all those who put their faith in Christ. The Church (local) is to be an assembly of those who have put their faith in Christ.**
- ❖ **Beware the denial of either – contrary to teaching and record of the New Testament**
- **Purpose**
- **To present Christ – “*giving the Gospel*”**
    - Acts 2:41
 

41 *Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.*

      - “*accepted his message*” = Peter preaches the good news of Jesus (evangelism)
    - Matthew 28:19
 

19 *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,*

      - “*make disciples*” = Discipleship begins with showing people who Jesus is and what He has done for them.
    - We, the Church, exist to present Christ (we as disciples are to find others to be disciples for our Master)
  - **To worship God – “*worship*”**
    - Acts 2:42
 

42 *They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*

      - “*prayer*” = Prayer is one aspect of worship – submission to God and recognition of who He is
    - Acts 2:46
 

46 *Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,*

      - “*temple courts*” = The early church continued to meet in the temple because it was the place of worship

- We, the Church, exist to worship God (we as disciples are to submit to our Master)
- **To serve others – “work”**
  - Acts 2:42
    - 42 *They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*
      - “breaking of bread” = Middle Eastern hospitality – serving another
  - 1 Corinthians 12:7
    - 7 *Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*
      - “for the common good” = The gifting of the Spirit is for the Body to minister to the Body
- We, the Church, exist to serve others (we as disciples are to carry on the ministry of our Master)
- **To equip believers – “work”**
  - Acts 2:42
    - 42 *They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*
      - “apostles' teaching” = Jesus had commanded the apostles to teach all that He had commanded
  - Ephesians 4:12-13
    - 12 *to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up*
    - 13 *until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*
      - “may be built up” = The “build up” is to equip or make ready
      - “become mature” = The result of our equipping is that we become mature
- We, the Church, exist to equip believers (we as disciples are to know our Master's words)
- **To care for people – “fellowship”**
  - Acts 2:42

- 42 *They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*
- “fellowship” = This is the community – more than meeting together it’s becoming together
- Acts 2:44-45
- 44 *All the believers were together and had everything in common.*
- 45 *Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.*
- “as he had need” = Care for people happens when we are together and willing to share our lives as blessings to others
- We, the Church, exist to care for people (we as disciples are to imitate our Master)

❖ **The Church exists to present Christ, worship God, serve others, equip believers and care for people**

➤ **Ordinances**

- Ordinance = an authoritative decree; something ordained or decreed by a deity; a prescribed usage, practice, or ceremony
- Sacrament = {Newer meaning} a Christian rite that is believed to have been ordained by Christ and that is held to be a means of divine grace; {Older meaning} oath of allegiance

- **Baptism**

➤ Immersion of a believer in water

➤ Matthew 28:19

19 *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,*

- “baptizing” = Word carries meaning of full submersion under water (scuttle a ship)
  - Notice the order – make disciple then baptize
- Baptism is an initial oath of allegiance made once when choosing to follow Christ and not needing to be repeated

- **Lord’s Supper**

➤ Commemoration of Christ’s death

➤ 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

23 *For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread,*

- 24 *and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."*
- 25 *In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."*
- 26 *For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*
- “do this in remembrance” = The Lord’s Supper is a commemoration
  - “proclaim the Lord’s death” = It is to show and proclaim the work of Christ on the cross
- The Lord’s Supper is a repetitive oath of allegiance made after choosing to follow Christ and is repeated to reaffirm our decision to follow Him

❖ **The Church practices two ordinances, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, as a demonstration of our allegiance to Jesus Christ our master**

## Response

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- **As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are to know about God’s people so that we can rightly worship, work and fellowship together.**
  - Observers = Become one of God’s People

Disciples = Worship, work and fellowship