

Doctrine for Dummies

Lesson 8

Ecclesiology – The Doctrine of the Church

The Greek word *ekklesia* means “assembly”. In ancient Greece the gathering of an assembly of citizens was called *ekklesia* for the assembly of a group of people together in one place. In the New Testament, this is the word that was used for the congregation of believers in Christ in a given locality at least 100 times. In many cases, it was also used of all believers around the world who form what the New Testament authors called the “body of Christ”.

1. The Old Testament was clear that Gentiles would be saved, but according to Paul what was the mystery that was revealed by Him in his letters (Ephesians 3:1-6, Colossians 3:10-11, 1 Cor 12:13)?
2. What great promise did Jesus make to His disciples the night before He was crucified in John 14:16-17, 26; 16:13-14? When this promise was fulfilled, it marked the beginning of the church. When did the church begin, and what large group (3000) was added the first day (Acts 2:1-4, 14, 36-42)?
3. Is it necessary to assemble together regularly (Hebrews 10:24-25)? Is it necessary that the local church have leadership (Titus 1:5, Acts 14:23)?
4. Who were the principle leaders of N.T. churches (1 Tim 5:17, Titus 1:9)? Who were the servants in the churches, and when was this office first commissioned (Acts 6:1-6, 1 Tim 3:8)?
5. In Acts 20:17, the elders in Ephesus were called overseers (bishops) in 20:28. What were the qualifications of elder/overseers (1 Tim 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9)? What were the qualifications of deacons (1 Tim 3:8-10)?

6. Eventually, the head elder in each area became known as the bishop, and today might be known as pastor or minister. How were the early churches governed (1 Timothy 5:17, Titus 1:5, Acts 14:23)?

7. What are the two ordinances of the church (1 Corinthians 11:23-26, Matt 28:19, Acts 2:38; 22:16)?

8. How are believers in the local church to use the spiritual gifts given to them by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:7; 14:12, Eph 4:12-13)? What image did Paul use in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 to explain the use of spiritual gifts to bring unity to the church and meet everyone's needs?

9. Who is the "head" of the universal church (Eph 1:20-22, Colossians 1:18)? What are some of the images used in the N.T. to illustrate the relationship between Christ and His church (John 15:1-5, Eph 2:19-21, 1 Cor. 12:12-18, Eph 5:25-33)?

10. What is the purpose of the local church (Hebrews 10:24-25, James 1:27, 2 Cor 8:4, 7, 24, Galatians 6:10, Acts 20:28-32, Acts 1:8)?