

LESSON 5



CHURCH ORGANIZATION

Scripture Texts: *Colossians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 12:12-18; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:4-5; 1 Corinthians 3:11*

As you read the Bible what church do you see there? That is the church to which these lessons are pointing. Because so many false ideas have been put into practice so generally and for so long a time, many see only the form of the humanly built organizations that have been built up. Looking at this false church many confuse it with the true, not realizing that there is any other. There is a true, holy, divinely-built church in the world. It is the church described in the Bible, God's family, the Church of God.

MEMORY VERSE: *"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."*

1 Corinthians 3:11

Not an Organization of Man

Colossians 1:18 **He (Christ) is the head of the body, the church.** To organize is to put the parts together and place them so they work together as one harmonious organism. An organism is any living thing or anything resembling a living thing in its complexity of structure or functions. When and how was this done to the church? Only in the Bible can we find the answer. Christ is the head, the chief one, in order **that in all things he might have the preeminence.** God will not allow ANY other person to become head of the church, usurping Christ's position. In Matthew 16:18 Christ is named the builder and the foundation. No other than Christ could build such a divine organism. There never has been, there is not now and never will be, a person as a substitute for Christ, who can sit in the stead of God. The body of Christ has only one head. A body with more than one head is a freak and a monstrosity.

First Corinthians 12:12-16 The human body is used to show some things about the church. **For as the body is one, and hath many members . . .** The Church of God is not put together as a machine, but as a living body. Each part is attached to the others. Life flows through it. There is growth. **For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body (church) . . .** This is baptism in the Spirit, not in water. All of God's people drinking of the same Spirit makes them members of ONE body. Ephesians 1:22-23 tells us Christ is **head over all things to the church, which is his body.** The head of the church, its power and leadership are divine. But God wants and needs human people to complete His body and perform its work. As part of His organizing of the church, He puts people into it. Then He places each one in the position he is to fill in the church.

First Corinthians 12:17 Each member, or part, depends on each other to cause the body to function properly. There are no big I's or little you's in the body of Christ. Many times a member of the body who others hardly notice is the one who is the greatest help in the success of the church.

First Corinthians 12:18 **Now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.** There is no other way to be placed in the Church of God. When any member is set in his place by God, all other parts of the body will recognize the move because it will work smoothly. When God is pleased the rest of the body is also pleased.

Work of God and Man

Ephesians 2:19-22 A number of truths concerning the church are stated here. Not **strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens**. There is a close relationship of the saints. **The apostles and prophets** are part of the foundation. As building stones, they were laid directly upon Christ the foundation rock, connecting the rest of the building with Him. Jesus is **the chief corner stone**. He is the one foundation under all. Without Him there can be no church. It is in Christ that the church is **fitly framed together**. The church is made for God to dwell in—**for an habitation of God**. God **through** the Spirit lives in the hearts of the church.

In this we see the union of the divine and the human in the church. The church is God and men come together. It is the one place where God and men meet and merge. **The tabernacle of God is with men** (Revelation 21:3). **I in them, and thou in me** (John 17:23).

Lively Stones

First Peter 2:4-5 When we look at the church of the Bible, the true church, we see that the Church of God is built of God and people. Repentant sinners come to Christ, **a living stone**. He gives of His life to those sinners and makes of them **lively stones**. They **are built up a spiritual house**. Only Christ can produce this life in a spiritual building. This is the reason that other religious bodies are cold, dead, and unmoving. The church is not a mere gathering of people into an association. It cannot be entered by joining. It is a spiritual fellowship of those cleansed and made alive by God. It is all those indwelt by the same Holy Spirit. They are **an holy priesthood**; the whole church is a priesthood. Every saved one has the blessed privilege of coming directly to God.

First Corinthians 3:11 **Other foundation can no may lay than . . . Jesus Christ**. Since He is the only foundation, it follows that the church built on Him is the only church. All others are false. It is a basic principle that only one building can be placed on one foundation. Yet various religions all claim to be on that one foundation. Man can place members in dead organizations, but only Christ, through the Holy Spirit, can place lively stones into a living organism.

JUST A THOUGHT

The secret of being a saint is being a saint in secret.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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