

**The Church – Volume 1:
Universal And Local**
by Derek Prince

— Study Note Outline —
TC1

Six Tape Series

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**The Universal Church
5001**

Definition: Greek *ekklesia* = assembly (see Acts 19:32, 39, 41).

More fully: “An assembly formed by *calling out* those who fulfill certain requirements.”

I. Universal (“Catholic”)

A. Matt. 16:15–18—*I will build My church*

1. Entrance into, and membership of, this universal church depends *solely* upon a *personal relationship to Christ*, made possible *only* by the *Father* through the *Holy Spirit* (compare Matt. 11:27).
2. Thus entrance into the church involves a relationship with each person of the Godhead:
 - a. Confrontation
 - b. Revelation
 - c. Acknowledgement
 - d. Public confession (compare Matt. 10:32–33)
3. *All* who are in this relationship to Christ *necessarily* belong to this *universal church*.

B. John 10:1–9

1. The *Father* is the *owner* of all
2. The Holy Spirit is the porter (doorkeeper)
3. Jesus crucified is the door
4. *Jesus resurrected* is the *shepherd* (see Heb. 13:20)
5. The *sheepfold* is the *assembly* of God’s people *on earth*
 - a. There are no thieves in heaven (See Matt. 6:20, 1 Cor. 6:10).
 - b. Those who gain entrance by any other route are *thieves* and *robbers*.

C. This church is compared to:

1. Eph. 2:20–22; 1 Pet. 2:4–6—*A house*, or *building*, of which Christ is the foundation and cornerstone, and in which all true believers are built together as “living stones.” In Scripture “church” is *never* applied to a material building of bricks, timber, etc.

2. Eph. 1:22–23—A *body*, of which Christ is the head, and all true believers are members.
 - a. As a *house*, the church is God’s *dwelling place* (see 1 Cor. 3:16, 2 Cor. 6:16, Eph. 2:22).
 - b. As a *body*, the church is God’s *executive agent* and *personal representative* (see Matt. 10:40; 28:18–20; John 20:21).
3. 1 Cor. 3:11—This church has *only one foundation* Jesus Christ (compare 1 Pet. 2:6; Is. 28:16; Ps. 62:1–2, 6–7).
4. Eph. 1:22—This church has *only one Head*: Jesus Christ.
5. Heb. 12:22–23—Its headquarters are in *heaven*.
6. Gal. 4:26—It is a *free church* (not bound by legalism, or human rules, titles or traditions).
7. Eph. 4:4—It is *one body*, controlled by *one Spirit* (compare Rom 8:14).
8. Rom. 12:4–5—Each believer is an individual member of the one body.
9. 1 Cor. 12:12–27—All the members need, and depend on, each other.
- D. There are two official public *attestations of membership*
 1. Gal. 3:26–28—Baptism in water. Acceptance by human leaders.
 2. 1 Cor. 12:13—Baptism in the Holy Spirit. A supernatural seal administered by Christ as Head (compare Eph. 1:13).
 3. Both baptisms are designed to emphasize and strengthen the *unity of the body*.

The Local Church 5002

I. Introduction

- A. Matt. 18:15–20—Basically: two or three “led together” *into* the name of Jesus Christ (compare Rom. 8:14).
- B. Deut. 12:15–18; 16:2, 6, 11—In the Old Testament God only allowed Israel to meet for worship *in one place* (the temple in Jerusalem) where He chose to place *His name*.
- C. John 8:18–21—In the New Testament Christ and His name replace the Old Testament temple.
 1. This smallest group is the *cell*, out of which the whole body is built up. A healthy body can only be built up out of healthy cells. The basic requirement is *harmony*.
 2. Completely: the local church is that part of the universal church resident in any given locality.
- D. Uses of the word *ekklesia* (as translated in KJV):

1. Church is a city	35 times
2. Church is a house	4 times
3. Churches in a province	36 times
4. Church universal	20 times
5. Church local, but not exactly defined	16 times
6. Church in a province	0 times
7. Old Testament church in the wilderness	1 time

8. Assembly
(of a city of Ephesus) 3 times

Total: 115 times

- E. Thus, the only two defining areas of a local church are:
1. A *city*
 2. A *house*
 3. It is unscriptural to speak of two or more churches overlapping one another in any given locality.
- F. Col. 2:19—The New Testament church is held together by *joints* and *bands (bonds)*.
1. Joints = Personal relationships:
 - a. To Christ
 - b. To fellow believers
 2. Bands = Universal attitudes:
 - a. *Peace* (Eph. 4:3)
 - b. *Love* (Col. 3:14)
 3. All these joints and bands are *invisible*. In the Old Testament one constantly repeated error of Israel was to represent or replace the *invisible* God by some kind of *visible* image. In the present dispensation one constantly repeated error of Christians is to replace the *invisible relationships* within the true church by some kind of *visible structure* or *organization*. One common result of doing this is that the invisible relationships cease to be recognized and are often totally broken down.
- G. The central purpose of the local church is *fellowship*
1. 1 Cor. 1:9—We are called to the *sharing together of Christ*.
 2. 1 John 1:3—The New Testament was written to bring us into the fellowship of the apostles, sharing with them the *fellowship of the Father and the Son*.
 3. 1 John 1:4—This fellowship brings *full joy* (compare 2 John 12).
 4. John 3:6—Out of this fellowship the Holy Spirit brings to birth the purposes of God (compare Acts 2:1; 13:1–4). Without fellowship there can be no spiritual birth.

Mobile Ministries: Apostles 5003

I. Introduction

- A. *Mobile ministries* function within the *universal* church, and available to all sections of the church in all places.
- B. Eph. 4:11—Apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers. The end purposes of all three ministries:
1. Perfecting (equipping) of the saints
 2. Building up of the body of Christ. They are to continue *till we all come into unity and maturity*.

II. Apostles

- A. “Apostle” = Literally “one sent forth” (see John 13:16). In KJV sometimes translated “messenger.” Meaning closely corresponds to “missionary.” Apostles referred to in New Testament:

1. Before Pentecost:	
a. Heb. 3:1—Jesus (compare John 10:36; 20:21)	1
b. Matt. 9:36–38; 10:1–2, 5— The twelve	12
c. Acts 1:26; 2:14—Mattias	<u>1</u>
	14
2. After Pentecost: (see Eph. 4:8, 11)	
a. Acts 13:4; 14:4, 14— Barnabas and Saul	2
b. Rom. 16:7— Andronicus and Junias	2
c. 1 Cor. 9:5; Gal. 1:18–19; Matt. 13:55; Jude 1— James, Joses, Simon, Judas	4
d. 2 Cor. 8:23; Tit. 1:5; Titus + 2 (?)	3 (?)
e. Phil 2:25—Epaphroditus	1
f. 1 Thess. 1:1; 2:6— (Paul), Silas, Timothy	<u>2</u>
	14

B. Matt. 10:1–5—“Disciples” become “apostles” when commissioned and “sent forth.”

C. Acts 13:1–4; 14:4, 14—“Prophets and teachers” become “apostles” when called and “sent forth.” Paul’s apostleship was set in motion by human instruments, but he always claimed *divine authority* for it (see Gal. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:1).

D. Judges 5:23—God identifies himself with his servants whom he calls to a special task. Our attitude towards those servants is our attitude towards God Himself.

E. Acts. 13:2—“The work whereunto I have called them”: basically, bringing churches into being (compare Acts 14:23).

1. Apostles also give direction to churches that are not necessarily brought into being by their ministry.

2. See Rom. 1:10–11; Col 2:1. (Compare also Gal. 1:1–2 and 1 Peter 1:1.)

F. Gal. 2:7–8—Peter had a general “apostleship” to the circumcision (the Jews). Paul had a general “apostleship” to the Gentiles.

G. 1 Cor. 12:28—Within a local congregation apostles are the senior ministry. (In this list the *ministry of God’s Word* has been *preeminent* over all other forms of ministry.)

H. Thus apostles have *two main functions*:

1. To bring into being properly ordered churches.

2. To set, and maintain in order churches already in being (see Tit. 1:5). Probably an apostle includes the other four main ministries.

I. 1 Cor. 9:2—*Seal* of apostleship: building a complete local church.

J. 2 Cor. 12:12—*Signs* of apostleship:

1. Strength of character

2. Miraculous attestation

K. 2 Cor. 11:5; 12:11—There are various levels of apostleship.

L. 2 Cor. 11:13–15—There are false apostles.

M. Rev. 2:2—Therefore claims of apostles must be tested.

Mobile Ministries: Prophets 5004

III. Prophets

- A. Prophet = Literally, one who “speaks forth,” i.e. on behalf of God by inspiration of the Holy Spirit (not necessarily prediction of the future).
1. 1 Kings 17:1—The Lord God . . . before whom I stand. Essentially a prophet stands before God, receives His message, and delivers it.
 2. 1 Kings 18:1—Go, shew *thyself* unto Ahab. The message cannot be separated from the man. (“God uses *men*, not *methods*.”)
 3. Jer. 23:15–32—The true prophet “stands in the counsel of the Lord” and delivers the *word of the Lord*. The false prophet delivers a message out of the deception of his own heart.
 4. Amos 3:7—God always shares His secrets with His prophets.
 5. Jer. 15:15–19—Condition for being a *mouthpiece* of God.
 6. Is. 55:11—God’s *Word* out of God’s *mouth* (i.e. given forth by God’s *Spirit*) never fails.
- B. Prophets referred to in the New Testament:
- | | |
|--|----------|
| 1. Acts 11:27–30—Agabus + 2 | 3 |
| 2. Acts 13:1—Barnabas, Simeon,
Lucius, Manaen, Saul | 5 |
| 3. Acts 15:32—Judas and Silas | <u>2</u> |
| Acts 21:10—(Agabus) | 10 |
- C. Compare the following:
1. An *apostle* has a special *task* (establishing and ordering churches).
 2. A *prophet* has a special *message*, individually received from God, to be delivered at a certain time and place.
 3. A *teacher* expounds God’s truth generally, but has no special message individually received.
- D. Examples of men with a special prophetic message:
1. Jonah 3:4—Jonah
 2. Mark 1:6–8—John the Baptist
 3. Acts 11:27–30; 21:10–11—Agabus
- E. Eph. 4:11; 1 Cor. 14:31—He gave *some* prophets, i.e. men with the *ministry* of prophets (compare 1 Cor. 12:29).
1. Ye may *all* prophesy: i.e. exercise the *gift* of prophesying.
 2. Not all who exercise the gift of prophesying necessarily have the ministry of prophets.
- F. 1 Cor. 14:22—In the New Testament prophecy is normally directed to believers, not unbelievers.
- G. 1 Cor. 14:29—Let the prophets (plural) speak . . . let the others (plural) judge.

- H. In the New Testament prophets are normally members of a *group*, submitting their message and ministry to the *judgment of the rest*. This agrees with the New Testament picture of all believers as interdependent members of one body.
- I. Zech. 4:2–3, 11–14—Prophets are like olive trees supplying the oil of fresh inspiration and revelation to the church (compare Rev. 11:3–4, 10).
- J. Prov. 29:18—Without fresh revelation God’s people perish.
- K. Luke 17:26; Heb. 11:7—As it was in the days of Noah:
 1. The wickedness of the unbelievers
 2. Direct divine revelation and warning for the believers

**Mobile Ministries:
Evangelists And Teachers
5005**

IV. Evangelist

- A. Evangelist = Literally, “a proclaimer of good news.” The noun is used only 3 times; Eph. 4:11; Acts 21:8; 2 Tim. 4:5. The verb “evangelize” is used about 50 times, e.g. Luke 4:18, 43; 9:6; 20:1; Acts 8:25; 14:7; 16:10; Rom. 1:15; 10:15; 15:20; 1 Cor. 1:17; 2 Cor. 10:16.
- B. Primary purpose: to introduce sinners to the Savior, bringing them into *salvation* and *water baptism*.
- C. 2 Tim. 4:5—As an *apostle*, Timothy needed at times to do the work of an *evangelist* (compare 1 Cor. 1:17).
- D. Acts 6:5; 21:8—Philip began as a *deacon* but developed into the pattern *evangelist* of the New Testament (see 1 Tim. 3:13). His evangelist ministry is described in Acts. Ch. 8:
 1. v. 5, 35—His *message*: “Christ,” “Jesus”
 2. v. 6–7—His *attestation*: *supernatural* (compare Mark 16:15–20, Heb. 2:3–4)
 3. v. 26, 29, 39—His *direction*: *supernatural*
 4. v. 12, 38—He saw his converts baptized in water (but not in the Holy Spirit)
 5. v. 40—He was continually on the move (compare Luke 4:43; 8:1)
- E. 1 Cor. 12:28—Within the local assembly the ministry of the evangelist is not listed, because his ministry is to be uncovered.

V. Teachers

- A. Teacher = Essentially “an interpreter of Scripture.”
- B. Two levels of teaching:
 1. Eph. 4:11—To the whole body in all places
 2. 1 Tim. 5:17—To the members of the local flock
- C. Example of a teacher to the whole body: *Apollos*
 1. Acts 18:24–28; 1 Cor. 3:5–6—Apollos “watered” what Paul had “planted.”
 2. The believers in Achaia had come to Christ through *supernatural grace*.
 3. Thereafter, their faith needed to be established through *understanding of the Scriptures*.
- D. Acts 18:28—Systematic, public exposition of Scripture
- F. An evangelistic ministry often comes forth rapidly after conversion, but a teaching ministry takes longer to develop

- F. Often “teacher” is linked with one of the other mobile ministries:
1. 2 Tim. 1:11—*An apostle* and a *teacher*.
 2. Acts 13:1—*Prophets* and *teachers* (compare Acts 15:32).
 3. Luke 20:1—Jesus was *teaching* and *evangelizing*.

**Resident Ministries:
Shepherds And Deacons
5006**

I. Introduction

- A. *Resident ministries* function within a *local* church, and are restricted to a given locality
- B. Phil. 1:1—Two levels of local leadership:
1. Bishops (also called Elder or Shepherd)
 2. Deacons

II. Shepherd (KJV “Pastor”)

- A. In New Testament three different Greek words are used for these local leaders:
1. *Presbuteros* = Elder
 2. *Episkopos* = Overseer (sometimes in KJV “bishop”)
 3. *Poimen* = Shepherd (once in KJV “pastor”)
 4. These different words all denote *one and the same office or ministry*
- B. Acts 20:17, 28—*Elders . . . made overseers over the flock . . . to feed (= shepherd) the church.*
- C. Tit. 1:5, 7—Ordain *elders . . . a bishop (overseer) must be blameless.*
- D. 1 Pet. 2:25—Jesus is the *Shepherd* and *Bishop (Overseer)* of our souls.
- E. 1 Pet. 5:12—*Elders . . . feed (shepherd) the flock . . . taking the oversight.*
- F. *Qualification* = Elder; *ministry* = Shepherd, *work* = Oversight
- G. In New Testament “elders” are always mentioned in the *plural*:
1. Acts 14:23—Ordained (chose) *elders* in *every church*. (The same Greek word for “choose” is used in Acts 10:41 and 2 Cor. 8:19).
 2. Acts 20:17—Called the *elders* of the church.
 3. Tit. 1:5—Ordain (set) *elders* in *every city*.
 4. James 5:14—Call for the *elders* of the church.
- H. Note also the following passages where the leaders of the local church are mentioned in the *plural*: Phil. 1:1; 1 Thess. 5:12; Heb. 13:7, 17, 24
1. Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22; 16:4—Often *apostles* are associated with elders.
 2. Acts 15:23—Apostles are elders and brethren: “Brethren” are probably all other mature men in the congregation.
 3. 1 Pet. 5:1–2—Where an apostle resides and is associated with a local church, within that church his position is that of a *co-elder* (compare 2 John 1; 3 John 1).
 4. Acts 13:1—In a local church there may also be resident *prophets* and *teachers*.
 5. 1 Cor. 12:28—In a meeting of the whole local church the three senior ministries are:
 - a. Apostles
 - b. Prophets
 - c. Teachers
 6. 3 John 9–10—A local elder is required to acknowledge the ministry of an apostle.

7. Elders are the vital *link* between the *mobile* ministries and the *resident* personnel of a local church.

III. Deacons

- A. Acts 6:1–6—Where added responsibilities make it necessary, elders are assisted in matters of *practical administration* by *deacons (servers)*. Deacons are chosen from amongst the local congregation by the believers themselves, but their appointment must be confirmed by the leaders of the local church.
- B. Phil. 1:1—The *maximum* total personnel of a local church consists of three groups:
 1. Elders (bishops)
 2. Deacons
 3. Saints (all remaining believers)
- C. The principle of *plurality of local leadership* means that in any given locality there need never be more than *one local church*, even though there may be many thousands of believers. The number of leaders (shepherds) is simply multiplied in proportion to the number of believers.
 1. Acts 18:22—The *church* (singular) in Jerusalem.
 2. Acts 21:20—Ten-thousands (myriads) of Jews which believe (in Jerusalem).
 3. Acts 21:22—The *multitude* must needs come together. That is, *one church*, but 50,000 or more members.
- D. There are two mutually exclusive alternatives:
 1. *Many* local churches each with *one* leader.
 2. *One* local church with *many* leaders.
- E. Acts 14:23—When elders are appointed, “disciples” become “churches.” “Elders” are *relative* to a group. These men had only been converted a few months. *Spiritual maturity* is primary.
- F. Tit. 1:5—Until elders are appointed, the order of the local church is incomplete.