



SESSION 3

# BASIC DOCTRINES 2: THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH (ECCLESIOLOGY)

GLC  ESSENTIALS

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# GLC ESSENTIALS

## **BASIC DOCTRINES 2**

### **SESSION 3: THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH**

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## I. Biblical Images of the Church

- A. People of God** - designates those people with whom God has established a covenant relationship. The people of Israel in the Old Testament experienced this (Judges 20:2). The Christian church also understands itself in this way (Hebrews 4:9; 11:25; cf. 1 Peter 2:9–10).<sup>1</sup>
- B. The Body of Christ** – The term is used in the New Testament as an image for the Christian church (1 Corinthians 12:27), which is united in the one body of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:16–17).<sup>2</sup>
- C. Temple of the Holy Spirit** – the church is now indwelt by the Spirit, imparting life and power and sensitivity to the Lord’s leading. The Spirit also makes the Church holy and pure. (1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 6:19, Ephesians 2:21-22, 1 Peter 2:5)<sup>3</sup>
- D. Bride of Christ** – An image of the Christian church (Revelations 21:2, 9; 22:17) reflecting its relationship to Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup>

## II. The Church and Jesus<sup>5</sup>

### A. Jesus Builds His Church

(Matthew 16:13–18; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 27)

Jesus promised, formed and keeps building His Church, and the gates of hell will not overcome it. The believer is placed in the Church by the Spirit’s baptism and Christ is the ultimate Agent because He sent the Spirit. Jesus is continually building up His Church in spite of the persecutions and the many challenges that the Church is facing. When the believers live as His Church, the gates of hell cannot withstand the offensive move of the Church.

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<sup>1</sup> Donald K. McKim, Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms, Westminster John Knox Press

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Millard Erickson, Christian Theology, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids Michigan

<sup>4</sup> Donald K. McKim, Westminster Dictionary of Theological terms

<sup>5</sup> **BASIC THEOLOGY** By Charles C. Ryrie VICTOR BOOKS Usa Canada England

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**B. Jesus is the Head of the Church** (Ephesians 1:20–23, 5:23)

By His resurrection and ascension our Lord was positioned in the place of honor at the right hand of the Father to be Head over the church, His body.

**C. Jesus Loves and Cares for the Church** (Ephesians 5:25-27,29)

He loves cares for His body in a number of ways. He sanctifies it. His work of sanctifying includes nourishing and cherishing His body (Ephesians 5:29). To nourish means to bring to maturity (as in 6:4). To cherish means literally to keep warm, thus to love and care for His children.

**D. Jesus Give Gifts to the Church** (Ephesians 4:7–13)

Christ conquered sin and death during His ministry on earth; now He gives gifts to His followers during His ministry in heaven. In 1 Corinthians 12:5 the giving of gifts is also related to the Lord.

**E. Jesus Empowers the Church through the Holy Spirit**

(John 15:1–10, 14:16–17)

This well-known illustration of the Vine and branches makes clear that without the power of the living Christ flowing through us we can do nothing. Clearly that power is resurrection power dependent on a relationship of our being in Him and His being in us (14:17).

### III. The Church and the Kingdom of God

While there is an inseparable relationship between the Kingdom and the church, they are not to be identified. The Kingdom takes its point of departure from God, the church from human beings.

**The Church** – is the fellowship of those who have experienced God’s reign and entered into the enjoyment of its blessings.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> A Theology of the New Testament George Eldon Ladd Revised Edition Edited by Donald A. Hagner William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company

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**Kingdom of God** – God’s sovereign reign and rule. God’s reign was the major focus of Jesus’ teaching (Matthew 6:33; Mark 1:15; Luke 6:20, etc.). Its fullness is in the future (Luke 13:29; 22:18) and yet it has also come in Jesus himself (Luke 10:9; 17:21).<sup>7</sup>

**A. Relationship between the Church & Kingdom of God<sup>8</sup>**

**1. The Church is not the Kingdom**

The New Testament does not equate believers with the Kingdom. The first missionaries preached the Kingdom of God, not the church (Acts 8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31). It is impossible to substitute “church” for “kingdom” in such sayings. The only references to the people as *basileia* are Revelation 1:6 and 5:10; but the people are so designated not because they are the subjects of God’s reign but because they will share Christ’s reign.

**2. The Church Witnesses to the Kingdom**

It is the church’s mission to witness to the Kingdom. The church cannot build the Kingdom or become the Kingdom, but the church witnesses to the Kingdom to God’s redeeming acts in Christ both past and future. This is illustrated by the commission Jesus gave to the twelve (Matthew 10) and to the seventy (Luke 10); and it is reinforced by the proclamation of the apostles in the book of Acts.

**3. The Church is the Instrument of the Kingdom**

The disciples of Jesus not only proclaimed the good news about the presence of the Kingdom; they were also instruments of the Kingdom in that the works of the Kingdom were performed through them as through Jesus himself. As they went preaching the Kingdom, they too healed the sick and cast out demons (Matthew 10:8; Luke 10:17).

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<sup>7</sup> Donald K. Mckim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological terms*

<sup>8</sup> *A Theology of the New Testament* George Eldon Ladd Revised Edition Edited by Donald A. Hagner William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company

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## IV. Implications of the Doctrine<sup>9</sup>

- A. The Church is not to be conceived of primarily as a sociological phenomenon, but as a divinely established institution.
- B. The Church exists because of its relationship to the Triune God. It exists to carry out its Lord's will by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- C. The Church is the continuation of the Lord's presence and ministry in the world.
- D. The Church is to be a fellowship of regenerate believers who display the spiritual qualities of their Lord. Purity and devotion are to be emphasized.

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<sup>9</sup> Millard Erickson, Christian Theology, Baker Book House. Grand Rapids Michigan



