

# Lecture Nine--ecclesiology: The Church

by Greg Herrick

*This sermon explores the nature and purpose of the church, including its relationship to the kingdom of God and its ordinances.*

**Scripture:** Ephesians 4:4

**Topics:** "Church Government", "Ecclesiology"

## Description

Greg Herrick delves into the study of ecclesiology, focusing on the church as the assembly of believers indwelt by the Spirit of God, exploring topics like the church's nature, metaphors used to describe it, its relationship to the kingdom of God and Israel, as well as its purpose in the world. The sermon also covers the government of the church, its ordinances, and the spiritual gifts given by God for maturity and growth in Christlikeness.

## Transcript

The term "ecclesiology" (from Greek ecclesia meaning "meeting," or "assembly" and logos meaning "word," "matter," "topic") refers to the study of the church as the assembly of those who know the Lord and in whom the Spirit of God dwells (Romans 8:9). It often deals with such topics as the nature of the church, including NT metaphors used to describe the church, the church's relationship to the kingdom of God, to Israel, and her purpose in the world. Other related topics include the government of the church, her God-given ordinances, as well as the spiritual gifts graciously bestowed on her by God for her maturity and growth in Christlikeness.

IA. The Nature of the Church 1B. The Problem of a Starting Point for a Definition 2B. The Term ekkle,sia 1C. Classical Greek 2C. Septuagint (LXX) 1D. The Term lh^q\*28 2D. 1 Kings 2:3 3D. Numbers 22:4 4D. Genesis 35:11 5D. Deuteronomy 9:10 6D. 2 Chronicles 20:5 7D. Joel 2:16 3C. New Testament--114x (not in 1, 2 Peter) 1D. Home Church--1 Cor 1:2; 1 Thess 1:1 2D. Church in a Region--Acts 9:31 3D. Church in Asia--1 Cor 16:19 4D. Universal Church--Eph 4:4; Hebrews 12:23-29 4C. The Use of The Issue of Unity ekkle,sia 5C.

The Church Visible and Invisible IIA. Metaphorical Expressions in Reference to the Church: Certain Examples and Their Significance 1B. The Body of Christ 1C. 1 Cor 12:12-27 2C. Ephesians 1:22-23 2B. Family--2 Cor 6:18 3B. Vine and Branches--John 15:1-11 4B. Pillar and Ground of the Truth--1 Tim 3:15 5B. Building--1 Cor 3:9 6B. A Living Temple that Grows--Eph 2:20-21 7B. A Holy Temple in which God Dwells--1 Cor 3:16 8B. A Holy Nation--1 Pet 2:9 9B. A Royal Priesthood--1 Peter 2:9 10B.

Living Stones around the Cornerstone--1 Pet 2:4-8 11B. Salt and Light 1C. Matt 5:13-15 2C. Acts 13:47 3C. Col 4:5-6 IIIA. The Church and the Kingdom of God 1B. The Kingdom of God: A Definition 2B. The Church and the Kingdom: Five Observations 1C. The Church Is Not the Kingdom 2C. The Kingdom Creates the Church 3C. The Church Witnesses to the Kingdom 4C. The Church Is the Instrument of the Kingdom 5C. The Church Is the Custodian of the Kingdom<sup>30</sup> IVA. The Church and Israel 1B.

The Issue 1C. Statement of the Question 2C. Key Factors in the Debate 1D. The Use of the OT in the NT 2D. The Abrahamic, Davidic, and New Covenants 3D. "National" vs. Solely "Ethnic" Israel and Romans 9-11 4D. The Interpretation of Revelation 20:4-6 5D. The Issue of the Land Promises in the NT 3C. Some Key Texts 1D. Matthew 21:43 2D. Acts 1:5; 3:19-21 3D. Acts 13:33 4D. Galatians 3:29 4C. Extreme Positions 5C. Mediating Positions 2B. Importance of the Question VA. Purpose & Service of the Church 1B.

General Statement 1C. John 14:13-14 2C. Acts 1:8 3C. Acts 13:47 2B. The Godward Focus of the Church 3B. The Inward Focus of the Church 4B. The Outward Focus of the Church 5B. The Church's Reliance on the Spirit, Word, and Informed Tradition VIA. The Government of the Church 1B. Various Church Government Structures 1C. Episcopalian 1D. ArchbishopàBishopàDioceseàRectors/Vicars 2D. Methodist, Anglican, Catholic Church 2C. Presbyterian 1D. Local Church Elects Elders to Sessions (Presbyterian) 2D.

Local Church Elects Elders to Consistory (Reformed Church) 3D. Some Elders Are Members of Higher Body: Presbytery (Presbyterian) 4D. Some Elders Are Members of Higher Body: Classis (Reformed) 5D. Some Members of Pres. Or Classis Chosen to Form Synod 6D. The General Assembly: Lay and Clergy Representatives 3C. Congregational<sup>31</sup> 1D. Focus in This Government: Autonomy of Local Church and Members 2D. The Priesthood of all Believers 4C. Non-Government 2B. Qualifications for Elders and Deacons 1C.

A Plurality of Elders<sup>32</sup> 1D. Acts 14:23 2D. Acts 20:17 3D. 1 Timothy 4:14 4D. Titus 1:5 5D. James 5:14 6D. Hebrews 13:17 7D. 1 Peter 5:1-2 2C. Is There A Need for Presbyteries and General Assemblies? 3C. The Qualifications Proper 1D. Elders--1 Timothy 3:1-7 2D. Elders--Titus 1:5-9 3D. Deacons--1 Timothy 3:8-13 VIIA. Ordinances Given the Church 1B. Ex opere operato? <sup>33</sup> 2B. Baptism 1C. The Context--Matthew 28:19-20 2C. The Meaning and Mode of "Baptism" 1D. Meaning of Baptizo,, 2D.

The Mode: Immersion not Sprinkling 1E. John Baptized in the Jordan River 2E. Jesus' Baptism<sup>34</sup> 3E. John 3:23 4E. Acts 8:37-38<sup>35</sup> 5E. 1 Peter 3:21 6E. Romans 6:4 (Col 2:12) 3C. The Subjects of Baptism 1D. Acts 2:41 2D. Acts 8:12 3D. 10:44-48 4D. 16:14-15 5D. Households (Infants?/Unbelieving Adults?)--Acts 16:32-33 6D. 1 Corinthians 1:16 4C. Baptism and Salvation 1D. Acts 2:38 and the Meaning of the Preposition eis 2D. Repentance Can Proceed Baptism in Acts 1E. Acts 3:19 2E. Acts 26:20 3D.

Salvation Is Totally by Grace in Acts 1E. Acts 10:43, 47 2E. Acts 13:38-39, 48<sup>36</sup> 4D. Other Important Texts and Considerations 1E. 1 Corinthians 1:17 2E. 1 Peter 3:21 3E. Romans 4:1-12 4E. Ephesians 2:8-9 5E. Titus 3:5 6E. Luke 23:43 5C. Summary of Baptism 1B. The Lord's Supper 1C. Baptism and the Lord's Supper Compared 2C. The Frequency of Observance 1D. Matthew 26:27-29 (and Parallels) 2D. The Lord's Supper as "Reminder"--1 Cor 11:24-26 3D. "For Whenever..."--1 Cor 11:26 3C.

Relationship of Elements to Christ's Literal, Physical Body 1D. Key Issue: Christ's Presence in the Supper 2D. Catholic Transubstantiation and Salvific Grace 3D. Luther, Consubstantiation, and Christ's Body 4D. Calvin: Signs of Christ's Real Spiritual Presence 5D. The Lord's Supper and Non-Baptized Believers 6D.

Summary VIII A. Gifts Given the Church 1B. God's Church, His Indwelling Spirit, and the Spiritual Gifts 2B. The Gifts Are Given at God's Discretion 1C. 1 Corinthians 12:11 2C. 1 Corinthians 12:18 3B.

The Gifts Are Given for the Common Good--1 Corinthians 12:7 4B. Confusion Can Exist Regarding the Gifts--1 Corinthians 12:1-3ff. 5B. The Lists of Gifts 1C. Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 1:7; 12-14 (Acts 21:9); Ephesians 4:11-12; Hebrews 2:3-4, and 1 Peter 4:10-11. 2C. Some Observations 1D. No Two Lists Agree Completely 2D. "Gifts of..." 3D. 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 4D. The Personal Context for Their Use Is Christlikeness--1 Cor 13 5D. The Corporate Context for Their Use Is Genuine Love--1 Cor 13 3C.

A List of Some Gifts (see the passages above in VIII A, 5B, 1C) 1D. Prophesying 2D. Teaching 3D. Serving 4D. Encouraging 5D. Giving 6D. Leading 7D. Wisdom 8D. Knowledge 9D. Healing 10D. Discerning 11D. Tongues and Interpretation of Tongues 12D. Apostleship 13D. Pastoring 14D. Evangelist 6B. Difficulties in the Interpretation of Certain Gifts 1C. E.g., The "Message of Wisdom" 2C. E.g., The "Message of Knowledge" 7B. The Continuation or Cessation of Certain "Sign" Gifts 1C. Confusion over the Real Questions 2C.

Statement of the Question(s) 1D. 1 Corinthians 1:4-9 2D. Hebrews 2:3-4 3D. Statement Proper 3C. The Issue of Theological Method: Experience and the Text of Scripture? 1D. "Beginning" with Experience 2D. "Beginning" with Scripture 3D. The Issue Is not Where "To Begin," But What Is The Final Authority? 4D. Christian Maturity and Listening Well to Detractors 4C. The Gift of Tongues 1D. The Issue in 1 Corinthians 12-14 37 2D. Their Purpose in Acts (2, 8?, 10, 19)

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28 There is another term in the Hebrew OT, namely, *hd'u@*, and it often refers to Israel as a "ceremonial community" centered in the cult or the Law. It is, however, never translated with *ekkle,sia*. See Jack P. Lewis, "qahal," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 789-90; Lothar Coenen, "Church," in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 1:291-95.

29 Cf. BAGD, 240-41.

30 For his defense of these points see, George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, rev. ed., ed. Donald A. Hagner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 109-117.

31 For further discussion of these three representative forms of church government, see Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1069-83; Leon Morris, "Church Government," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 238-41; D. MacLeod, "Church Government," in *New Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Sinclair B. Ferguson, David F. Wright, and J. I. Packer (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988), 143-46.

32 "Elders" are also known as "pastors," "overseers," and "bishops" in the NT. See Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 913-14. Though this position is by no means certain, it does seem quite tenable.

33 These are sometimes referred to as "sacraments." To some, the term "sacrament" suggests the idea that either participation in these rites is necessary for salvation or that they actually work in and of themselves, apart from the faith of the participant. Indeed, this is often how they are conceived in the Catholic church.

34 Matthew uses the expression *anebe,, apo tou hudatos* (Matt 3:16) and Mark says *anabaino,,n ek tou hudatos* (Mark 1:10). Both indicate that Jesus and John were in the water, not just beside it.

35 The same language that's used of Jesus coming out of the water is used of the Eunuch as well (i.e., *avebe,,san ek tou hudatos*).

36 See Wallace, *Exegetical Syntax*, 369-71.

37 While Paul claims to speak in tongues more than all the Corinthians (1 Cor 14:18), it is interesting, in light of certain contemporary claims, to note that tongues is not mentioned by Luke in connection with the apostle's conversion (Acts 9). Further, while tongues is mentioned in connection with Pentecost (Acts 2:1-13), the conversion of Cornelius and Gentile believers (Acts 10:46), and disciples of John the Baptist in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7), the same cannot be said for Lydia (Acts 16:11-15) and the Philippian jailor (Acts 16:31-34). The latter two, however, are explicitly regarded by the narrator, Luke, to participate fully in Christ's salvation.

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