

Bible Basics Conference

Catford, 10 – 11 November 2007



Agenda



Session 1: What is the Church?	Hugh Clark
Session 2: Assembly Meetings?	Gavin Hughes
Session 3: Gifts	Geoff Hawes
Session 4: Sign Gifts	Edwin Cross
Session 5: Elders, Bishops, and Deacons	Nick Fleet
Session 6: Why so many Churches?	Michael Hardt
Session 7: Relationships between Assemblies	Andrew Poots
Session 8: Who can break bread?	Graham Warnes
Session 9: Assembly Authority	Simon Attwood
Session 10: Types	Paul Dronsfield
Session 11: The Hope of the Church	Ernie Brown

Session 1: What is the Church?



Hugh Clark

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Questions

Answers

References

A WHAT IS THE CHURCH?	See the end of the sheet 2	
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B Is it just a collection of individuals?	No - it is a unity	Ephesians 1:22-23
		do 2:14-16
		do 4:4
	Note: It is not a "voluntary association", but	
	Christ is building it	Matt 16:18



C Why not?

Scripture looks at the church in three ways - all "singular"

a body	see above
a (spiritual) house	I Timothy 3:15 Ephesians 2:20-22 I Peter 2:5
a bride	Ephesians 5:25-27 Revelation 21:2, 9

Note: Today we are occupied mainly with the body and the house; the "bride" will be seen in glory

See session 11: "The hope of the church"



E Why did the church start when it did?

"I will build my church"

Matt 16:18

On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit

- came to indwell each believer**
- baptised all believers into one body (the church)**

Acts 2

I Cor 12:13

This was only possible after Christ's atoning work and glorification

John 7:39

Note: Neither Israel nor other Old Testament believers have been or will become part of the church. Their blessings are distinct.

SO, WHAT IS THE A CHURCH?

**Something suited to Christ
Something which is part of Christ**

**Gen 2:18, Eph 4:13
Gen 2:23, Eph 1:22-23,
Eph 5:30**



Questions

Answers

References

**D How do you
become a
member?**

Repentance, faith, confession

Acts 4:12

Romans 10:9-10

Matt 16:16-18

Acts 2:37-40,47b

Eph. 1:13

**Note: All believers are part of the
body, but breaking bread and
enjoying the privileges of the
assembly are another matter**

**See session 8 - "Who
can break bread"?**

Session 2: Assembly Meetings?



Gavin Hughes

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READING Acts 2 v 42

Assembly formed straight after Pentecost as a result of Lord Jesus Ascended glorified and the Holy Spirit sent down.

DEFINITION

"**Called out**" people from the world – this should mark us out.

Similar to

- Greek word used in the thought in Matthew 2 v 15 and John 1 v 13 - "**Out of**" & "**of God**"
- Greek word used in Mark 1 v 20 and Matthew 4 v 21 – "**called them**"

Only ONE Assembly but expressed locally in many places (Mt. 18:20).

For believers on the Lord Jesus Christ - "**when you come together**" – 1 Cor. 11 v 17,18,20; 14 :23.26.

(if unbelievers come in they will be affected / impressed if we are meeting in an orderly and biblical manner – see 1 Cor. 14 v 23 - 24).

INTRODUCTION



- Meetings for
- Young people
- Mothers & Toddlers
- Senior Citizens
- Gospel outreach
- Womens Meetings
- Others (missionary reports, administration, etc.)

These are good and most needful but are not assembly meetings though assembly order may apply where appropriate.

When opportunity arises true assembly worship will result in some of these taking place.

WHEN YOU COME TOGETHER IN ASSEMBLY



	<i>Guidance</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Ministry	1 Cor.14 v 24-29,	1 Cor. 14
Breaking of Bread	1 Cor. 11	Acts 2 & 20 v 7
Prayers	Eph 5 v 20 Philip.4 v 6 1 Thess.5 v 17 James 5 v 16 Mt. 18 :15-20	Acts 1 v 14, 4 v 23, 12 v 5



Ministry for **edification** – improving the mind and heart
for **growing** in grace & in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus

Breaking of Bread for **remembering** the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ
for **magnifying** His Person and Work
for **touching** our hearts
for **expecting** His soon return for the assembly
for **expressing** the unity of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 10)

Prayer expresses our **dependence** on God
express **appreciation, thankfulness, gratitude** to God
requests make known for others to God
make known our **needs** to God

CHARACTER OF ALL SHOULD BE: "**decently and in order**" as 1 Cor. 14 v 40.

WHICH ONE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT?.....

Gifts

Their source and their use
Opportunities and dangers



Definition

Special abilities given by Christ to enable the members of His body to carry out His work.

Divine power from above, energised by the Holy Spirit, which acts upon souls.

More than natural ability



Christ the Source

As the victorious, risen & ascended Saviour who has:

conquered Satan;

led the enemy captive;

loves His Church;

cares for every member

gives gifts to men for Christian ministry, that souls might be saved, His people edified, nourished & perfected.



Origin of Gifts

Given by Christ from heaven

According to His own sovereign will

Given by grace

Heaven is their source

They have a heavenly character



Examples of Gifts

Romans 12	1 Corinthians 12	Ephesians 4
Prophecy	Wisdom	Apostles
Ministry	Knowledge	Prophets
Teaching	Faith	Evangelists
Exhortation	Healing	Pastors & teachers
Giving	Miracles	
Ruling	Prophecy	
Showing mercy	Discernment	
	Tongues	
	Interpretation of tongues	



Purpose of Gifts

Perfecting the saints (*primary purpose*)

For the work of the ministry

Edifying the body of Christ

Bringing souls to Christ

Not intended to serve the world

Intended to serve Christ (*then others*)

Resulting in glory to God

Profit not display



Working of Gifts

Ministry must flow from Christ alone.

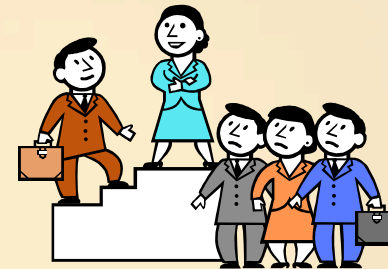
Exist in believers by the energy of the Holy Spirit.

Motive should be love for fellow saints.

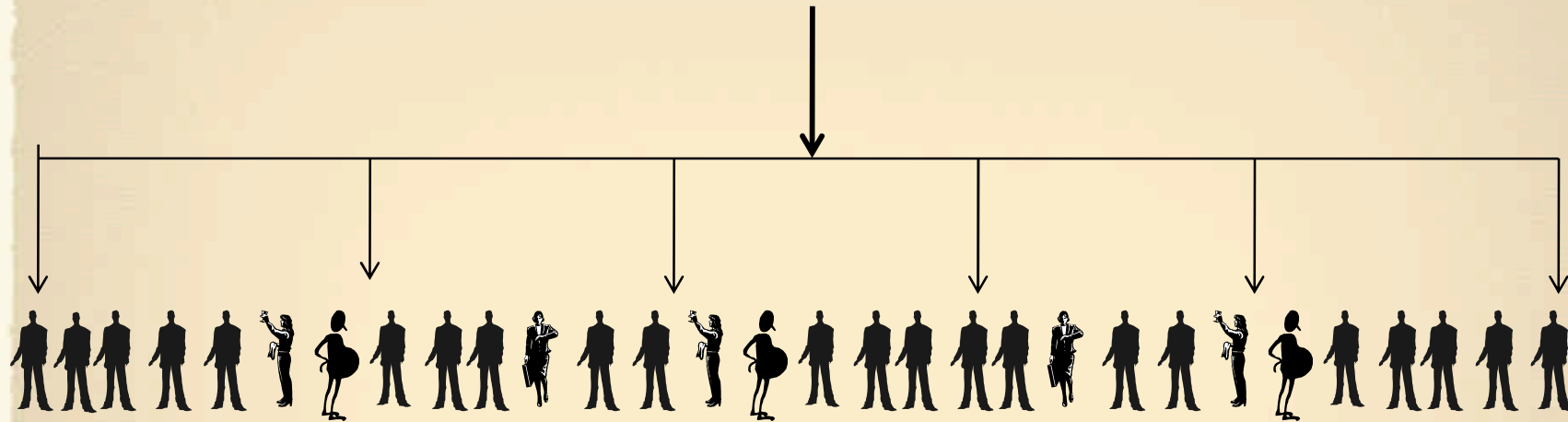
Christ continues to give gifts & will continue until we all come in the unity of the faith.



Hierarchical



Holy Spirit



Holy Spirit

The intermediary - conveying, distributing, making them effective.

e.g. Abraham & his servant Eliezer

Abraham owns & gives the goods but Eliezer takes them & distributes them to Rebecca (the church).



Two Kinds of gifts

To awaken souls & gather the Church

Sign gifts to the world, signs of the presence of God in the Church

We do not have a catalogue of all the gifts!

Unlikely that 2 gifts are exactly the same!



Ephesians Ch. 4

Persons are the gifts.

This chapter only discusses those gifts which gather & edify the Church.

These gifts will remain because Christ still desires to nourish the members of His own body.



1 Corinthians Ch.12

Discusses both kinds of gifts.

Endowments of one Spirit given to various persons - wisdom, knowledge, faith etc.

Gifts are looked at according to the energy of the Holy Spirit, who distributes them as He wills.

Shows us how to distinguish between divine gifts & those of demons.



1 Peter Ch. 4

All was to be done as coming from God so that He might be glorified.

If saints were to honestly wait on God there would be more gift.

To serve by the ability received of God.



Ministry, Priesthood & worship

Priests

All Christians are priests who should praise, worship & thank God

All should serve Christ

Ministry

Only a few are ministers

Should be performed by those with gifts given by Christ

Not those chosen by men

Not those who have been to college etc.



Natural ability & gift

Gift is more than natural ability!

Lord gives out talents (Matthew Ch.25)

Natural ability is taken into account by the Lord when distributing gifts.

Natural ability alone does not make someone a minister of God's Word.

Must be a positive bestowal of a gift from Christ!



Principle of Scripture

People possess a “natural” ability

(given by God - distribution of the talents)

Gift is given by the Lord

Person must be diligent

Examples

Paul

Peter



Dangers

Presence of a gift does not hinder the working of our sinful nature.

Gifts can cause Christians to be "boastful"

Gifts cannot give spirituality

Christians can lose their balance

Bring discredit on the Name of Christ.



Reasons for apparent lack of gift

Christians are unfaithful & sin.

Presence of sin hinders the working of Holy Ghost.

Christians neglect His discipline.

Love for Christ wanes.

Christians are not diligent in the use of their gift.



Hindrances to using Gifts in the Church

Opportunities for using different gifts in the assembly can be hindered by:

man's will in the assembly.

the "arrangements" of man so the different gifts have no room to work.

disorder being allowed.

God being "shut out"!

Only being a few gifts (*or even none*) in an assembly. (*Gifts are given to whole Church!*)



Human Intervention?

Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors & teachers were gifts given to the Church by Christ - *not called or invested by human authority.*

Great difference between denomination's way of appointing people & the divine system of spiritual gifts bestowed by Christ

Lord gives gifts of His own grace which do not require human intervention.



Members of the Body of Christ

All members held responsible to take their part in edifying each other.

All obliged to complete what God has given them to do.

Only act as directed by

Gifts which are not seen are often those which are most precious.



How should gifts be used?

Everyone who has received a gift should:
live close (cleave) to the Lord Jesus;
follow Christ's directions for its use;
serve Christ energetically;
use them responsibly for the Lord Jesus;
use them to their full profit;
keep within the limits of their gift.



Session 4: Sign Gifts

Their role in the beginning – and their role today
Are you Spirit – filled?



Edwin Cross

Bible Basics Conference

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The rôle of revelatory gifts in the beginning



Three Main Periods of Miracles in the Bible

1.

2.

3. New Testament times

- Hebrews 2:3-4
- Mark 16:17-18
- Acts 5:12
- Rom. 15:19
- 2 Cor. 12:12.

Their rôle today



Are there any Sign Gifts Today?

Gift of Healing Began to Fade During Paul's Earthly Ministry

- 1 Timothy 5:23
- 2 Timothy 4:20
- Philippians 2:27.

Tongues - Earthly Languages & purpose of the gift

- Acts 2:4,6
- Revelation 5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9
- 1 Corinthians 14:22
- Deuteronomy 28:49 & Isaiah 28:9,13.

False claims

- 1 John 4:1
- Proverbs 25:14.

Are you Spirit-filled?



What does it mean to be filled by the Spirit?

- Romans 8:1-4 walking by the Spirit
- Romans 8:14 led by the Spirit
- Ephesians 5:18-21 filled with the Spirit



Session 5: Elders, Bishops, and Deacons

Where are they? Do we need more organisation?

Nick Fleet

Bible Basics Conference

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Elders, Bishops, and Deacons

Bishops (from the Greek *episkopos* = ‘overseer’) and Elders (*presbuteros* = ‘aged person’) were the same, as can be seen from Acts 20:17 & 28 and Titus 1:5-7

They were always mentioned in the plural – each city (and hence one undivided assembly) had more than one (not one Bishop over a large district).

They were **made such** by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28) and **appointed** by an apostle or his delegate. They did not appoint one another nor did the local church appoint or choose those to be ‘**over them**’.

Their role is an ‘office’ though not an official position, as such, but really a work or responsibility to ‘take care of’ or ‘shepherd’ (= ‘pastor’) the church of God. It is not a matter of gift as such, though they should be ‘apt to teach’.

Qualities and Appointment



They must have certain moral qualities, listed in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 (blameless / irreproachable, discreet, of good behaviour, husband of one wife, sober, hospitable, not given to excess from wine, not a striker, mild / patient, not greedy for money, conducting his own house well, children in subjection, not a novice, of good testimony outside the church).

They cannot now be **appointed** (there are no apostles or delegates) nor can they **exercise oversight over an unbroken local assembly** (the church in any locality is divided.) However, there are surely those who care for and feed the flock of God and who devote themselves to such work, having the necessary qualities that we can recognise, and who have been made such by the Holy Spirit.

Deacons



Deacons (from *diakonos* = ‘servants’) are those who serve or work in some administrative way for the local assembly. The word is translated variously as ‘servant’, ‘minister’ or ‘deacon’. They are therefore **‘under’** the church in contrast to bishops and elders who were ‘over’ the church. They may be sisters (as was Phoebe, Rom. 16:1).

Their work is rarely specified in Scripture (except perhaps in Acts 6:3, distributing funds to widows) but would include such work as treasurer, secretary, trustee etc. There is much scope for such ministry or deacon service.

Deacons must have similar moral qualities to those of bishops and elders, 1 Tim 3:8-13, grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the truth faithfully, without charge against them, husbands of one wife, conducting their house and children well (the women similarly grave, not slanderers, sober, and faithful in all things).

Session 6: Why are there so many Churches? And which one is right, if any?



Michael Hardt

Bible Basics Conference
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Questions...



1. Why are there so many different 'churches' today?
2. Who is right – and does it matter?
3. Is there a right way to go?
4. Separation and unity – a paradox?
5. The place of God's choice



Two ways of looking at the Church of God

God's Counsel

- There is one body (Eph. 4:4)
- The fullness of Christ (Eph. 1:21)
- Christ is the Head (Col. 1:18)
- The 'mystery of Christ' (Eph. 3:5): the church united with Him!
- A Divine Habitation in the Spirit (Eph. 2:22)
 - Christ building
- The Bride of Christ (Rev. 22:2)

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today

Man's Responsibility

- Division
- Man is building (1 Cor. 3:6)
- Mixed building materials (incl. wood, grass, straw)
- A 'great house' (2 Tim. 2:20)
- Mixture of vessels to honour and dishonour
- Decline of the Christian testimony (Rev. 2-3)

The Church of God is in Ruins

- How can you tell?



- By comparing the status quo to the original

The Church of God is in Ruins



- No intention to look at others in a fault-finding spirit...
- But the ruin of the Christian testimony is just too obvious:
 - Divisions
 - over 1,500 Christian denominations!
 - A human 'head of the church'
 - The 'Pastor-of-a-church' concept
 - Membership of a church organisation
 - Bible criticism
 - Immorality tolerated
 - Fundamental truths denied
 - Association with evil widespread
 - etc. etc.



The ruin predicted

The ruin
of the
church
did not
come as
a
surprise.

Actually,
it had
been
predicted



New Testament Warnings

Paul

- “...there will come in amongst you after my departure **grievous wolves**, not sparing the flock” **Acts 20:29**
- But this know, that in *the* last days **difficult times** shall be there

2 Tim. 3:1

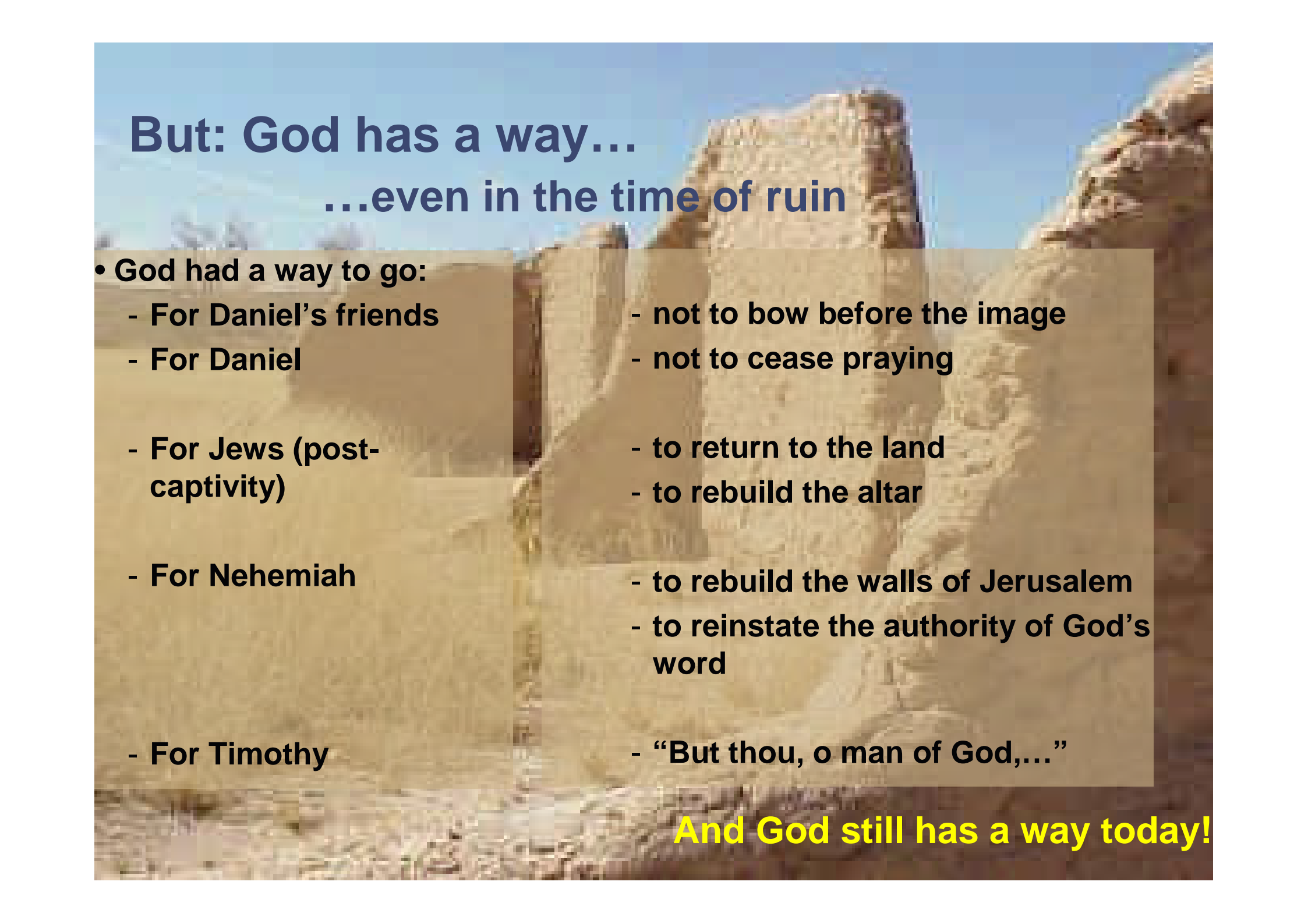
Peter

- “there shall be also among you **false teachers**, who shall bring in by the bye destructive heresies” **2 Peter 2:1**

- “...there have come **many antichrists**, whence we know that it is *the* last hour.” **1 John 2: 18**

John

- Initial decline: “thou hast **left thy first love**” of the Christian testimony **Rev. 2:4**
- ending in **complete indifference** (Laodicea): “I am about to spue thee out of my mouth” **Rev. 3:16**



But: God has a way... **...even in the time of ruin**

- **God had a way to go:**

- For Daniel's friends

- For Daniel

- For Jews (post-captivity)

- For Nehemiah

- For Timothy

- not to bow before the image

- not to cease praying

- to return to the land

- to rebuild the altar

- to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem

- to reinstate the authority of God's word

- "But thou, o man of God,..."

And God still has a way today!

God's way in the time of ruin

- Example Jude:
 - Speaks of total apostasy
 - And yet: “But to him that is able to keep you without stumbling, and to set you with exultation blameless before his glory...” (v.24).

- We are NOT told to
 - Undo the ruin (actually, we can't)
 - Compromise because of the ruin

- God looks for: faithfulness in the time of ruin.

God's way in the time of ruin



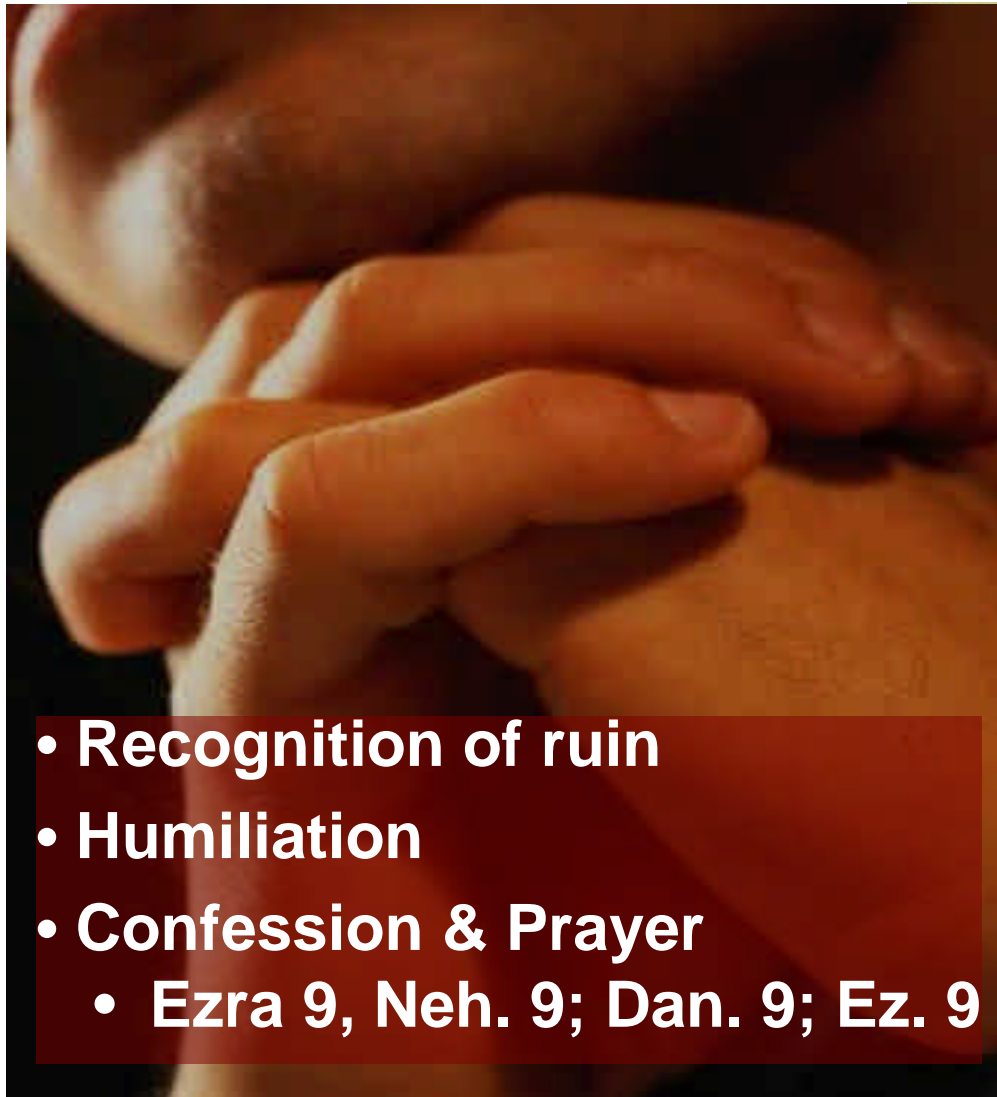
What exactly is God's way...

...for Christians in the 21st century?

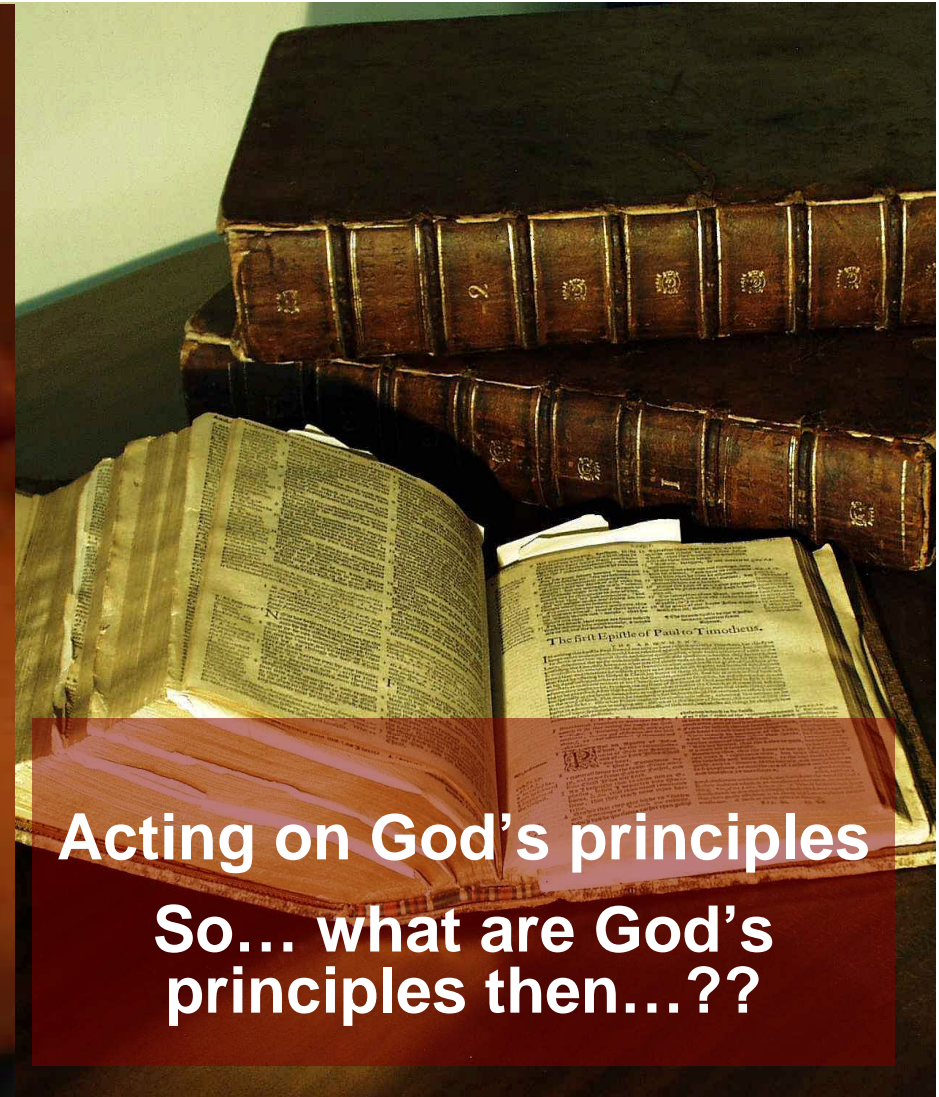
- “Go with the flow”?
- “Pick whatever suits you best”?
- “Start a new ‘church’”?
- Or what....?



God's way in the time of ruin



- Recognition of ruin
- Humiliation
- Confession & Prayer
 - Ezra 9, Neh. 9; Dan. 9; Ez. 9



Acting on God's principles
So... what are God's principles then...??

The One Place



- **Deut. 12**

- A place God had chosen
- A unique place
- A place where God was honoured

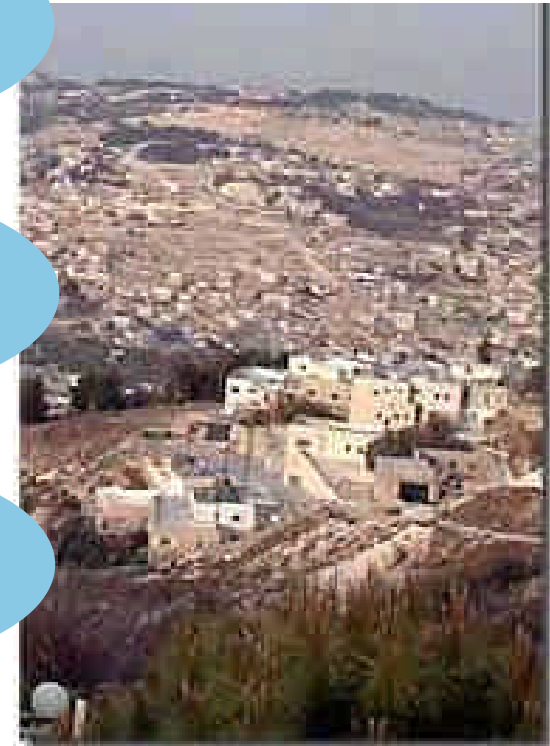
In the beginning

- **Matthew 18:20**

- The NT equivalent: a spiritual place:
 - Christ is at the centre
 - His authority is recognised
 - He leads and directs
 - Hearts desire to obey the Scriptures

After the captivity

today



God's Principles: unity and separation



- There is **one body** (Eph. 4:4)
 - No need to 'found' a church
 - No need to become a member
 - But: reception as members of the body of Christ
- Depart from iniquity (2 Tim 2: 21)
 - **Separation** from evil (moral, doctrinal, and associations)
 - Impossible without maintenance of church discipline



Unity and Separation – a Paradox?



No – both are divine prerogatives

- **Ezra:**

- The remnant had left the majority of Jews behind, in Babylon
- And yet it was the remnant that expressed the unity of the people in the place of God's choice
 - 12 He-goats (6:17)
 - 12 bullocks (8:35)

- **1 Cor. 10:** the bread which we break:

- on the basis of the membership of the body of Christ
- but in separation from evil.

- **2 Tim. 2**

- The two sides of the seal (2:19)





So let's revisit our Agenda...

1. Why are there so many different 'churches' today?
 - Because the church is in ruin
2. Who is right – and does it matter?
 - God's word is always right – and everyone who follows it
3. Is there a right way to go?
 - Always. God looks for faithfulness in the time of ruin.
4. Separation and unity – a paradox?
 - Not at all: God has made the unity and He enjoins the separation.
5. The place of God's choice – do you know it?
 - Gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus

Session 7: Relationships between Assemblies



Andrew Poots*

Bible Basics Conference

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Note: At the time of going to press slides were not available from the speaker but the convenors trust that the following notes may be of help to some of the Lord's people.

A local meeting/assembly



A local meeting (or assembly, or church) is part of the whole church of God (1.Cor. 1:2).

Local meetings therefore act in harmony with one another as members of the human body work with one another, not against one another.

- Obviously, the body is not composed of assemblies but of individuals – but the individuals who compose the local assemblies are all members of the one body.

‘There is one body’ (Eph. 4:4) and there is one head in heaven

- Christ Himself, who desires to direct the believers and their assemblies according to His thoughts and in harmony with one another.

Expression and Representation



The local assembly is only the expression and representation of the whole church of God:

“Now *ye* are Christ's body, and members in particular.”(1 Cor. 12:27).

- No article before ‘body’ in the Greek text: “ye are body of Christ”
- They were part of it
- They bore its characteristics (unity and diversity)
 - Just as today you might say: “you are English”. That does not mean you are all of them but it means you are part of them and bear their characteristics.

Assembly decisions



When a local assembly takes a decision (say, in discipline or in receiving a believer into fellowship) then this is binding for all other assemblies: ‘what you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven’ (Mt.18:18).

Paul repeats that his instructions to the Corinthians were also binding in all other places (1.Cor.1:2; 4:17; 7:17; 11:16).

	Independence	Unity	Centralism
1. Structure	independent units	body	hierarchy
2. Principle	autonomy of "local assembly"	united action	must comply with HQ ('head quarter')
3. Binding	valid in this particular meeting	valid in all meetings	ratification by HQ (?)
4. Case of a meeting tolerates known evil	autonomy implies: other meetings cannot help as this would be 'interference'	Other meetings care. In case of persistence they must finally separate.	decision by HQ
5. Consequence of point 4.	A "strict" meeting has no possibility to separate from evil! You may find yourself breaking bread in a 3rd meeting with somebody excluded in yours	Separation from evil is possible	depends on decision by HQ



	Independence	Unity	Centralism
6. Case of mistaken action taken by one meeting	No help	Other meetings (prayerfully) work towards restoration	Decision by HQ must be accepted
7. Case of a new meeting starting	A new' independent unit, so what?	seeks fellowship with other meetings that are already meeting on the same principle	recognition by HQ required

What does Scripture say?



Paul's doctrine about the one body (1 Corinthians 12:12,13) the Head of which is Christ (Ephesians 1:22,23, Colossians 1:18) is a blow at the very foundation of centralism (based on the idea of a human head or headquarters) as well as at the idea of many independent local bodies (this would make Christ the head of many bodies.)

The Body is composed of the whole church (all believers on earth. Eph. 1:22, Col. 1:18) and not a company gathered in one place. The latter idea is based on a misunderstanding of 1 Cor. 12:27, see previous slides.

What does Scripture say?



The Lord's words in Matthew 18:18 utterly refute the idea that discipline exercised by a particular meeting should be valid in that particular locality only: "Verily, I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind on the earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever ye shall loose on the earth shall be loose in heaven." The Lord has endowed the "two or three gathered unto His name" (v. 20) with His authority.

If we act against their decision this must imply that we do not recognize this company as gathered unto the Lord's name at all.

Believers who are gathered unto the Lord's name are not infallible; but the Lord has given them His authority.

- If a meeting act wrongly then, if they are truly gathered unto the Lord's name, He will show them where they were mistaken and the error will be corrected.



History: Acts 8

History, interestingly, confirms the practice of unity even **before the doctrine** of the unity of the church **was given**.

- **Acts 8:14-17** shows that Jerusalem was not indifferent towards what happened Samaria.
- A beautiful path of unity is described in this passage.
- When the Apostles in Jerusalem heard that the gospel had been received in Samaria, they did not ignore this and leave these newly converted Christians to themselves.
- Instead, they sent Peter and John to Samaria (v.14).



History: Acts 11

A similar pattern is followed with regard to Antioch (**Acts 11:19-30**).

- The gospel is preached in Antioch.
- A large number turned to the Lord.
- "Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch". They did not even hesitate.
- "In these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch" (v.27). Gifts are for the whole body and, therefore, there is no reason for them to be exercised in one place only.



History: Acts 11

Finally, fellowship between Jerusalem and Antioch is expressed when those in Antioch, having heard of the famine, "determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea, which also they did...".

- Here the (Gentile) believers in Antioch reciprocate spiritual gift received from those (Jewish) believers in Jerusalem by sending relief for their material needs.

Hence:

- Different members of the same body act in harmony
- This is not confined to a single locality but is expressed in the way believers in different localities walk together.



History: Acts 15

Further, **Acts 15** shows how believers from different regions endeavoured to take a united position on doctrinal matters (in this case: the false teaching of "salvation conditional on circumcision"). If local meetings were autonomous there would have been no reason to reach a united conclusion on this matter.

These examples demonstrate the diligence used by the early church to keep the unity of the Spirit "in the uniting bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3) and how the Lord was honoured in this.

Not easy... but worthwhile



Keeping the unity of the Spirit requires humility: it can only be, done "with all lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, bearing with one another 'in love" (Ephesians 4:3).

It is simply much more attractive to the flesh to follow the rule of some human HQ (whose voice may be heard more easily than the Lords, i.e. without having to wait upon the Lord in dependence upon Him), or to declare one's autonomy in order to be free to act as one pleases.

The enemy of our souls wants to substitute any display of unity by a false representation of "the Christ" (1 Cor 12:13).

- Disunity among assemblies results in a distorted representation of the body of Christ.

But worthwhile: when members of the body of Christ act in unity it will be visible that "all the members of the body, being many, are one body" (1 Corinthians 12:12). This will be a testimony to Christ, our Head in heaven.

Session 8: Who can break bread?



Graham Warnes

Bible Basics Conference

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Who can break bread?



I would like to begin with asking another question,
"Who should break bread"

The answer is everybody, because everybody should have responded to the commandment of God in (Act 17 v 31) to repent of there sins and believe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the only way to become a member of the body of Christ. But we live in the real world and we know millions still reject the gospel of our Lord and have no right to partake in the Lord's supper.



Who can break bread?

However there are those who form part of the body of Christ but their walk is not according to the word of God, these we cannot receive.

We have an example of this in 1 Cor.5. Although he was a Christian, born again, and is now with Christ, yet because of his walk (look at vs 10 and 11 of the chapter) he had to be put out of fellowship.

We also read of some who held doctrines about the person and work of the Lord which were contrary to the word of God. In 2 Timothy ch 2 we read about some who denied the resurrection. Paul speaking of them says in 1 Cor 15. "No resurrection, no salvation."

In John's epistle we read that if any come among you or even to your house bringing not the doctrine of Christ we are not to receive them or to even bid them God speed.

Who can break bread?



There are many today who although they are walking according to scripture in their personal lives and are sound in doctrine are not able to break bread because of their associations. Those who deliberately remain in fellowship with those mentioned above, are co-responsible for the evil in it, even though they personally reject the evil itself. They may even be part of a godly and concerned segment within the group who stand against the evil, but this does not lessen their responsibility.

In the Old Testament (e.g. Lev. 7:21; Num.19:1,16; Hag. 2:13) as well as in the New (e.g. 2 Jn. 9,10; 2 Tim. 2:21; 1 Cor. 15:33; 1 Cor. 10: 21; 1 Cor. 5:6; Gal. 5:9) it is clearly taught that association with evil defiles.

Session 9: Assembly authority and its limits

Matthew 18:15-20



Simon Attwood

Bible Basics Conference

Catford, 10 – 11 November 2007



What is assembly authority?

- ‘Authority’ is the right or responsibility *and* power to do something.
- The assembly has the authority to bind or loose, which means to discipline and release from discipline, and agree what should happen on other issues, from the Lord Jesus (Mt. 18:18-19).
- It has this authority from Him on the principle that ‘where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them (Mt. 18:20).

Why are binding and loosing important?



To enable the assembly to deal with sin and disorder so these things do not:

- dishonour God (1 Cor. 5:1),
- spoil the assembly's witness (1 Cor. 5:1, 8),
- defile the fellowship (1 Cor. 5:6; Gal. 5:9),
- leave those who have gone wrong in
- spiritual danger (1 Cor. 5:5).



The honour of God and the assembly's witness

- Paul writes about knowing how to behave in the house of God, '*the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth*' and doing things 'decently and in order' (1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Cor. 14:40).
- Surely no one else in this world can or wants to please God in these ways (1 Pet. 4:17; 2:5, 9).
- In this sense the assembly takes the place the Lord Jesus filled when He was here (1 Tim. 3:16).



Preserving the fellowship and restoring those who go wrong

- If binding does not take place, the sin or disorder will defile the fellowship, and those who go wrong will not realise the seriousness of what they have done (1 Cor. 5:2, 6; 2 Thess. 3:14-15).
- If loosing does not take place when they repent, the assembly will lose the benefit of their fellowship, they will be discouraged and there will be no testimony to the restoring grace of God (2 Cor. 2:6-8, 10-11).

Matthew 18:18-20



- The assembly has the authority to bind and loose, and agree what should happen on other issues, even when it numbers only two or three believers in a place.
- But to exercise it they must be gathered together to the name of the Lord Jesus so He can be in their midst to direct them (Mt. 18:20, 1 Cor. 5:4).
- Their action in doing this is recognised in heaven (Mt. 18:18).

Limits (1)



- If the action of an assembly is recognised in heaven, all local assemblies should be united in recognising it as well. They should not ignore it or try to deal with the issue themselves (Rom. 16:1-2; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 2:10; Gal. 1:21-24).
- The assembly exercises authority *within* (Acts 6; 1 Cor. 5:12-13) not *outside* in the community and country, even if people there profess to be Christians! (Mt. 13:28-29).

Limits (2)



- The assembly should not try to control the exercise of spiritual gifts because the Lord gives and directs these Himself (Eph 4:10-16; 1 Cor. 12:4-6).
- However, there should be a readiness to have fellowship in service and to give and take counsel (Acts 13:2-3; 14:26-27).
- The assembly should discipline those who exercise gifts (and those who exercise oversight locally) if they go wrong (1 Tim. 5:19-20; Gal. 2:11).

Limits (3)



- We do *not* read of assemblies exercising authority over other assemblies. If there is an issue between assemblies they should seek the Lord's mind together (Acts 15:1-2, 4 etc.).
- If a problem in an assembly persists, it may not be possible for other assemblies to continue to have fellowship with the believers there but it would be wise for two or three assemblies that are able to take responsibility for trying to resolve the issue to do so before deciding and announcing this is the case.



Things to bear in mind (1)

We need to be prayerful, careful and humble when we exercise assembly authority because:

- we do so in the name of the Lord Jesus,
- we cannot claim today to be the local assembly in a place (because believers are divided into different groups), only to act on the basis of God's Word and for the whole of His assembly,
- we can make mistakes even though we have the Holy Spirit and God's Word.



Things to bear in mind (2)

- We should all take responsibility for sin or disorder (Dan. 9:5; 1 Cor. 5:2; Rev. 2:14-16)
- We should deal with local issues locally rather than at a distance, but be willing to seek and submit to enquiry and counsel (Deut. 21; 13; Acts 15; 1 Cor. 5; Gal. 5; Acts 20:28).
- We should seek two or three witnesses (Mt. 18:16; 1 Tim. 5:19).
- No one should take assembly authority to himself. The Apostle John censured Diotrephes for doing this (3 Jn. 9-10; 1 Pet. 5:1-5).

So...



Assembly authority exercised according to God's Word:

- honours Him,
- promotes the assembly's witness in this world,
- preserves the fellowship, and
- seeks the restoration of those under discipline.

Session 10: The Use of Old Testament Types

Is it useful to use OT passages to discuss church related issues?



Paul Dronsfield

Bible Basics Conference

Catford, 10 – 11 November 2007

What is a type?



A type gives a figurative illustration of something that goes beyond its own literal meaning. For example the Ark of the Covenant was literally a wooden box covered in pure gold but as a type it speaks of Christ in the lowliness of His manhood and the glory of His deity.

What Scriptural authority do we have for thinking literal Old Testament narratives can be interpreted in a figurative way?

What is a type?



In the New Testament we are taught about the use of types, which are spoken of in different ways:

Figure (corresponding to) Heb. 9:24

Ensample (type, metaphor) 1 Cor. 10:11

Pattern (copy) Heb. 9:23

Shadow (image or outline) Col. 2:17

Allegory (figurative illustration of principle) Gal. 4:24

How can a type be understood?



To perceive the meaning, or indeed even the existence of a type we must be in possession of the antitype.

Just as a shadow can only be discerned when light strikes the object that casts the shadow so the foreshadowing types can only be seen when the light of Gods' Word illuminates Christ in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

....meat ...drink....an holyday.....new moon.....Sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come: but the body (substance) is of Christ.

Col. 2:16 &17



Why are types used in Scripture?

Types illustrate scriptural doctrines helping us to understand them more fully.

Gen. 28:18 & 19 1 Tim. 3:15

Scriptural principles are illustrated in types giving us a practical application of them.

Gal. 4:23 & 24 1Cor. 10:1-6

Types demonstrate to us the unity of the Word of God and the eternal and abiding character of His purpose.

Rom. 15:4

Session 11: The Hope of the Church



Ernie Brown

Bible Basics Conference

Catford, 10 – 11 November 2007

A Second Coming implies a First Coming

It implies He has come before



Hebrews 9 v 26 – 28 once → the second time!

The Second Coming of Christ is therefore a scriptural subject. But, we must distinguish things that differ. We must not confound:

- 1) The Rapture – His Coming for His saints → JOY (1 Thess. 4 v 15 – 18)
- 2) The Appearing – His Coming with His saints → JUDGMENT (Jude 14, 15)

NB The Rapture v The Appearing

- The Rapture is entirely a matter of Privilege.
- The Appearing is related to our Responsibility.
- The Rapture will take place in the air.
- The Appearing will be manifest on earth.
- The Rapture will be effected by the Lord personally
- The Judgments beginning at the Appearing will involve the angels, instrumentally.

We must distinguish things that differ



The Appearing stands connected with the whole scheme of prophecy.

The Rapture stands apart, unrelated to the scheme of Old Testament prophecy, except that God's prophetic clock will not resume ticking until The Rapture takes place.

At The Rapture: one taken – for (heavenly, eternal) blessing; one left – (potentially) for judgment.

At The Appearing, one taken – for judgment, one left – (potentially) for (earthly, millennial) blessing. (Matthew 24 v 40, 41).

The Rapture



The Rapture will be:

1) Positive - No presumption to receive and believe what the Bible says. It is rather unbelief if we do not!

- 1 Corinthians 15 v 51 by revelation
- 1 Thessalonians 4 v 15 – 17 by the word of the Lord

2) Permanent- once with Him, no separation

John 14 v 3

1 Thessalonians 4 v 17

3) Plenary - 1 Corinthians 15 v 23, 51 – 52

1 Thessalonians 4 v 17

NB See Revelation 20 v 4 – 6



- 4) Personal - John 14 v 3
Philippians 3 v 20
1 Thessalonians 1 v 10
1 Thessalonians 4 v 16
1 Timothy 1 v 1

- 5) Private - (cf/ct Appearing – Public)
John 14 v 19
Ephesians 5 v 27
1 Thessalonians 4 v 17
Jude 24

- 6) For the Pleasure of Christ
Cf/ct Rapture v Appearing

Gratification v Glory
Joy v Judgment
John 14 v 3
Ephesians 5 v 27
Hebrews 12 v 2
Jude 24



7) Pure grace and mercy

From start (Titus 3 v 5) to Finish (Jude 21) it is all of Christ.

Titus 2 v 11 – 13

Jude 21

- 8) Prestissimo 1 Corinthians 15 v 52 (Instantaneous)
1 Thessalonians 4 v 17 (twinkling, not blinking)
(Raptor)

- 9) Pre-millennial 2 Thessalonians 2 v 5 – 8
Revelation 3 v 10



10) Perhaps today
(Prochain?)

The Place is prepared

John 14 v 3

We wait
We look

1 Thessalonians 1 v 9 –
Philippians 3 v 20

We listen

1 Thessalonians 4 v 16

I

In like manner (perhaps today? Acts 1 v 11

Even so

Revelation 22 v 20

11) Prompt

Mark 13 v 32

Hebrews 10 v 37

We must distinguish things that differ

The Rapture stands apart, unrelated to the scheme of Old Testament prophecy, except that God's prophetic clock will not resume ticking until The Rapture takes place.

The Appearing stands connected with the whole scheme of prophecy.

'The Appearing'



The grand focal point of much of Bible prophecy is that climactic event which scripture terms:

The Nation of Israel, because of their individual and national idolatry and rebellion against God, forfeited their place at the head of the Nations, and have, since then, been dominated by one Gentile Nation after another. The Lord Jesus referred to this period as 'The Times of the Gentiles' (Luke 21 v 24).

After the Rapture, there will commence a period of approximately and at least seven years, during the second half of which a time of unprecedented trouble and tribulation will be suffered by the Jews.

Towards the end of that 'Time of Jacob's Trouble' (Jeremiah 30 v 7) things will seem to be at their blackest for the Jews. They will be buffeted from every direction. There will be few (but some) who seem inclined to help them (Matthew 25 v 31 – 40).

Then, when all seems lost, when all hope of deliverance seems to be gone:

CHRIST WILL APPEAR



Read: Matthew 24 v 27 – 31

Revelation 19 v 9, 11 – 16

20 v 4 – 6

The Appearing will have the following aspects:

1) Rest/Relief- Deliverance from enemies

Comfort in difficulty

Matthew 24 v 27 – 31

2 Thessalonians 1 v 7 – 10

1 Peter 1 v 6 – 7

Revelation 2 v 10



2) Retribution- Judgment on enemies

Matthew 24 v 27 – 31, 40 – 41.

1 Thessalonians 5 v 1 – 3

2 Thessalonians 1 v 7 – 10

Jude 14 – 15

3) Recompense - The only proper answer to rejection, anguish and suffering.

2 Timothy 4 v 8

Titus 2 v 11 – 13

Hebrews 9 v 28

Revelation 14 v 14 (cf/ct Matthew 8 v 20)



4) Revelation - Everything seen in proper perspective – in its true colours

Luke 19 v 11

2 Thessalonians 2 v 6 – 8

1 John 2 v 28

Revelation 1 v 7

5) Relationship - Association with Christ

1 Corinthians 15 v 22 – 33

Colossians 3 v 1 – 4

1 Thessalonians 3 v 13, 4 v 14.

Jude 14



6) Rewards - Rewards made manifest

Trophies displayed

Crowns:

1 Corinthians 9 v 25 Incorruptible

1 Thessalonians 2 v 19 Joy

2 Timothy 4 v 8 Righteousness

1 Peter 5 v 4 Glory

Revelation 2 v 10 Life

Revelation 4 v 4 Gold

But: Revelation 4 v 10 → Revelation 14 v 14



7) Regulator of Present Conduct

1 Timothy 6 v 14

2 Timothy 1 v 10

2 Timothy 4 v 1 – 2, 6 – 8.

1 John 3 v 1 – 3.

Remember: The Rapture v The Appearing

The Rapture is entirely a matter of Privilege

The Appearing is related to our Responsibility.

‘Every man that hath this hope in Him (Christ) purifieth himself (the believer), even as He (Christ) is pure (1 John 3 v 3).

Recommended Books



Of course, the best book to read is the Bible! However, the following will be found to be very useful for further reading on the various subjects covered during the Bible Basics Conference. The list is not intended to be exhaustive but these books can generally be recommended for their Scriptural approach and content. Don't forget to take advantage of the special offers available on these and many others at the Conference.

- *Church of the Living God, The* by R K Campbell
- *God's Order* by B Anstey
- *Are You a Member and of What?* by George Cutting
- *What is a Meeting of the Assembly?* By H L Rossier
- *All About Speaking in Tongues* by F Legrand
- *Office, Gift, and Priesthood* by A J Pollock
- *Assembly Relationships* by R K Campbell



Recommended Books

- *Beginning With Christ* by H L Heijkoop
- *Unity and Authority* by W R Dronsfield
- *Christ as Seen in the Offerings* by R F Kingscote
- *Hopes of the Church, The* by J N Darby
- *Lord's Coming, The* by C H Mackintosh
- *[New and] Concise Bible Dictionary* compiled by George Morrish (although no longer 'New', this is still the best Bible Dictionary available!)

For a wide range of free online books and articles please see:

- http://www.biblecentre.org/topics/tpc_church.htm



Thank you!

www.biblecentre.org

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