



Session 44

Topic

Authority of the Church - Part 1

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SESSION FORTY-FOUR
STUDENT NOTES





The Authority and Jurisdiction of The Local Church

Acts 2:41-47; 8:1-4; 11:19-22

Here in these verses we see the church at Jerusalem burst forth with a great light for the Gospel (**Acts 2**); then we see the church in Jerusalem dispersed at the persecution with the immediate result of the Gospel bursting forth into S_____, which was according to what the Lord Jesus said would happen when on the Mt Olives just before He ascended (The verses relating to Samaria are -**Acts 8:1-4**),

Then, we see the progression of the Gospel going as far as Antioch which was then the sending church of Paul to go to the Gentiles - that is, the beginning of the third stage (**Acts 11**).

Now, in the scope of what we will look at today, we can see interwoven in all of it basically all the subjects that I have to cover, being - The authority for the G_____ C_____ which in turn encapsulates **missions and outreach, ordaining of men for the ministry and sending missionaries, and establishing new churches** in the places the missionaries are sent.

Also within the scope of our subject today we will see in respect of the authority of the local church, its responsibility for **the spiritual nourishment of the believers, for the wellbeing of its own members**, as well as for **other believers elsewhere (as possible), talking of literal physical help**.

So, first of all in **Acts 2**, did the apostles just use their own wisdom and abilities to oversee the establishment of this church that grew exponentially from the day of Pentecost onwards? No, of course not!

So, let us look at how this church was well organised, and why the apostles successfully oversaw its establishment both there in Jerusalem, and onwards as the G_____ C_____ progressed.

We see here the first local church of the New Testament, being the church in J_____ with the leadership leading the growth & establishment of the believers and thereby the establishment of the church proper as we see in **Acts 2:41-47 (Acts 2:42- apostles teaching. See Luke 6:13** - important to grasp this aspect, and we will look at this as we progress through this lesson).

Next, with the work the Lord used Philip to start in Samaria which was stage two of the Great Commission (**Acts 8**), we see the two leading apostles in the church in Jerusalem being sent to establish these new believers & put in order the work. (Acts 8:14-25).

The two sent were the leading apostles - P_____, appointed as the apostle to the Jews as we see in **John 21:15-17, Romans 15:8 & Galatians 2:7-8 (READ)**;

and John the beloved apostle (**John 13:21-26 - READ**) who was always the ministry partner with Peter during the Lord's earthly ministry. (**See Luke 22:7-8** - Peter & John sent to prepare for the Last Supper).

And as we have seen in John 13 above, John was the closest apostle to the Lord Jesus, and he was the only one not martyred from the twelve. He had a special part to play later on that century to record (apart from the Gospel of John & his three epistles), the R_____ .



SHINING LIGHT INDEPENDENT BAPTIST CHURCH

Next, in **Acts 11**, in respect of the third stage of the Great Commission, we see in **verse 19**, that the word went as far as Cyprus, Phenice, and Antioch, so churches were being established as the the third stage of the Gospel went out, with A_____ (as mentioned) ultimately being the sending church for Paul going out to the Gentiles.

In **Acts 11:22**, we again see the church in Jerusalem send someone (Barnabas) to Antioch, to set things in order for the church there. Look at **Acts 11:22-26**, and we see Paul (originally Saul) comes into the picture.

—> **What are we seeing here in these verses in relation to Samaria and Antioch?** We are seeing authority & the right use of that authority in relation to the Great Commission and to missions & outreach.

So, we have looked at these things so far to understand there was proper structure as the Gospel went out to these places despite the reason for the believers being spread to these places because of the persecution that had arisen through Saul (Paul) before his conversion.

1 Corinthians 14:40 reads, “Let all things be done decently and in order.”, and they were despite the manner in which the thousands of believers were dispersed from the first local church of Jerusalem.

Things must indeed be done decently and in order, or else it results in disorder!...

And though the second and third stages of the Great Commission came to be because of the persecution forcing the believers in the church at J_____ to flee going as far as A_____ we can see in each of these stages the authority of the church at Jerusalem in respect of missions, by sending first Peter & John to Samaria to set things in order, and then Barnabas to Antioch to do likewise.

They were not being control freaks, but considering the people that God used to start churches in these places were from the local church in Jerusalem, but fled due to the p_____, there was naturally the need for the church at Jerusalem to be active in the establishment of these new local churches as well as the spiritual wellbeing of these new churches started by their “own people”.

If you think about it, that is within the boundaries of one of our points today in respect of the spiritual wellbeing of our own members.

Now, let us go back a bit and consider the church at Jerusalem. It was the first local church of the New Testament. How did the apostles in the first instance know what to do from the day of Pentecost onwards, and what authority they had to do these things?

Well, the ultimate purpose of the Lord Jesus' earthly ministry, was to be the one perfect s_____ for our sins that we may have eternal life.

However, The Lord Jesus also did all the ground work for the establishment of local churches, their structure, and the authority therein during His earthly ministry, including **giving the apostles/the ministers** the pattern for the L_____’s S_____ the night He was betrayed **Luke 22:14-20 (READ)** - note the words “...after supper...” in verse 20. Also, 1 Corinthians 11:23-28 - Paul the apostle to the Gentiles.

We have have seen so far today the **end result** of looking at what the Lord Jesus had put in place as we looked at **Acts 2, Acts 8, & Acts 11**.



SHINING LIGHT INDEPENDENT BAPTIST CHURCH

Therefore let's look at how the Lord did indeed establish the apostles to take this new work forward from the day of Pentecost and on by setting things in order in the church in Jerusalem, then with Samaria and Antioch, and that pattern of the jurisdiction and authority of the Local Church has been passed on down through the centuries.

We can see in **Acts 2:41** that there was about 3,000 saved on the day of Pentecost, and thereby added to the church. We can also see in **Verse 47**, that people were saved daily and added to the church.

Now, the church at Jerusalem flourished with many thousands in it by the time of the persecution. Apart from what we have seen in **Acts 2:41-47** (i.e. the approximately 3000 saved on the day of Pentecost, and others added daily), we can see for example in **Acts 4:4**, that the number of men saved on that occasion was about 5,000 due to the lame man being healed in **Acts 3**.

So, there was obviously a need for a proper structure in the early church at Jerusalem, with all these new believers, or it would have been simply a mess, and as quoted earlier - **1 Corinthians 14:40**, "Let all things be done decently and in order."

Let us move on to consider how the Lord Jesus "set things up" during His earthly ministry, so that things would be done decently and in order.

This is the important thing to observe in respect of the structure and authority of the Local Church, as the Lord Jesus put it in place - it was not the opinion or views of man in respect of authority (& structure).

Therefore, we are not going to get down to the "nitty gritty" of this subject for the simple reason that on ground level in the individual churches, we have various situations like for example, churches without pastors, of which there is a considerable number.

So, with that in mind let us look at this from a broad view in the Scriptures rather than from as I said, looking at it from the point of view of the "nitty gritty".

The Lord Jesus started to put in place the structure of the local church in reality by establishing a leadership when He called the disciples to follow Him.

Point One: For the structure and authority to be after the way the Lord would have them the church to be, it should be a leadership that God has called.

a). Matthew 4:18-22 (Read). Here we see The Lord starting to choose the future leadership for the work of the Gospel.

Note: The Lord said, "...Follow me, and **I will make you** fishers of men." That is, He trained them over the next 3 1/2 years for the ministry to follow after He had ascended back to heaven so they would know how to lead.

We will focus just on the twelve for the purpose of what we are looking at today. I realise that we can see for example, that He appointed and sent out seventy others two by two in **Luke 10:1**, because the "... harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few:..." **Luke 10:2**