

1. **The Scripture does not speak of business meetings, but it does speak of conducting business at meetings.**
 - a. **Congregational or at least representative vote**
2. **There are no other meetings that “conduct Heaven’s business.”**
 - a. **At least, there are no other entities that conduct Heaven’s business.**
 - b. **If determining who belongs in Heaven is voted on and revered...**
3. **Since there is no distinction between worship and business meetings in the New Testament, our business meetings better have worship therein.**

18:15-17

Moreover another clue that we are in the very same context! Instead of me “offending a little one” (preceding context), now it is a “little one” offending me! **if thy brother shall trespass against thee**, “if He breaks God’s law in how he deals with you.” **go and tell him** this is not about cornering or strong-arming; it is about reconciliation—or else why do we want the offender to “hear.”

his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. 16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. Deuteronomy 19 gives this precedence, and it demonstrates that this action is to give fear to those observing. **17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church,** This is probably not a 3-step method, but rather drives home the point of escalating accountability ultimately ending at dismissal.¹ The intent of Jesus is to ultimately restore, as discreetly as possible, one who fears for their salvation. **let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.** There are two clues here that the church is not intended for the unbeliever. First, it supposes that if there is a problem within the church, it is with a “brother.” This would certainly be a believer. Secondly, if one is to be treated as a “heathen and a publican,” heathens and publicans are not typically a part of this church/assembly. An unbeliever, then, should not feel “welcomed” in the church. This is not about simply voting rights, this is about feeling welcomed or not. This is not just about membership. This is about anybody who “identifies” as a part of a particular “church.”

Furthermore, if you are treated as **a heathen and a publican**, you should assume that you are, in fact, **a heathen**, and that you are not saved. No **heathen** should therefore feel welcome at any “church,” but rather the “church” corporate (all assemblies) should respect the authority of the local assembly/church which dismissed the **heathen**. By the way, this process here would preclude the need for law suits and would empower pastors to work with their respective members if they catch wind of law suits taking place between their members.

Churches, then, should not feel “welcomed” in that they should not feel like it is designed for them. Think with me for a minute. If you have a person to your home and you decide to cook them a meal. Let’s say they have children. Are the children “unwelcomed” in your home? No, but it is understood that the children by themselves would not have been invited. The meal was intended for the parents. Is the meal designed for the child? No.

It is the same way church is to be designed. For whom is the worship of God designed? His people. For whom is the meal of the Word of God prepared? God’s people. Over whom do

¹Jesus’ intent is not formulaic, but rather progress. Otherwise, do women get to take part (after all, 1 Corinthians 7 speaks of either a father or a husband having a part in the accountability of a lady, so also does Moses’ law)? Is 4 witnesses too much? How much time is required between steps?

the shepherds of the flock watch? The sheep of His pasture. Who do we, the pastors, care for? The flock; the church; the people who comprise Berean Baptist.

There is evidence that unbelievers will naturally join the church:

1 Corinthians 14:18 I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: 19 Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. 20 Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men. 21 In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. 22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. 23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? 24 But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: 25 And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

Let it be observed, then, that it is believers acting like believers as if it is only believers which convinces the unbeliever He must be a worshipper of their God. The gifts and the assembly are designed for the believer. The unbeliever should not feel like they are “a part” of things at “First Church of Corinth.” Let your unbelieving friend hear the Gospel in other places, but do not feel like your pastor is the only evangelist. Remember, that unbeliever will feel out of place. The church is simply not designed for them...and that’s the point of church membership. They are treated as **heathen and publicans** because that’s what they probably are.

and a publican Imagine the **publican** who wrote this smiling as he realized that since this passage had a main concern of repentance, Jesus wanted His church to have those who were as far gone as him!

let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Jesus just said that in the church you don’t have people that cause dissension without accountability, and if you have them, well then, they have got to go. If they won’t repent, you have to assume they’re lost and send them on their way. Well, this does seem somewhat of a contradiction. It is a paradox in any case. It appears to be a contradiction of Matthew 13 where He deals with:

*24 The kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field. 25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. 26. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. 27. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, “Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? From whence then hath it tares?” 28. He said unto them, “An enemy hath done this.” The servants said unto him, “**Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?**”*

I would say that right there you have the basic difference between these two passages. We’re supposed to leave the tare alone until the harvest. Ok, that means that we’re not supposed to be

having this sort of theocratic thing where, like Calvin says, the civil law is supposed to bear the sword and get rid of all those who will not be a part of the kingdom. So the kingdom is like this: its expanse, its jurisdiction is worldwide. That's true. But it is to be done specifically, according to God's will, in the church and there's supposed to be a moderate level of toleration in the world, of which the church is not a part, strictly speaking.

So the difference? In one passage the disciples are not allowed to get rid of the tares and in the other passage the disciples are commanded to get rid of those people that are obviously unconverted. They are supposed to be treated **as heathen and publicans**. I just wanted you to see very clearly that these are two different situations. We are not supposed to go out into the world and try to purge it of all unbelievers, but we are supposed to do so in the church.

18:18

“Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Twice in three chapters (16:19 also)—both of which are in the context of the “church.” We don't have to be totally clear on what this means to know that the same stuff is happening in both places in answer to the Lord's prayer (Matthew 6).

18:19-20

“Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three as witnesses as seen in verse 16.² These are meeting to conduct business with Jesus. We are talking about “getting rid” or “heathen” and “publicans.” **are gathered together** for discipline, in the context. **in My name, I am there in the midst of them.**” Jesus is saying that “whatever you do down here, I am doing in Heaven.” So, since we see that the church is made up of believers seeking to expel the unbeliever, we know that our churches should not seek to be “seeker sensitive.”

Furthermore, if there is any place where we believers should be counted on to have Heaven's will done, it should be in the church...a home for believers, and not for “heathen or publicans.”

¹ [1 John 3:22; 5:14]

²The O.T. was much easier. You merely died whereas in the New Testament the action by “two or three witnesses” indicates that you belong in Hell.