

8. **Local Churches** They are not district, statewide, or regional churches. They exist in and serve a localized geographical area. Biblical example: (1 Cor 1:1-2) “*Paul ---- unto the _____ of _____ which is at Corinth.*” Each local church is autonomous (ie: self-governing) under Christ. Why? No local church in the NT is granted jurisdiction outside of its own internal affairs.
9. **How Local Churches Began** Jesus said (Lk 24:47) that “*repentance and _____ of _____ should be preached in _____ among all nations, beginning _____.*” It happened! In (Acts 2) we are given all the details. Jews from all over the Roman Empire were there and (V41) “*the _____ day there were added unto them about _____ thousand souls.*” They returned home and founded local churches. Later (8:4), due to localized persecution, “*they that were _____ abroad went every where _____ the word.*”
10. **What Is A Scripturally Organized Church?** Within a relatively short time after their establishment Barnabas and Paul (Acts 14:23) “*ordained them _____ in _____ church.*” These were the churches they visited on their first evangelistic tour. Paul wrote Titus, who was in Crete, to “*set _____ the things that are _____, and ordain _____ in _____ city.*” The word for elders is *plural* meaning there was to be more than one. We suggest that you carefully study TPBS Lessons No. 42-45 on Elders, especially No 42 on Is Perpetual Existence Without Elders Scriptural? No local church is complete without elders who are (Acts 20:28) “*overseers, to _____ the church of God.*” Only the “local church” has such organizational structure.
11. **More** A good word picture of the excellent Phillipian Church is found in Paul’s salutation: (1:1) “*To all the _____ in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the _____ and _____.*” Count the blanks. We have saints who are _____, bishops, which is another name for _____, and deacons, who work under the supervision of the elders and are best described as “servants” who assist the elders with the Lord’s work.
12. **More On Local Autonomy** The elders are to (Heb 13:7, 17) “*_____ over*” the local church but not to (1 Pet 5:3) be “*lords over _____ heritage.*” These “shepherds” (V2) to take “*the _____ thereof, _____ by _____, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a _____ mind.*” Never in the NT do we find the elders of one church “ruling over” or “overseeing” another congregation, rather (V3) “*being _____ to the flock*” – meaning their local body. This eliminates “man instituted” ties of local churches to area associations, state conventions, national headquarters, etc. Our membership is in heaven, our inheritance (1 Pet 1:4) is “*_____ in heaven.*”
13. **Christianity Is A Vocation Of Choice** Jesus said: (Lk 12:7) “*Even the very _____ of your head are _____ numbered.*” God is omniscient (ie: all-knowing) and is aware of what man will choose to do even before that man is born. Yet, (1 Pet 3:9) “*The Lord*” is “*not _____ that any should _____.*” It’s up to every person to (Eph 4:1) “*walk _____ of the vocation wherewith ye are _____*” and (Phil 2:12) “*_____ your _____ salvation with fear and trembling.*” (Deut 30:19) “*Choose _____, that both _____ and _____ may live.*”
14. **More On Choices** One may choose secularism over God, to be a lukewarm religionist, or (Rom 12:11) to be “*_____ in spirit; _____ the Lord.*” Don’t kid yourself, if there are other Christians of (2 Pet 1:1) “*like _____ faith*” anywhere near you, it is your duty to heed the command: (Heb 10:25) “*Not forsaking the _____ of ourselves _____.*” The local church is neither irrelevant nor optional. We need (1 Thess 5:11) to “*_____ yourselves together, and _____ one another*” and follow the apostolic example: (Acts 20:7) “*Upon the _____ of the week---the disciples _____ to break bread.*”
15. **Summation** The NT church, over which Christ reigns as King, is universal, headquartered in heaven, and comprised of every saved believer. The local church is the scriptural organization of Christians for their work, worship, and devotion to God. One little verse says it all: (Eph 3:21) “*Unto him be _____ in the church by Christ Jesus throughout _____, world without end. Amen.*”