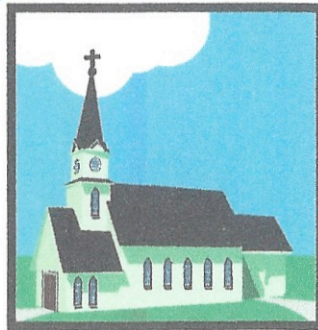


What is The Church?



BIBLE DOCTRINE STUDIES #8



By J. PAUL RENO

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

Bible Doctrine Studies #8

By

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Published by

Blessed Hope Publishers

Hagerstown, Md.

All Scripture quotations in this book are taken
from the *King James Version* of the Bible.

WHAT IS THE CHALLENGE?

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What is The Church?

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I. Universal and Local

- ~ Two concepts are found in the Scriptures. The emphasis Biblically is heavily weighted towards the “local” concept. – The word “church” is often misused.

Eph. 1:22, 23

1. Jesus is the head of the Church.
2. Jesus is the head over “*all things*” to the Church – in all areas, functions, plans, goals, principles, methods, decisions, motives, etc.
3. The Church is Christ’s body here on earth.
4. The Church is to fully do Christ’s work on earth as instructed by Jesus, the Head.
5. This pictures the Church in its large view.

I Thess. 1:1

1. This refers to a specific group in a local area made up of specific people.
2. They were the receivers of this book.

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3. Other such churches were addressed:

Rom. 1:7

Phil. 1:1

I Cor. 1:2

Col. 1:2

II Cor. 1:1

II Thess. 1:1

Eph. 1:1

4. Saved people (saints) were gathered together to function as a unit called a church.

Gal. 1:2

1. This refers to more than one church – “*churches*” – thus specific groups throughout a region.

2. **Rev. 1:4** – The book of Revelation was sent to seven different churches in seven different cities (**2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14**).

3. Each church was distinct from the others with specific traits, problems, etc.

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Acts 15:13-18

1. God designed to visit the Gentiles and “**take out**” a people.
2. God knew all of His actions well ahead of time – “**from the beginning**”.

Acts 16:5

1. Churches are to be “**established in the faith**”.
2. They are also to be “**increased in number daily**”.
3. This was the result of being ministered to.

Matt. 16:13-18

1. This is the first mention of the word “**church**” in the Bible.
2. The Church belongs to Jesus – “**My Church**”.
3. The Church is built by Jesus. Anything built by man cannot be a church.

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4. The “*gates of Hell*” can never prevail against the Church.
5. Jesus will build His Church on “*this rock*”.
 - a) Not Peter – he was only a stone.
 - b) Not verbal agreement to right doctrine (7:22, 23).
 - c) Involved divine revelation of the person of Christ (vss. 16, 17 & 11:25-27).

Matt. 18:15-17

1. The local church is a place for hearing of disputes, coming to conclusions, and passing judgments in discipline.
2. This even covers the area of faults and trespassing.

Eph. 5:22-33

1. Marriage is a picture of the relationship of Christ and His Church.

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2. This passage deals primarily with Christ and the Church (**vs. 32**)!
3. Disruption of the marriage relationship mars the picture of the Church.
4. The wife is to picture the Church in ...
 - a) Her submission (**vs. 22**).
 - b) Not being the head (**vs. 23**).
 - c) Being saved (**vs. 23**).
 - d) Her subjection (**vs. 24**).
 - e) Recipient of love (**vs. 25**).
 - f) Being sanctified and cleansed (**vs. 26**).
 - g) Being holy and without blemish (**vs. 27**).
 - h) Being joined permanently as one to her husband (**vs. 31**).
 - i) Reverencing her husband (**vs. 32**).

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Eph. 3:3-11

1. The Church with Gentile members "*was not known*" (vs. 5) in previous ages.
2. Now the mystery of the Church is to be revealed not only to mankind (vs. 5), but also to principalities and powers (vs. 10).
3. The Church is to illustrate the great wisdom of God.

I Cor. 12:12, 13

1. We are baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Church.
2. We are individual members with individual ministries, yet one body joined together under Jesus.

I Cor. 12:27-31

1. God has chosen the area of function for each member, and the importance or priority of that function.

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2. No one is able to fill all of the functions and no one function is held by all.
3. We need each other for the Church to function properly (**Rom. 12:4, 5**).

Col. 1:13-18

1. Jesus is to have the pre-eminence in the Church, – not man, men, leaders, committees, doctrine, building, tradition, program, etc.
2. Jesus is to be the focus, message, concern, delight, and the passion of the Church.

II. Purpose and Function

Eph. 2:19-22

1. Not only are we individually indwelt by the Holy Spirit (**I Cor. 6:19, 20**), but we are to be jointly as a church inhabited by God through the Holy Spirit.

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2. Jesus is the Chief Corner Stone of His Church.
3. We are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.
4. We are not randomly thrown together but ***“fitly framed together”*** by God.
5. We are to grow in holiness both individually and corporately into a temple in the Lord.

Eph. 3:7-10

1. The Church is the receiver of God’s minister(s), and to benefit from their preaching.
2. The Church is to operate according to the eternal purpose of God as seen in Christ Jesus our Lord.
3. God’s (many-sided) wisdom is put on display before an onlooking world of humanity and angelic beings. It is seen in the Biblically functioning Church!

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Eph. 3:20, 21

1. The Church is to display the glory of God for all to see.
2. God answers Church prayer beyond what we ask or think that there might be glory in the Church.
3. This glory is produced by Jesus in the Church.
4. This glory should be constant through all ages and circumstances, and never end!

Eph. 4:7-16

1. (**vs. 11**). Jesus assigns ministers to churches as gifts. They are not deserved, earned, nor to be taken for granted.
2. Churches should not choose a minister but seek to find Christ's gift to them if and when a need arises. It would be a devastating event to lose, abuse, or send away Christ's gift and replace him with a

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non-given professional or amateur who wasn't God's choice.

3. Different ministers have different ministries and are not to be compared or contrasted with each other.
4. **(vs. 12)**. The function of the minister is ...
 - a) To bring the saints into conformity to the Bible,
 - b) To develop the saints so that they can minister to a lost world,
 - c) To instruct and strengthen the Church.
5. It is not the duty of the minister to reach the world, but rather to work with the Church. The Church is to reach the world. (Shepherds work with sheep and sheep have lambs).
6. **(vs. 13)**. The minister's work is to continue in the church until ...
 - a) The whole Church is in unity of "***the faith***".

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- b) The whole Church has a full knowledge of Jesus in all His aspects.
 - c) The whole Church is made up of holy people.
 - d) The whole Church measures up to being fully conformed into the image of Jesus.
7. (**vs. 14**) The minister labors in the Church and the people follow so that they might reach a place of doctrinal stability. They become so instructed that no one can manipulate, deceive, or pull them from the truth.
8. (**vs. 16**) The Church so develops that it ...
- a) Stays "***joined together***" in a fit way.
 - b) Increases in members.
 - c) Edifies itself in love.

I Cor. 12:28

- 1. God knows what each Church needs in ministry and who is to be placed where.

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2. God sets people in the Church according to His wisdom.
3. He only gives a church "*some*", not all.

Acts 20:28

1. God's Church was purchased with His blood (blood of deity).
2. The "*elders of the Church*" (vs. 17) were to feed the flock.
3. The Holy Ghost had made these elders "overseers" over the Church.
4. The Church is never to be over the elders.

Acts 16:5

1. The churches were first to be established in the faith.
2. After establishing of the Church, then comes the increasing in number ... possibly even on a daily basis.

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Acts 2:41

1. Entrance into the local Church requires:
 - a) Hearing the word.
 - b) Gladly receiving the Word.
 - c) Scriptural baptism.
 - d) Uniting with the Church.
2. (**vs. 42**) This will be followed by:
 - a) Continuing steadfastly in right doctrine and fellowship.
 - b) Bonding and visiting with each other (**vss. 42, 44-46**).
 - c) Continuing steadfastly in a life of prayer.

Acts 2:47

1. The Church should constantly praise God.
2. The lives of its members should be above reproach and find favor with all.
3. Additions to the Church will be based on their faithfulness.

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Eph. 5:21-23

1. The Church should have a fear of God.
2. The members of the Church must learn to submit to each other.

II Cor. 11:2

1. The Church is to be as a chaste virgin.
2. The Church is already espoused to Jesus.
3. Paul exercised a "**godly jealousy**" over the Church at Corinth to keep her pure. This pattern should be followed by all who love Jesus.
4. Impurity in the espousal relationship was reason for either a public stoning or a private being put away (**Matt. 1:19**).

Acts 12:5

1. The Church must recognize the great power of prayer.
2. In time of stress, the Church turned to

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prayer and succeeded. They bypassed the lesser matters of petitions, politics, lawyers, marches, protests, organizations, publishing, complaining, etc.

3. **(Col. 4:2-4)** Prayer can open doors for speaking, helps us make the mystery of Christ known, and be able to speak as we should.
4. **(II Thess. 3:1)** Prayer gives the Word of God freedom to operate in hearts and be glorified in others as it is in us.
5. **(Rom.15:30,31)**Prayer can bring deliverance from unbelieving persecutors and acceptance of service. Believers must put efforts into striving together in prayer.
6. **(II Cor. 1:11)** Prayer as a church is a means of helping God's servants when they are in desperate situations (**vss. 9 & 10**).
7. A church will only make progress as it makes it in prayer on their knees.

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Eph. 6:18, 19

1. Prayer is the basis of the spiritual warfare (10-17).
2. Prayer is to be constant (always), in all areas, and with supplication "*in the Spirit*".
3. Prayer for all saints by the Church is to be normal.
4. Prayer makes possible right speaking, boldness, and the ability to make clearly known the mystery of the Gospel.

Phil. 1:9, 10

1. Prayer produces increased love, knowledge, and judgment.
2. Sincerity and being inoffensive come from right praying.

Phil. 1:19

1. Paul expected deliverance from suffering through the prayers of the Church.

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2. Prayer can and should be mixed with the work of the Holy Spirit. The Church is the mixing place.

I Cor. 6:1-5

1. The Church is the place where believers can have their differences settled.
2. Saints will one day judge angels. Issues of human matters are far simpler and should be able to be handled easily in the Church.

Phil. 4:10-19

1. The Church is to corporately support missionaries in their labors.
2. The Church, and thus its members, receives credit for supported missionaries' fruit. It is recorded on their account.
3. The Church that sacrifices (**vs. 18**) for missionaries receives special promises:
 - a) (**vs. 13**) Strength to do all things.

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b) (vs. 19) Supplies to meet our needs.

Acts 13:1-5

1. The Church was the location from which the first missionaries were selected.
2. The Church was informed by the Holy Ghost whom they should send.
3. The missionaries had first proved their usefulness and had gained experience in the local Church.
4. The sending of the missionaries (including the commissioning) was accomplished by the Church.

Matt. 9:37, 38

1. Jesus taught that prayer affects the production and sending of laborers.
2. There is a difference between laborers and volunteers, novices, etc. Laborers are experienced, active, capable, productive,

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etc. The Church is the preparation place for laborers.

I Tim. 3:5

1. Pastors are to care for the Church of God as they rule their own houses.
2. Rebels against pastoral authority are like rebellious children in the home.

I Tim. 3:14, 15

1. The Church is God's house – not the building, but the people.
2. The Church is owned by and controlled by a God who is very much alive.
3. It is essential to know how to behave in the membership of the Church.
4. The Church is God's custodian/proclaimer of Truth to this sinful generation.

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Heb. 2:11, 12

1. Jesus has a special relation with the people of His Church(es) – He calls us “**brethren**”.
2. Jesus joins with the Church in its worship and sings with us to praise God the Father!
This would have to be a local Church!

James 2:1-9

1. The Church is not to judge individuals based on their person, wealth, jewelry, clothing, etc.
2. The assembly is where all believers are equal before God. We are to set apart those distinctions and prejudices found out in the world.

III. Church Discipline

- ~ This is corrective discipline, not formative discipline. Different problems are to be dealt with differently. There is no one way

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to deal with all different problems. There is a great variety of offences and ways of handling each.

Matt. 18:15-17

1. Trespass is a "***fault***", not a sin.
Faults are to be confessed to others (**James 5:16**), while sins are confessed to God (**I John 1:9**).
2. The trespass is a breaking over that is personally offensive and serious.
3. The 'fault' is to be approached on an individual basis by the offended party, OR the offender may approach the offended party and confess his fault asking for prayer (**James 5:16**). Consider (**Rom. 15:1 and Gal. 6:1, 2**).
4. If the offender refuses to face his fault, further steps are outlined to deal with their stubbornness (**I John 1:8 and I Tim. 6:4**).

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5. Often, dealing with a fault uncovers deeper and more serious issues.
6. The final step is to put them out of the Church and treat them as lost.

Acts 5:1-10

1. (**vs. 3**) The offense was a deliberate lie to the Holy Ghost.
2. The price was death (**vss. 4, 5, and 10**). This is somewhat similar to Achan in the O. T.
3. This is totally different than **Matt. 18:15-17**. It is not a fault but a sin. It is not a trespass against Peter, but a lie to the Holy Ghost.
4. There is a sin unto death (**I John 5:16-17**).
5. (**vss. 11-14**) These verses give five results of this discipline.

Rom. 16:17, 18

1. The offence here is, "cause divisions and offenses". This goes beyond disagreements.

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2. There is no particular doctrine at issue.
3. They are operating so as to break the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace.
4. These serve their own belly.
5. These are good talkers – “***good words and fair speeches***”, but they deceive the hearts of the simple.
6. We are to “**mark them**” and “**avoid them**”.

I Cor. 5:1-13

1. The guilt is of serious sin (vs. 11; 6:9-10).
2. The guilty party is called a brother, but acts like the lost.
3. Action to take is: Deliver to Satan (vs. 5), Purge out (vss. 7 and 13) Not to keep company (vs. 11), not to eat with (vs. 11), and Judge (vs. 12).
4. Results may or may not be to recover the sinner. The primary goal is the purity and

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protection of the Church (**vs. 7**) and regaining sincerity and truth in the Church (**vs. 8**).

I Cor. 11:16

1. Issue of somebody who would seem to be contentious.
2. This is not to be tolerated. We have no such custom in the Church.

I Thess. 5:14

1. Some are unruly, i.e., they don't submit to being ruled.
2. Such we are to warn...
 - of dangers.
 - of sin against the Holy Spirit.
 - of reaping.
 - of damaging a testimony.
 - of lost opportunities.
 - of lack of Christ-likeness.

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II Thess. 3:6-15

1. A group of offenses often related are here listed:
 - (vs. 6) Walking disorderly
 - (vs. 11) Lazy
 - (vs. 11) Busy bodies.
2. The responses are just as clear:
 - (vs. 6) Withdraw yourself from them
 - (vs. 14) Note that man
 - (vs. 14) Have no company with him.
3. Don't treat such as an enemy or lost, but rather as a brother.
4. Admonish, let them be ashamed, but don't reject totally.
5. Often this reveals the weakness within the Church as some individual members may not co-operate in breaking fellowship as commanded in the Bible. These may become guilty of vs. 6, – walking disorderly or being unruly (**I Thess. 5:14**).

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I Tim. 1:19, 20

1. These had blasphemed – bad doctrine (II Tim. 2:17, 18).
2. They were to be delivered unto Satan. The purpose was to teach them a lesson not to shipwreck or overthrow the faith of others.

I Tim. 5:19, 20

1. This deals with the problem of elders in sin.
2. Accusations are to be given by a minimum of two witnesses.
3. The accusations are not to be received except “**before**” or in the presence of the accused elder.
4. If he is found guilty, there is to be a public rebuke.
5. Examples include Paul rebuking Peter (Gal. 2:11) and John rebuking Diotrophes (III John 7-9).

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Titus 3:10, 11

1. Here is the case of an heretick.
2. Such is subverted, sinneth, and condemned of himself.
3. They are to receive two admonitions, and if they do not repent, then reject them.

IV. Officers of the Church

Titus 1:5-11

(I Tim. 3:1-7)

1. Elders are found in the plural in the cities and churches (**Acts 14:23; 20:17; Titus 1:5**).
2. Bishops are found in the singular (**Titus 1:7; I Tim. 3:1, 2**) with the exception of **Phil. 1:1**.
3. Bishops must meet all the requirements of the elders and seem to hold both titles simultaneously. (All bishops are elders, but not all elders are bishops).

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4. Requirements include:
- a) Blameless (**Titus 1:6**)
 - b) Husband of one wife (**vs. 6**)
 - c) Having faithful children **vs. 6**)
 - d) Not self-willed (**vs. 7**)
 - e) Not soon angry (**vs. 7**)
 - f) Not given to wine (**vs. 7**)
 - g) Not given to filthy lucre (**vs. 7**)
 - h) A lover of hospitality (**vs. 8**)
 - i) A lover of good men (**vs. 8**)
 - j) Sober (**vs. 8**)
 - k) Just (**vs. 8**)
 - l) Holy (**vs. 8**)
 - m) Temperate (**vs. 8**)
 - n) Well taught (**vs. 9**)
 - o) Holding fast to the faithful word (**vs. 9**)
 - p) Consistent to what he had been taught (**vs. 9**)

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- q) Able to exhort and convince gainsayers (**vs. 9**)
- r) Able to stop mouths (**vs. 11**)
- s) Vigilant (**I Tim. 3:2**)
- t) Of good behavior (**vs. 2**)
- u) Apt to teach (**vs. 2**)
- v) No striker (**vs. 3**)
- w) Patient (**vs. 3**)
- x) Not a brawler (**vs. 3**)
- y) Not covetous (**vs. 3**)
- z) Ruling his own house (**vs. 4**)
- aa) Children under subjection (**vs. 4**)
- bb) Not a novice (**vs. 6**)
- cc) Good reputation in the world (**vs. 7**).

II Tim. 3:8-13

1. Deacons are found in the plural in the churches (**I Tim. 3:8; Phil. 1:1**).
2. While the bishop is the pastor, leader, shepherd, overseer, and the elders assist as

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overseers, the deacons seem to assist, support, strengthen the hands of the pastor. They certainly are not to rule over the shepherd.

3. Requirements include:

- a) Grave (**vs. 8**)
- b) Not double tongued (**vs. 8**)
- c) Not given to much wine (**vs. 8**)
- d) Not greedy of filthy lucre (**vs. 8**)
- e) Hold the mystery of the faith (**vs. 9**)
- f) Must be first tested and proved (**vs. 10**)
- g) Blameless (**vs. 10**)
- h) Wives must be grave (**vs. 11**)
- i) Husband of one wife (**vs. 12**)
- j) Ruling both children and house well (**vs. 12**)

4. Great benefits to faithful service (**vs. 13**).

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5. The high requirements for these church officers allows the Church to set a model before new Christians and the world of how homes and lives should be. Thus every generation can come back to holy lives and holy homes by God's ordained means.

V. The Church and Their Pastor

I Thess. 5:12-14

1. Know them; that is, recognize God's servant as God's servant, spiritually accept his ministry, love him as God loves him, receive him as God's minister and messenger.
2. Esteem them; that is value him and his ministry, attend regularly, co-operate and encourage him, treat with the highest respect, and avoid criticism, bitterness, rumors, jealousy, and familiarity.

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3. Be at peace; an improper attitude brings dissension, lack of peace, and turmoil (warn the unruly).

Eph. 4:11-16

1. Pastors are a gift to the Church from Jesus. He is free to give them to another Church at anytime.
2. With a shortage of laborers (and an oversupply of self-approved, trained volunteers) it often happens that churches end up with hirelings instead of God-given shepherds (pastors) (**John 10:12, 13**).
3. Don't resist or avoid the ministry of a God-given pastor.

Heb. 13:17, 7

1. Obey and submit to them (**I Tim. 3:4, 5**).
2. Let them care for your soul.
3. Your response to them may determine the destiny of your soul and/or others (presently, for future generations, visitors, society).

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Psm. 105:15

1. Touch not mine anointed.
2. If He protected Israel, how much more His people today.
3. When God has His hand on a man, He never lets anyone else put their hands on him.

I Sam. 24:6, 10; 26:9, 11, 23

- ~ Daniel wouldn't touch wicked Saul, even in self defense.

II Sam. 1:14-16

- ~ Death was the proper punishment for claiming to destroy God's anointed.

I Cor. 9:7-14

1. Oxen get the first choice and their fill from the harvest.
2. Spiritual ministering brings material results.

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I Tim. 5:17-20

1. Faithful ministers are worthy of double the income of their people.
2. Levites in the O. T. received a tithe (10%) from the other 12 tribes. The Levites were the smallest tribe, and thus had an income of over three times the average Israelite when all gave as they should (**Num. 1:45-47; 3:39**). This was before first fruit offerings, love offerings, etc. God's ministers have extra expenses inherent to the ministry. If you can't trust them with your money, how can you trust them with your soul?
3. Don't hear rumors/accusations except from two or more witnesses, and then only in front of the pastor.

II Tim. 4:2-5

1. Hear him as he preaches the Word.

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2. Accept and benefit from his reproofs (**3:5-17**).
3. Take warning at his rebukes.
4. Grow under his exhorting.
5. Recognize the necessity of preaching:
 - a) **Titus 1:3** – manifests the Word.
 - b) **I Cor. 1:18, 21b** – power of God, means toward salvation.
 - c) **Rom. 10:13, 14** – needed for sinners to be saved.



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