

What Was Church Like in Paul's Day?

An Excursus in the 1 Timothy Series

Grace Chapel November 8, 2009 Dr. John Niemelä

INTRODUCTION

CHRONOLOGY OF FIRST CENTURY LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS

Jesus ascended 40 days after resurrection (Acts 1, note verse 3) May 14, AD 33

Jesus commissions the eleven to apostolic ministry

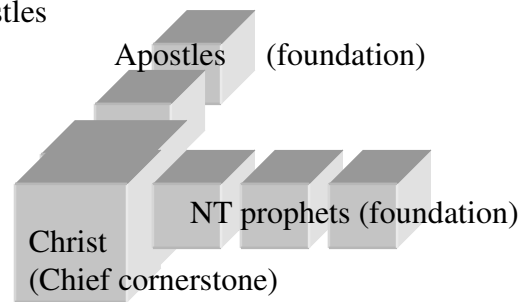
Holy Spirit comes and the Church begins May 24, AD 33

The eleven began functioning as apostles

Paul, the apostle, became a believer AD 35

The human leaders of the church were the apostles

Consider Ephesians 2:19ff.



How is it that the apostles and (New Testament) prophets were foundational?
Their foundational role is described in Ephesians 3:5ff. Cf. the Ephesians series.
God revealed the *mystery of Christ* to them

That mystery was not revealed before (definition of *mysterion*: mystery)

Apostles and NT prophets were the human writers of the New Testament

No one since the first century has qualified as an apostle (or prophet)

Consider Acts 1:20ff.

Consider 1 Corinthians 9:1

Consider Galatians 1:1

WHO (OR WHAT) REPLACED THE APOSTLES?**HOW DID THE APOSTLES PREPARE THE CHURCH FOR THE TRANSITION?****(ACTS 20:6–12) PAUL AT A CHURCH SERVICE IN TROAS (Late April AD 57)**

(20:6) Paul sailed from Philippi to Troas (Troy) and remained there a week

(20:7) Paul attended a breaking of bread service the evening before departing (for Assos), extending his message until midnight

(20:8) They were gathered in an upper room, where there were many lamps

(20:9) Eutychus sat in a window, fell asleep as Paul long spoke, and fell out the third floor window—dying

The word for Paul speaking is important here: *dialogizomai*

(20:10) Paul raised Eutychus and assured everyone that he was alive

(20:11) Paul returned, broke bread with them and ate, continuing speaking until daybreak, then departed.

(20:12) Everyone was overjoyed that Eutychus was alive

OTHER PERTINENT PASSAGES**1 JOHN 4:1–3**

(4:1) Christians should not believe every [message coming from] a spirit, but are to test the [messages coming from] spirits (to see if they are from God), because many false prophets have gone out into the world

John does not mean for his readers to try to contact spirits directly.

Notice that they have contact with human prophets:

They are false prophets, if a false spirit is the source of their message.

They are true prophets, if the Holy Spirit is the source of their message.

(4:2) The Holy Spirit is the who is behind (any prophet of God) who confesses Jesus Christ has come in the flesh

(4:3) Prophets with spirit of antichrist behind them will not confess that Jesus has come in the flesh

Remember, John was dealing with heresies of his day. In his day, this was a reliable litmus test. John was not saying that there would never be a false prophet who would admit that Jesus Christ came in the flesh.

Note also, John was not present with this church. While away, he wrote this letter. When John was away, they were to test the accuracy of what prophets said.

1 Corinthians 14:29–35

Preliminary consideration: We do not see positive biblical evidence for the revelatory gifts: apostleship, prophecy, tongues/interpretation of tongues continuing. We also see positive biblical evidence concerning their cessation. However, the main thrust of this message is not on the cessation/continuation debate. The main issue is how Paul urged the Corinthians to manage the use of gifts. Hence, this message will not delve into issues of cessation/continuation.

(14:29) Two or three prophets may speak (one at a time in a service), but the rest are to judge (what was spoken)

Verses 30–31 show that prophets were to speak one at a time

Observe that Paul wanted prophecies to be judged by others. This is very much like what 1 John 4:1–3 says.

(14:30) When the second (or third) prophet says what was revealed to him, the prophet who preceded him is to remain silent

Of course, there will be judgment of what each prophet says

(14:31) Each prophet may speak one at a time, so all may learn and be comforted

Verse 29 limited the number of prophets who could speak in a service to two or three. This strongly suggests that Corinth had more than three prophets. How that Paul can say that they may all prophesy (if there were more than three prophets)?

(14:32) Each prophet has the ability to restraining himself from speaking what was revealed to him

(14:33) [In explanation of the ability of each prophet to remain silent] God [who reveals] is not the creator of confusion, which applies to all churches of the saints

(14:34–35) [In the context of judging prophecies] women are to remain silent in church, rather than speaking, so they are to ask their husbands at home, if they want to learn anything [in this context of judging prophecies], because it is shameful for women to speak [in the context of judging prophecies]

What is the basis for my interpretation of verses 34–35?

A final passage in 1 Corinthians

(We are focusing on a subsidiary issue in this passage, not its main topic)

Reconciling the two passages in 1 Corinthians

How does this relate to 1 Timothy?

Note 1 Timothy 2:11–12 (We will be there soon. This message is background)

1 Timothy 1

1 Timothy 3

1 Timothy 4

CONCLUSION