

The Church: Introduction
Selected Scriptures
January 4, 2015

Introduction

I am praying that the year 2015 is the year where we can look back and see an awesome turning point of our church in advancing the Kingdom of God. This does not necessarily mean that there needs to be a radical change or that we radically reinvent our ministry. I believe that God wants us to be an ordinary church glorifying God with our faithfulness and love for one another. God has used rather ordinary means to glorify Himself. After all, we are here for His glory.

For the first few months of 2015, I want to focus on the Biblical definition of the church. I want us to see what the Bible says that a church should look like. I am doing this because I love the church. I love how God has placed His people in a group that come together on a regular basis and glorify Him. The New Testament has given us a unique metaphor for the church—the body. One body with Christ as the Head. Jesus gives us a look at how the relationship is within the church.

Mark 3:32-35 *A crowd was sitting around Him, and they told Him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for You." 33 "Who are My mother and My brothers?" He asked. 34 Then He looked at those seated in a circle around Him and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! 35 Whoever does God's will is My brother and sister and mother."*

I love the church and it is not perfect, but everyone who professes to be a Christian is part of my family. Yes, we all experience instances of bitterness and discord and it should not be because we have not been fully redeemed. However, Christ gives us the command to love one another which means that we continually forgive others who sin against us. When we all get to heaven all believers will be closer to us than the families we have on earth.

I want us today to get started on the doctrine of the church. We will look at Jesus revealing the church and what the birth of the church means for us today.

I. Revelation of the Church

- Before we get to the birth of the church
 - Must ask: NT Church and OT Israel, one and the same?
 - Are OT Saints identified as the Church (as during the OT)?
 - Answer to both questions: No
- Church revealed by Christ Jesus
 - The church was first revealed by Christ Jesus

Matthew 16:17-18 *Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by My Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.*

- The word church in Gk is *ekklesia* which means “calling out” or “gathering”

Note: The church is by Him, on Him, for Him, and of Him

- The church is built by Christ
 - Jesus said “I will” which indicates future time
- The church is bought by Christ

Acts 20:28 *Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with His own blood.*

- The church is built on Christ

Matthew 16:16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

1 Corinthians 3:10-11 By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. **11** For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

- The church is joined to Christ

Ephesians 1:22-23 And God placed all things under His feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church, **23** which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way.

- The church is inseparable from Christ

Matthew 18:17-20 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. **18** I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. **19** Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by My Father in heaven. **20** For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.

Note: The church is the only institution Jesus leaves behind.

- Church and Israel are distinct

Ephesians 3:4-6 In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, **5** which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. **6** This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

- Israel = distinct from all nations
 - Special rules, clothing, food
- With the church that distinction between nations is gone
- The OT people never saw the church age
 - God gave some hints in the OT about the salvation of Gentiles, but not the church

II. Birth of the Church

- Jesus tells the people that such day is coming that the Holy Spirit will come in a mighty way

John 7:37-39 On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. **38** Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." **39** By this He meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

- He tells the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the coming of the Holy Spirit

Acts 1:4-5 *On one occasion, while He was eating with them, He gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift My Father promised, which you have heard Me speak about. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."*

- **Acts 2:1** *On the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.*
 - Believers together
 - Pattern after resurrection
 - For 40 days, our Lord spent time with them
 - After Ascension, they are in Jerusalem per Jesus' command (**1:13**)
 - Upper Room
 - Large room (enough for 120 people that met that day (**1:15**))
 - Pentecost
 - Luke is indicating that it is God's timing and perfect timing it is!
 - Pentecost—Feast of First-Fruits (or Weeks)
 - Gk—50th of something (in sequence)
 - 50 days after Passover
 - OT Feast—has several names
 - Feast of Harvest (**Exodus 23**)
 - Feast of Weeks (**Exodus 34**)
 - Feast of Firstfruits (**Numbers 28**)
 - Purpose of Pentecost
 - Announcement and celebration of firstfruits of wheat harvest
 - Celebrating the harvest that is to come (a promise)
 - After exile—celebration of the giving of the Law (50 days after Exodus from Egypt)
 - God's sovereign plan
 - **Leviticus 23**
 - Different Feasts that Israel had to celebrate—all shadows of true One to come (Jesus Christ)
 - Passover
 - Picture of Christ's Death (Christ our Passover Lamb—**1 Cor 5:7**)
 - Feast of Unleavened Bread
 - Day after Passover
 - No leaven for a week
 - Leaven = sin; Picture of Christ's resurrection (victorious)
 - Feast of Harvest
 - First fruits in a sense—harvest is not fully ready
 - Promise of completion
 - Christ sends the Holy Spirit as the guarantee

Ephesians 1:13-14 *And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of His glory.*

- **Acts 2:2** *Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.*
 - Loud noise like a wind
 - Not the wind itself—there is no wind
 - Sound like a hurricane
 - Filled the whole house

- This is not a sensation or a feeling
- Reality that has taken place
- Holy Spirit baptism
- What is happening here?
- Very important
 - Holy Spirit is binding the believers into one body
 - Fusion of believers—to form the church
 - This is a onetime event—not what the Pentecostals or Charismatics believe

1 Corinthians 12:13 *For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.*

- Jesus' prayer
 - Fulfillment of what He prayed

John 17:11 *I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, protect them by the power of Your name—the name You gave Me—so that they may be one as We are one.*

John 17:20 *My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message,*

John 17:22 *I have given them the glory that You gave Me, that they may be one as We are one:*

John 17:23 *I in them and You in Me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that You sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.*

- Spiritual reality of Holy Spirit in us
- We are able to love one another—be unified to one another
- This is what He does in us
- **Acts 2:3** *They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.*
 - Tongues of fire
 - Visible manifestation of the Holy Spirit
 - Why?
 - Proof that God is present in the disciples' life
 - Visible proof of the Holy Spirit's power
 - Power of the Holy Spirit
 - Being filled with the Holy Spirit
 - To be filled with the Spirit means to be moved by the Spirit
 - Imagine a sail on a boat being filled with the wind—moved by the wind
 - To be effective believers, we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit
 - To be under the control of Him through the Word
 - When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we are filled with peace, love, joy, self-control

Application

The church was born when the Holy Spirit came into the lives of the believers in the Upper Room. He came in and fused the believers to Christ and to each other. I mentioned before that during the Feast of Harvest, the priest would wave two loaves of leavened bread before the Lord. This is significant because Christ is sinless, the church is not; however we are one loaf, fused together by the power of the Holy Spirit.