

"The Earthly Kingdom of Jesus Christ"

Part 30

Matthew 16:13-18

Introduction: The last time we were together we were looking at when the church began. We entered into this study because we are looking at what God is doing in this interim age. The Kingdom is postponed and the King is away but that does not mean that God is idle. He is busy gathering a people for His name from among the Gentiles.

Acts 15:4, 13-14

⁴ *And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.*

¹³ *And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me:*

¹⁴ *Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.*

In our last study we were using Scripture to determine when the church began. There are those who believe the church began in the Old Testament and contains the elect from all ages. They believe it started with the first people saved. Reformed churches stress that throughout all history there is but one people of God, and that these saved people make up the Church. Then there are the ultra-dispensationalists who teach the church began with the Apostle Paul. There are some Baptists who believe the church began with John the Baptist. We looked at each of these and determined that the church did not exist in the Old Testament and it did not begin with Paul.

Ephesians 1:20-22

²⁰ *Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.*

²¹ *Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:*

²² *And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,*

In Ephesians we see that Jesus became the Head of the church after His accession so if the church existed in the Old Testament it existed with no Head.

Ephesians 4:7-8

⁷ But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

⁸ Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

Here we see that the spiritual gifts were not given until Jesus ascended so if the church existed in the Old Testament there were no gifts for edification.

Acts 8:1-3

And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

² And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.

³ As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

In these verses we see that the church existed before Paul was saved.

Romans 16:7

⁷ Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

In Romans Paul tells us these people were in Christ/the church before him. Therefore, the church existed before Paul was saved. All of this shows us when the church did NOT begin. But when did it begin?

➤ **The Church began with Spirit Baptism**

1 Corinthians 12:13

¹³ For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

From this verse we can determine that the church started when the baptism of the Spirit started but when did this begin? Let us first of all understand what Spirit baptism is. Spirit baptism is what happens the moment we are saved. We are baptized by Jesus Christ with the Spirit and thus we are members of the body of Jesus Christ. I want to correct something that I had taught you a while back and that was that I said there were two baptisms. Let us notice the words of John the Baptist.

Matthew 3:11

¹¹ *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: **he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost**, and with fire:*

The part I bolded refers to Spirit baptism. Now notice again 1 Corinthians 12.

1 Corinthians 12:13

¹³ ***For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body**, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

If we look at Matthew 3:11 it tells us that Jesus is the Baptizer then in 1 Corinthians 12 it looks as though the Spirit is the Baptizer. Therefore, some conclude that Jesus baptizes us with the Spirit and the Spirit baptizes us into the body of Jesus Christ. But there is a major problem with that.

Ephesians 4:4-5

⁴ *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;*

⁵ *One Lord, one faith, **one baptism**,*

Here we see there is only ONE baptism. Notice the words of George Zeller on this:

"But someone might raise an objection and say, "The Spirit baptism mentioned in Matthew 3:11 and Acts 1:5 is different from the Spirit baptism mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:13. In Matthew 3:11 and Acts 1:5 Christ is the Baptizer, but in 1 Corinthians 12:13 the Holy Spirit is the Baptizer. As we read the English Bible this seems to be the case, but the Greek construction of Matthew 3:11 and Acts 1:5 is practically identical to that of 1 Corinthians 12:13, as the following chart illustrates.

All four of these passages are talking about the same baptism, and the Greek construction

in all four passages is closely equivalent, as the following literal rendering reveals:"

Passage	Greek Construction
Matthew. 3:11	He (Christ) shall baptize you with (in) Holy Spirit
Acts 1:5	You shall be baptized (by Christ-Matt. 3:11) with (in) Holy Spirit
Acts 11:16	You shall be baptized (by Christ-Matt. 3:11) with (in) Holy Spirit
1 Cor. 12:13	We all were be baptized (by Christ-Matt. 3:11) with (in) one Spirit into one body

In every one of these verses Jesus Christ is the Baptizer. Notice the words of Zeller again:

"The order of the words in 1 Corinthians 12:13 has been altered in order to show that the same Greek construction is used. In the King James Version, the Greek preposition (en) is translated "By one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13) which has led some to wrongly conclude that the Spirit is the Baptizer. But the passage should be understood in this way: "With (en) one Spirit were we all baptized [by Christ] into one body [the body of Christ, His Church]."

Now let us get to when this baptism first took place.

- ✓ **It was future for John the Baptist.**

Matthew 3:11

*¹¹ I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but **he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:***

This is the first prediction of Spirit baptism. John's baptism was with water but the coming baptism by Jesus Christ would be of the Spirit. In this verse John makes it very clear that the Spirit baptism had not yet taken place in his day. It would be in the future.

- ✓ **Spirit baptism was still future in Acts 1.**

Acts 1:4-5

⁴ And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

⁵ For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

Luke is quoting what Jesus said after His resurrection and at the time of His ascension and Luke places it here because it still had not taken place. Jesus said it would happen soon and it would be a matter of only days. It was ten days after these Words were spoken that it happened. Ten days after His ascension the church would begin and that would be on the Day of Pentecost. Notice what Peter said in Acts 11. In Acts 11 Peter is telling the Apostles at Jerusalem how the Gentiles were brought into the body of Jesus Christ and he says something that helps us.

Acts 11:15-16

¹⁵ And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.

¹⁶ Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

Peter tells us that the church began when the Spirit fell on them at the beginning. This is definitely a phrase that points to the Day of Pentecost and the events on that day affirm it was a supernatural day and event.

Acts 2:1-4

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

³ And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Based on what the Scriptures say we can therefore determine that the church began on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2.

There is one more point to make about why the church could not have existed in the Old Testament. The reason is because Paul tells us the church is a MYSTERY.

Ephesians 3:3-9

³ How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,

⁴ Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)

⁵ Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

⁶ That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

⁷ Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

⁸ Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

⁹ And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

When the New Testament speaks of a mystery it is referring to that which was hidden in the Old Testament. The church did not exist in the Old Testament and the plan of the church was not revealed until it was revealed to the Apostles and New Testament prophets.

Notice Ephesians 3:5 above again.

Let me show you another verse to help you with a question you may have.

Acts 7:37-38

³⁷ This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.

³⁸ This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:

Do not be confused by the word "church" here. It is referring to Israel in the wilderness not the church as we know it. It cannot be the church as we know it because the church today is made up of all believers and Israel was not.

Conclusion:

To have a clear understanding of when the church began is very important. Because ultra dispensationalists do not see the church starting until Paul gets saved many of them do not see baptism by water for the church, they do not participate in the Lord's Table and some do not see the Great Commission for us. The Reformed teachers what to place all the Old Testament Saints into the body of Christ and then they want to transfer all of Israel's blessings to the church. Next week we will look at why Replacement Theology is not correct.