

# *The Church*

## **History and Origin 2**

X In our last lesson we began a discussion of the history of the Church that we can see in the book of Acts. We began that discussion by taking a very brief historical look at some of the prophecies in the Old Testament that point to the coming Christ and the restored kingdom. We ended that lesson with this passage,,,

**Mark 1:14-15**

I

14 Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

John was sent as the precursor to Christ and preached to repent for the kingdom was at hand, then Jesus came preaching the same message...

2

### ***“The Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand”***

What the Jews had been looking for, what the prophets had foretold, what God had promised was soon to come to pass, Jesus the Christ came to establish. In...

**John 14:26**

3

26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

Jesus tells His disciples that the Holy Spirit would be sent by the Father to teach them all things and to remind them of all that He had taught them.

This brings up an interesting point. When God created the world and all that is in it, did He create it in infancy? Were the plants created as seedlings, barely big to poke above the ground to reach the sunlight? Were the animals created as newborn unable to fend for themselves or the fish as hatchlings? Were Adam and Eve created as newborn babies? The obvious answer to these questions, is not at all. God created things full grown, as mature, adult. How many rings did the first Giant Sequoia tree have when God created it? I don't know, but it wasn't one. When God created Adam and Eve, it wasn't as newborn babes. It would not make any common sense at all for God to have created anything as newborn any more than it would make any sense for the new kingdom to be created with no mature citizens within it to help it to grow and to sustain it.

Isn't that what we see in Christ's statements to the disciples? The disciples would have a helper to teach them and guide them into all things.

The four Gospels are essentially books of history. They tell us of the history of Jesus, from His birth to His death. They record for us the approximate three years or so of His ministry. They include some of His teachings to His disciples and others, some of the miracles He performed, and many of His prayers. They tell us about Jesus the Christ, but they don't tell us about the Kingdom of Heaven that was at hand. The book of Acts picks up some fifty days after the crucifixion of Christ. Acts chapter two depicts the events of the Day of Pentecost. Pentecost means fifty and the feast

takes its name from the fact that it falls fifty days following the feast of the Passover, which was the time of the crucifixion of Christ.

**Acts 1:1-5**

**4**

**1** The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, **2** until the day when He was taken up to heaven, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen. **3** To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. **4** Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me; **5** for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

Remember what Christ told the disciples in the passage we looked at from **John 14:26** when He told them that He would send them a helper that would teach and remind them all things. Here in Acts we see them gathered together waiting for that helper which Christ has told them would be the Holy Spirit. These verses are before Christ has ascended and we still see confusion on the part of the disciples when they ask Christ...

**Acts 1:6**

**5**

**6** So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?"

We saw in our last lesson how that God had promised David that He would raise one of David's descendants to sit on the throne of an everlasting kingdom, **2 Sam 7**. The disciples, like all of the Jews, still thought that this meant that God would restore Israel to an Earthly kingdom with Christ as an Earthly king. Now notice the answer that Christ gives them...

**Acts 1:7-8**

**6**

**7** He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; **8** but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

Jesus doesn't address their question in the specific though He does give them answer. He tells them that God has established the time when He would accomplish His purpose and plan, but He reiterates the promise that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them, implied in that promise is that that power would be by the authority of God and that they would use that power and authority to go throughout the world to witness for Jesus Christ.

Acts then tells us that...

**Acts 1:9-11**

**7**

**9** And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. **10** And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. **11** They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been

taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."

Christ has taught them everything they need to accomplish the task that He has left for them to do, spread the Gospel throughout the world and He has promised them a helper in that task. The disciples return to Jerusalem to wait there for the promise to be fulfilled. They are there with others who had followed Jesus, including His mother Mary and His brothers. Peter then addresses the gathering, some 120 people, and tells them that the scriptures had foretold what had happened with Judas, his betrayal and ultimate demise and that the scriptures also say...

*Acts 1:20*

**8**

**20** "For it is written in the book of Psalms, 'LET HIS HOMESTEAD BE MADE DESOLATE, AND LET NO ONE DWELL IN IT'; and, 'LET ANOTHER MAN TAKE HIS OFFICE.'

It was time for the disciples to choose a replacement for Judas. The scriptures tell us that they chose...

*Acts 1:21-22*

**9**

**21** "Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us— **22** beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection."

What is interesting here is that the 12 were not the only ones that had been with Jesus during the time of His ministry, there had been others. That was part of the requirement for being an Apostle, to have been with Jesus and witnessed His baptism to His resurrection. Two men's names were put forward to be selected from to replace Judas, Mathias was chosen.

This brings us to the day of Pentecost...

*Acts 2:1-4*

**10**

**1** When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. **2** And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. **3** And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. **4** And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

We saw the promises of the helper and the Holy Spirit that Christ had given to the disciples, here, now, we see those promises being kept. The 12 Apostles are given authority and power from God to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

This was an event of "Force Majeur," that means an event of such magnitude that it changes the world. Recall the statue of Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel's interpretation of it that we looked. This is the small stone that was not designed by any man. This stone is the handiwork of God, planned by Him, designed by Him, and implemented by Him. This beginning here with 12 men is the stone that will grow into a kingdom that will not answer to any Earthly authority, but only to the authority of God, through Christ. This is the stone that will last eternally.

When the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles it created them full grown, in the full knowledge and understanding of the Gospel, the Word of God. They became the beginnings of the Church.

The Apostles had a unique work in the Church. As we have already seen in **verse 8** and also in **verses 21 & 22**, they were to be witnesses, eye-witnesses of what He had taught, what He had done, and who He was to the world.

**2 Cor 5:20**

**11**

**20** Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

Paul calls himself an ambassador for Christ. Webster's defines ambassador as...

**12**

1. An official envoy; especially : a diplomatic agent of the highest rank accredited to a foreign government or sovereign as the resident representative of his or her own government or sovereign or appointed for a special and often temporary diplomatic assignment She's the American ambassador to Italy.
2. a : an authorized representative or messenger  
b : an unofficial representative traveling abroad as ambassadors of goodwill

This is the definition that we are all familiar with, the idea of a representative, but maybe more specifically a representative that has the authority to act on behalf of. But notice the difference with what the term ambassador means in the Greek. It comes from the word...

Presbeuo (NT:4243)

**13**

Denotes:

- a) "to be elder or eldest, prior in birth or age"
- b) "to be an ambassador," 2 Cor. 5:20, and Eph. 6:20

The Greek, presbeuo, carries with it a much deeper meaning than how the idea of an ambassador is thought of today. The term elders was used to indicate those of the city or the tribe that had the authority to govern or make law. It is used in the Church to indicate the men of each congregation that have been selected to rule over that congregation...

**Heb 13:17**

**14**

**17** Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account.

I think the idea is that the Apostles were tasked with being the ones to anchor the fledgling Church as it experienced the growing pains that would most assuredly come. I think this is seen in our Lord's comments in...

**Matt 16:19**

**15**

**19** I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven."

Jesus gave the Apostles the authority to carry those things that had been established by God to the world, to establish those things as Law for man and for the Church. They were to spread the Gospel through the world and in doing so, establish the Church wherever they went.

*Acts 2:14*

**16**

**14** But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: "Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words.

After the Holy Spirit had come upon the Apostles they had been endowed with spiritual gifts, one of which was the ability to speak in languages that they could not have known, they spoke in tongues, other languages. The people that were there from all over for the feast of Pentecost heard them and came to the conclusion that they were drunk. Peter addresses this, telling the people that they are not drunk but rather this is the fulfillment of scripture...

*Acts 2:17-21*

**17**

**17** 'AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,' God says, 'THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT ON ALL MANKIND; AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY, AND YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS, AND YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS; **18** EVEN ON MY BONDSLAVES, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN, I WILL IN THOSE DAYS POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT AND THEY SHALL PROPHECY. **19** 'AND I WILL GRANT WONDERS IN THE SKY ABOVE AND SIGNS ON THE EARTH BELOW, BLOOD, AND FIRE, AND VAPOR OF SMOKE. **20** 'THE SUN WILL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD, BEFORE THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS DAY OF THE LORD SHALL COME. **21** 'AND IT SHALL BE THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.'

Peter is using the scriptures to begin the process of convincing the people that Jesus is indeed the messiah, the one sent to establish the kingdom of God. This Jesus, the one that they had crucified, is the Son of God. In his sermon, the first recorded sermon of the Church, Peter uses the scriptures to illustrate how that Jesus fulfills every prophecy, how that He is a descendant of David. He illustrates that David could not have been talking about himself as the king of this restored kingdom, because David was dead and his tomb could be visited to that day. Peter shows the power and authority that Jesus had by reminding them of the miracles and signs that Jesus had done in their presence, signs and wonders which could only be done with the power of God.

*Acts 2:36*

**18**

**36** Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified."

That is the message from the first recorded sermon in the Church, Jesus is the Christ, the messiah, He is the Savior sent by God to establish the Kingdom of God that would stand eternally. The people then believed the message, do you?