

Part Two: The Origin of the Church

INTRODUCTION. The next three lessons deal with the origin of the Church from the viewpoints of (1) time and (2) authority. That is, when did the Church begin and by whose authority was it built? Whose authority controls it? All need to learn well the answers to these important questions. Particular stress should be given to the distinction to be made between Old and New Testament authority and the purposes Old Testament scriptures serve today in the Church of God.

LESSON 7 _____ **THE ORIGIN OF THE CHURCH**

LESSON 8 _____ **THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH**

LESSON 9 _____ **USE OF OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES**

Lesson 7

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I. The Importance of Knowing When the Church Began:

- A. Matter of identity—to distinguish it from Old Testament agencies and also from religious institutions of modern human origin.
- B. To identify its laws—and to see when the law governing the Church of God went into effect.

II. Church Foreshadowed in Old Testament (Heb. 9:11, 23; 10:1):

- A. The Church then was not in existence in Old Testament days.
- B. Old Testament worthies desired to see its era (1 Pet. 1:10-12).

III. Beginning of Church or Kingdom, Subjects of Prophecy:

- A. Isaiah 2:2-3; Micah 4:1-2. To be established...
 - 1. In last days.
 - 2. In Jerusalem.
 - 3. New Testament age is “last days” (Heb. 1:1-2; Acts 2:16-17).
- B. Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (Dan. 2:31-35); interpretation of dream (Dan. 2:36-45). Four Kingdoms:
 - 1. Babylonian—Nebuchadnezzar, King, 600 B.C. Kingdom fell in 536 B.C. Represented by head of gold.
 - 2. Medo-Persian, established by Cyrus, King of Persia, and Darius, King of Media, fell in 330 B.C. Represented by the breasts and arms of silver.
 - 3. Macedonia—Established by Alexander the Great. Divided among his generals in 323 B. C. Represented by belly and thighs of brass.
 - 4. Roman, established as world power by Octavius Caesar in 30 B. C. Roman kingdom represented by legs of iron and feet of iron and clay. “In the days of these kings” therefore refers to the time of universal empires, and “smote the image upon its feet” signifies that the event which Daniel foresaw, the establishment of the Kingdom of God, would take place after the beginning of the Roman Empire in A.D. 30 and during its existence.

5. The New Testament begins its story while the Caesars still ruled the world. “In those days came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, repent ye; for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 3:1-2). What days? (Luke 3:1-2). “In the Fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar” (Luke 3:1).

IV. Church Was Not Established By John:

- A. Preached “at hand” or approaching (Matt. 3:1-2).
- B. John was not in the Kingdom (Matt. 11:11).

V. Church Not Established During the Personal Ministry of Jesus—Yet In The Future:

- A. Mark 1:15—“at hand”—Jesus.
- B. Matthew 10:7—“at hand”—Twelve.
- C. Luke 10:9—“come nigh unto you.”
- D. Matthew 6:9-10—disciples taught to pray for it.
- E. Matthew 16:18—Christ promised to build.
- F. Matthew 18:1-3—disciples not yet in it.
- G. Mark 9:1—Christ promises that it will come during that generation.
- H. Luke 22:18; 19:11—disciples yet expecting it (Mark 15:43).
- I. Acts 1:6—had not come at time of ascension.

VI. The Beginning:

- A. (1) Kingdom to begin and law to go forth from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-3; Luke 24:47).
(2) Law went forth on Pentecost from Jerusalem (Acts 2:37-38).
(3) Pentecost the beginning (Acts 2:1-4; 11:15).
- B. (1) The Kingdom was to come with power (Mark 9:1).
(2) The power was to come with Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).
(3) The Holy Spirit came on Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4).
(4) Therefore the Kingdom came on Pentecost.
- C. (1) The law was to go forth from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-3).
(2) The apostles commissioned to preach (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16) but instructed to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit to come and guide them before beginning (Luke 24:49).
(3) Spirit came on Pentecost and began the preaching of the Gospel. The law of the Kingdom began on Pentecost (Acts 2:31-34, 36-38).

VII. Pentecost Marks the Beginning (Acts 11:15):

- A. The beginning of the Christian Age—The New Covenant (Heb. 8:8; 9:15-17).
- B. The beginning of the Church.
- C. The beginning of gospel preaching.
- D. Beginning of the preaching of the remission of sins (Luke 24:47).

VIII. After Pentecost the Church or Kingdom Always Spoken of as in Existence (Acts 2:47; 5:11; 8:1; 11:22; 13:1; 14:27; Col. 1:13; Rev. 1:9).

Questions for Discussion:

1. Why should one know when the Church began? _____

2. How do you know the Church did not exist during the Old Testament period? _____

3. Outline the prophecy of Isaiah 2:2-3. See also Micah 4:1-2. _____

4. Show how these predictions were fulfilled in Acts 2. _____

5. Give the leading facts of Daniel 2:31-35, 36-45. _____

6. Give the four kingdoms of Daniel's prophecy, and show how this was fulfilled. _____

7. How do you know the Kingdom was not set up during the days of John the Baptist or during the personal ministry of Jesus? _____

8. Discuss the markers of the actual beginning of the Kingdom. _____

9. What notable day marks the beginning? _____
10. After this date, how was the "Church" or "Kingdom" spoken of? _____

