

SERIES: Transition Time

SUBJECT: Heaven Came Down

READING: Act 2:1-2 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.

Introduction:

The second chapter of Acts marks a turning point in the history of God's kingdom. A new phase of His redemptive plan unfolds as the church is born.

In chapter 1 the disciples were to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit;

In chapter 2 He comes.

In chapter 1 the disciples were equipped;

In chapter 2 they are empowered.

In chapter 1 they were held back;

In chapter 2 they are sent forth.

In chapter 1 the Savior ascended;

In chapter 2 the Spirit descends.

The promises of the Lord Jesus Christ given in chapter 1 come to fulfillment in chapter 2 as the believers gathered in the upper room receive the wonderful promise of the Father. **Act 1:5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.**

God's eternal redemptive plan began to unfold in human history in the Garden of Eden after man's sin. In Genesis 3:15, He promised a

savior, who would one day redeem the human race from the effects of that sin. The unfolding continued throughout the patriarchal age, past the giving of the Mosaic Law, to a small hill outside Jerusalem called Calvary. There the incarnate Son of God gave His life for the sins of the world.

After rising victorious over sin and death, He promised to send the Holy Spirit to indwell believers for this to happen **Jesus had to ascend to the Father. Joh 7:37-39** In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, **If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. (38) He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (39)** (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.

Though the assembling of the redeemed in God's kingdom has gone on since the Fall, **the coming of the Spirit marks the beginning of the unique church age.**

The church is the bride of Christ; the branches of the Vine; the flock of the Good Shepherd; the kingdom of God's dear Son; God's household, consisting of His adopted children; a spiritual temple, of which Jesus Christ is the cornerstone; but, uniquely, the body of Christ.

Those assembled marked the first local assembly and would be identified as the church at Jerusalem;

Act 8:1 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.

Act 11:22 Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

Act 15:4 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.

That there would be an intervening age between the two advents of Messiah was not foreseen in the Old Testament. Nor was the unity of Jew and Gentile in one body, the body of Christ.

That One Body manifests itself in a visible way on earth. Paul called that concept a mystery in Ephesians 3:3-10. The word "church" translates ekklēsia, which means "called-out ones."

*Eph 3:3-10 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: (10) **To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,***

Dr. John MacArthur whom I disagree with some areas has written an article I want to share with you this morning concerning the "Local church" of which I stand in agreement with as it sets forth the exact New Testament revelation of the Local churches role in God's eternal plan.

I love the church. It's the center of my life and has been since childhood. My father was the pastor of a church when I was born, and I grew up in the church. It's the place where I was led to the knowledge of God, where I learned about the Person and work of Christ, and where I gained the knowledge of saving and sanctifying truth. It's where I learned how to pray, how to sing, how to worship, how to love, and how to serve. And it was in the church that I experienced the leading of the Spirit of God directing me to a life of ministry.

I met my wife in the church. We raised our children in the church, and now our grandchildren, too. It's where I've made lifelong friends and partners in ministry. The church touches every part of my life—in fact you could say it is my life.

People sometimes ask me why I write so much about issues in the church—why I can't just be quiet and enjoy my ministry. *The answer is, I love the church so much that I can't stand by and watch it struggle. I want to help it be all God wants it to be, and that means I need to be a pastor. I love the church too much to do anything else.*

Like Doctor MacArthur, I can't understand people who don't have a similar love for the church—who aren't eager for every opportunity to worship together with other like-minded believers. **I can't understand people who go to church on Saturday nights so they don't “mess up” their Sundays.** Why are they so eager to get away from the church? Where else would they rather be?

There was a time when coming to Christ meant coming to His church. As far back as the New Testament, salvation brought you into union with the visible, gathered Body of Christ ([Act 2:47](#) **Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.). Becoming a Christian meant entering into fellowship with the people of God.**

That's changed. The contemporary emphasis in evangelicalism is a believer's personal relationship to Christ. Individual faith is the pervasive theme, and rarely is there any discussion of how believers are supposed to fit into the church.

One contemporary example is this statement about church membership from "A Calvary Chapel" one of a nation wide movement called "Calvary Chapel." I quote;

"Every born-again believer is a member for one church: the Body of Christ.

Beyond that, we do not see local church membership represented in Scripture. Therefore, there is no church membership at Calvary Chapel. There are no tithe commitments, pledges, or teachings like "If you don't belong to our church, you're not saved." We are simply a fellowship of people who desire to worship together, learn together, and serve God together.

If God meets you here, teaches you here, matures you here, and challenges you here, please feel free to call Calvary Chapel of Kennett your home church.

You are also welcome to be a member of another church and attend Calvary Chapel services when you are able.

As an aside, we do have a church phone list. All who regularly attend are welcome to fill out the form in the bulletin and drop it in the offer basket. The phone list is updated and made available to the congregation on a regular basis."

First of all I agree with their initial statement; "Every born-again believer is a member for one church: the Body of Christ.

Of the 115 times the word The word "church" translates ekklēsia, which means "called-out ones." All but a few refer to an assembly of believers in a particular location. For example;

Act 15:22-23 *Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: (23) And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia:*

The vast numbers of churches mentioned in the bible are local assemblies which also have a “Church Membership” role for that location.

I vehemently disagree with those who say as those quoted above *There are no tithe commitments, pledges, or teachings like “If you don’t belong to our church, you’re not saved.” We are simply a fellowship of people who desire to worship together, learn together, and serve God together.*

Let’s address them one at a time;

1. ***Beyond that, we do not see local church membership represented in Scripture. The fact here is simply not true; we have just studied the membership function of a church in acts Act 1:15-23*** *And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,) (16) Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. (17) For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. (18) Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. (19) And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of*

blood. (20) For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take. .

- i. This local church chose a replacement of one of its officers in a business meeting of the whole Local church.
- ii. Those members voted; no outsiders none who had not followed Christ we a part of the decision!
- iii. Later we find a local church commissioning Paul as a missionary

Act 13:1-8 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. (2) As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. (3) And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

1. ***There are no tithe commitments, pledges; Calvary Baptist Church teaches the tithe as the bible teaches it by example of the word of God; it is given as an concerning God's promise of blessing and protection of your financial resources; your personal***

Mal 3:10-12 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. (11) And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her

*fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.
(12) And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a
delightful land, saith the LORD of hosts.*

Yes it is Old Testament but it is in perfect agreement with the New Testament teaching 1Co 16:1-3 *Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. (2) **Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.** (3) And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.*

2. *There are no tithe commitments, pledges, or teachings like “If you don’t belong to our church, you’re not saved.” No biblically sound local church says that your salvation is gained by membership with their particular local church! This is a straw man for those who want to deny the bible’s teaching of the local church.*

When was the last time you read a tract or heard a gospel presentation that ends with a discussion of the believer’s relationship to the church? At best there is a very low emphasis on church involvement, church membership, and being a part of the family of God in the visible, gathered household of saints.

And in the massive effort to make salvation personal, the church has been left behind and overlooked to the detriment of many souls.

Too many people today tend to be ecclesiastical consumers. They’re only interested in what they can get out of their church, and they bounce from congregation to congregation as their whims and interests change.

They don't have any particular commitment or loyalty to a specific assembly of saints.

In fact, they have little to no attachment to the church at all, and are under no obligation for regular attendance—if they make it, they make it; if not, it's no big deal.

For people like that, their faith is completely anchored in their personal relationships with Christ—there is no corporate commitment or responsibility to the people of God. Their Christianity exists completely outside and apart from the church.

But the idea of believers living independently of the church is totally foreign to the New Testament. The Holy Spirit addressed almost every epistle to a local church, and other books like 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon were addressed to key leaders in the church. Even the book of James—which was written to believers scattered by persecution—assumes the recipients are still meeting together and deals heavily with life in the context of the church.

Throughout the New Testament the assumption is always the same: that the people of God are faithfully gathering together in a local assembly where the Word of God is being disseminated. That unified gathering—not just the invisible worldwide church, but the local, visible congregation—is at the heart of Christianity. The church is the only institution the Lord established and promised to bless. Why would anyone who claims to love the Lord want to keep His people at arm's length?

The widespread lack of commitment to the church shows up in many other ways as well—the rampant neglect of baptism and communion, the explosion of parachurch ministries, and the forsaking of the biblical qualifications for church leadership are just a few examples.