

The Origin of the Church

Teaching Goals

To understand the biblical basis for viewing the church as a distinct program from Israel.

To understand the practical importance of viewing the church as a distinct program from Israel.

The foundational questions in formulating our doctrine of the church is:

"Which part of the Bible will we use?"

"Should we use the material in the Old Testament?"

"What about the gospels?"

Our answer to these questions have a number of important implications.

Our answer to these questions depend on our understanding of **when the church began**.

Protestants have tended to answer this question in two basic ways: Some define the church as comprising all believers from Adam on. Accordingly, they feel the freedom to include some of the Old Testament material in their understanding of the church. This is also the position of Roman Catholicism. Others define the church as comprising all Christians from **Pentecost** on. They therefore see the church as a distinct program from Israel. According to these, the primary biblical materials which define the church are Jesus' explicit teaching on the church (e.g., Mt. 16:18; 18:17; 28:18-20), Acts, the epistles, and Rev. 1-3.

Those who believe the church began on the day of Pentecost justify their idea from Scripture in the following way:

1. The church is Christ's body. (Col. 1:18)
2. The baptism by the Holy Spirit is the means by which believers in Christ are incorporated into his body. (1 Cor. 12:13)
3. The baptism by the Holy Spirit began on the day of Pentecost after Christ's resurrection. (Acts 1:5; 2:1-4; 11:15-17)
4. Therefore, the church began on the day of Pentecost after Christ's resurrection.