

CHURCH: GOD ACTS

How did Jesus prepare His people for the coming church?

- Matthew 16:18 - *I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*
- John 14:16-17; 25-26 - *I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you...These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. 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 have said to you.*
- John 16:7-14 - *It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you...When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.*

What is the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the church?

- Acts 1:1–5, 8-9 - *In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father..."you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now"..."you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.*

How did the church begin?

- Acts 2:1–7, 14-18 - *When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language...But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them...But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh...I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below..."*

What are the marks of the church?

- Acts 2:37-38, 41-47 - *They were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" ...So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.*
- The local church is a community of born again believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord. In obedience to Scripture they organize under Spirit-led leaders, gather regularly for preaching and worship, observe the sacraments of baptism and communion, are unified by the Spirit, correct works of the flesh, and scatter to fulfill the great commandment and the great commission as missionaries to the world for God's glory and their joy.

Why is preaching important for the church?

- Malachi 3:1 - *"Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming", says the Lord of hosts.*
- Matthew 3:1-3 - *In those days, John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah [40:3] when he said, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.'"*
- Matthew 4:17 - *From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." = Jesus' ministry begins with preaching*
- 2 Timothy 4:2 - *"Preach the word"*
- 1 Timothy 5:17 - *"Labor in preaching and teaching"*

What is baptism?

- Luke 3:21-22 - *Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."*
- Matthew 28:18-20 - *Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe*

all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

- Acts 2:38 - *Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

1. Do I need to be baptized to be a Christian?
2. How should baptism be conducted?
3. Who should be baptized?

What is communion?

- 1 Corinthians 11:27-31 - *Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged.*
- Meal #1 - Forbidden Fruit without God (Genesis 3)
- Meal #2 - Unblemished Lamb at Passover (Exodus 12)
- Meal #3 - Bread and Wine at the Last Supper (Luke 22)
- Meal #4 - Communion Meal by the Early Church (1 Corinthians 10:14-22; 11:17-34)
- Meal #5 - Wedding Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:6-9; Isaiah 25:6)

What are some Biblical images for the church?

1. Assembly or gathering - people called out from the world to meet with God (Acts 5:11; Romans 16:5)
2. God's people (Acts 15:14; Romans 9:25-26)
3. Family of Abraham (Galatians 3:29; 6:16)
4. Temple of God's presence (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 6:16-18)
5. Priesthood of believers (1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6)
6. Branches of Jesus, the Vine (John 15:1-17)
7. Body with many parts (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31)
8. Community of the Spirit (Ephesians 4:1-16; 1 Corinthians 12:13)
9. Flock with a Shepherd (John 10:1-21)
10. Field planted by God (1 Corinthians 3:6-9)
11. Bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:25; Revelation 19:7)
12. God's Family (1 Timothy 3:15; Galatians 6:10)