

# The Church—No. 1

## Its Beginning

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The church of the Bible had its origin long before it was established. Its origin was in the eternal purpose of God (Eph. 3:10–11). From the earliest moment in God's plan to send His Son to redeem man from sin, the church was included. This is why the church is frequently the subject of prophecy, type and promise in the Old Testament. (The misinterpreters of Scripture who make the church a mere substitute for a kingdom yet to come would do well to study this subject more carefully.)

When did the church or kingdom of Christ become a reality? John the baptizer came preaching, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:14–15). Soon after His baptism by John, Jesus began preaching, "Repent ye; for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Mat. 4:17). The seventy and the twelve were sent to preach a similar message (Mat. 10:7; Luke 10:9). Jesus promised the kingdom would come in the lifetime of His apostles (Mark 9:1). Some make the false claim that the church was established in the days of John. But John had already been beheaded by Herod when Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church" (Mat. 16:18). It still had not come between the resurrection and the ascension (Acts. 1:6).

It came with great power (Mark 9:1; Acts 1:7–8) on the Jewish feast of Pentecost following Jesus' resurrection. Acts 2 tells of the apostles' being baptized in the Holy Spirit, enabling them to speak in languages they had never studied. They told those who believed their message to repent and be baptized unto remission of sins (Acts 2:41, 47). Before this time, it was always a promise. From this time on, the church is a fact.

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