

TOPICAL SERMON: WHEN DID THE CHURCH BEGIN?

[2] The title of the sermon: "WHEN DID THE CHURCH BEGIN?"

Did "THE CHURCH" Really Begin In Acts Chapter 2?

- So many preachers today are teaching that the church began in the Book of Acts.
- Is this when the church began? We're going to look at this in detail today.
- You might ask, "Why do we need to know this?" Because there's so much false doctrine on this.
- People fall for dispensationalism constantly. They fall for other lies constantly.
- Why? Because they aren't studying and using God's words to form their personal doctrine.

For example, if you are reading and studying the Bible and forming doctrine from that study, we should match.

- Some preachers will say that the church is the New Testament church and is started in Acts Chapter 2.
- There are so many false "Christian" denominations and churches that teach this.
- What is church? We've gone over this before. It's very simple. Church is a gathering together of believers.
- Church is not a building. I just talked to a man this week who was seeking help from me.
- He's 61 years old. I asked him if he knew where he was going when he died.
- Let me tell you what he told me. He says this, and I will quote this directly:

[3] "In respect to God, that is a topic that I have struggled with for decades. It's not that I believe or don't believe, it's that I simply don't know. I think that I was extremely tainted by my Grandfather who was very high up in the Anglican Church and was not a very nice man! He came across as very arrogant and tended to speak down to many people as if he was above them."

[4] "I remember asking him to preside over my wedding in my parents backyard as we wove through the fruit trees etc, but he said no because it wasn't a house of God. I never understood that because I thought that the world was a house of God while a church was built by a man. Not only did he not preside, he refused to even come to the wedding."

[5] "From that point on, I think it has really left a sore point for me. It's not that I am shut off from the idea, but more tainted. I am not sure why I am sharing this with you, but for some reason I feel comfortable."

- Now I don't know much about the Anglican church but I do know they are closely related to the Catholic false religion.
- This man who doesn't know God at this point knows more than this Anglican grandfather of his.
- This man who doesn't know God sees the arrogance of this man who thinks he's something great.
- This man knows that a CHURCH isn't about the building. You don't need a building to have church.
- It makes it much easier to have church in a building versus the wilderness.
- Church is a gathering together of believers who trust in God Almighty.

[6] Acts 7:37-38 This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. 38 This is he, that was in the church in the

wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:

- If you look closely at Acts 7 verse 38, you'll see that Moses was in the church in the wilderness.
- Is that what the Scriptures say? What book are we in? We're in the Book of Acts.
- We're in the same book that preachers use to say the church started in Acts Chapter 2.

After we read that Scripture right there, did the church start in Acts Chapter 2?

- In Acts Chapter 2, where are we within the timeline of the Bible?
- Acts Chapter 2 would be after Jesus died on the cross, arose from dead, and ascended to heaven.
- If Moses was in the church in the wilderness, would this be before or after Acts Chapter 2?
- Let's find the Old Testament Scripture with Moses.

[7] Exodus 19:1-2 In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. 2 For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount.

[8] Exodus 19:3-4 And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; 4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

[9] Exodus 19:5-6 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: 6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

[10] Exodus 19:7-8 And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. 8 And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.

- That's the Scripture referenced in Acts Chapter 7 about Moses and the church in the wilderness.
- This happened long before Acts Chapter 2 or the Book of Acts entirely. LONG BEFORE.
- So, 100% without a doubt, CHURCH existed long before Acts Chapter 2. God says so.
- False preachers can attempt to twist that Scripture all they want, but they can't.

Church is not a building. They didn't have some fancy church building out in the wilderness. THEY HAD CHURCH.

- What did they have? They had an assembly. They had people gathered together that believed in the Lord.
- They had a congregation there in the wilderness. No fancy building. They were living in tents.
- When you have a congregation of believers who are gathered together to worship God, you have church.

[11] Matthew 18:20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

- I want to make sure we understand that today.
- If you're gathered together as believers to read the Bible together, to study, to worship, then you are having church.
- People will say, "But the pastor isn't there so it's not church." Do you understand what you just said?

Jesus just said, "For where 2 or 3 are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

- So you need the pastor there? Is Jesus Christ HIMSELF not good enough for you? Seriously?
- You should be a part of a local church and gathering of believers, but you don't always need all of those people around to have church and worship God.
- You simply need one other person with you. THEN, you're having church.
- You're gathered together in His name.

No matter how many times I'll say this, it just doesn't sink in to people's heads. They can't hear it.

- They are so accustomed to all of these church buildings, worship services with light shows, concerts.
- They believe that to be church. God never says any of these things ANYWHERE.
- Should you have a church leader. Yes. We'll get into that. Should you have a bishop or pastor? Yes.
- We'll see the differences in the church of the Old Testament and the church of the New Testament.

The Church Began With Adam, Eve, And Their Family

But understand today, that the CHURCH began with Adam and Eve who were a congregation.

- They added Abel who believed. Their congregation grew. They had other children.
- When did church begin? All the way back to the beginning. Adam and Eve believed in God. Obviously.
- We know that Abel did 100% for sure. The Bible refers to Abel as a righteous man.

[12] Matthew 23:34-35 Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: 35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

- When Adam, Eve, and Abel would gather together to worship God, they would have church.
- Is this mentioned in the Bible anywhere? Not word for word. But we do see this.

[13] Luke 11:50-51 That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; 51 From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.

- We see that Abel is a prophet. What does that mean? He was a preacher of God's word.
- When people gathered together to hear Abel preach or teach the truth, that would be church.
- But, the Bible doesn't say specifically that church began with Adam and Eve. That's my guess.
- But the Bible does say that church existed with Moses in the wilderness.
- So, we know for sure that church existed with Moses in the wilderness. It's as simple as that.
- "THE CHURCH," as preachers love to say, didn't start in Acts Chapter 2. Very clear in the Bible.

The words congregation or congregations is found 367 times in 334 verses within the King James Bible.

- All but one of those instances are found in the Old Testament.
- So, again, the word congregation is used in the Old Testament but only once in the New Testament.
- If we look up the words church and churches, we find 117 matches in 114 verses.
- All of the church instances are within the New Testament.

- The word church isn't found in the Old Testament.

The New Testament calls the congregation of the children of Israel in the wilderness with Moses a CHURCH.

- The Bible is telling us that congregation is used in the Old Testament
- Church is used in the New Testament.
- Church and congregation of believers are the same thing. Do you see this?
- I want you to see the first time the word congregation is used in the Bible.

[14] Exodus 12:1-2 *And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, 2 This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.*

[15] Exodus 12:3-4 *Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: 4 And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb.*

- There's the first time there in verse 3. "Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel."
- Gather them together and speak to them the words of the Lord. That's church.
- What are we doing right now? We're gathered together. I am speaking the words of the Lord.
- Let's look a little closer at the location of all the Scriptures within the Bible with congregation.

[16]

Old Testament (333)		New Testament (1)	
Genesis (0)	Ecclesiastes (0)	Matthew (0)	1 Peter (0)
Exodus (48)	Song of Solomon (0)	Mark (0)	2 Peter (0)
Leviticus (50)	Isaiah (1)	Luke (0)	1 John (0)
Numbers (120)	Jeremiah (2)	John (0)	2 John (0)
Deuteronomy (7)	Lamentations (1)	Acts (1)	3 John (0)
Joshua (16)	Ezekiel (0)	Romans (0)	Jude (0)
Judges (5)	Daniel (0)	1 Corinthians (0)	Revelation (0)
Ruth (0)	Hosea (1)	2 Corinthians (0)	
1 Samuel (1)	Joel (1)	Galatians (0)	
2 Samuel (0)	Amos (0)	Ephesians (0)	
1 Kings (8)	Obadiah (0)	Philippians (0)	
2 Kings (0)	Jonah (0)	Colossians (0)	
1 Chronicles (9)	Micah (1)	1 Thessalonians (0)	
2 Chronicles (26)	Nahum (0)	2 Thessalonians (0)	
Ezra (5)	Habakkuk (0)	1 Timothy (0)	
Nehemiah (5)	Zephaniah (0)	2 Timothy (0)	
Esther (0)	Haggai (0)	Titus (0)	
Job (2)	Zechariah (0)	Philemon (0)	
Psalms (21)	Malachi (0)	Hebrews (0)	
Proverbs (3)		James (0)	

- You'll see all the books of the Bible with the word congregation in blue followed by the number of times.

- In Exodus, we've already looked at a couple of those, but you see 48 times.
- Where do you see the most? NUMBERS. Do you remember the Book of Numbers? Awesome book.
- We can learn so much about how they were organized in their congregation.

[17] Numbers 1:1-2 And the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of the congregation, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying, 2 Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, after their families, by the house of their fathers, with the number of their names, every male by their polls;

- Notice that they now have a tabernacle. If you read through Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, you'll see this.
- They have built a tabernacle of the congregation. Now they have a building in the wilderness.
- But the tabernacle and building is not where the church started.
- Some people believe: "If we build a new church building, then we will have a church."
- No, you got it backwards. You must have a congregation of believers first. You don't need a building.
- That's not the definition of a church. But yes, a building helps you gather together and worship.
- If you keep reading in Numbers Chapter 1, you see this.

[18] Numbers 1:3-4 From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel: thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies. 4 And with you there shall be a man of every tribe; every one head of the house of his fathers.

[19] Numbers 1:5-8 And these are the names of the men that shall stand with you: of the tribe of Reuben; Elizur the son of Shedeur. 6 Of Simeon; Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. 7 Of Judah; Nahshon the son of Amminadab. 8 Of Issachar; Nethaneel the son of Zuar.

[20] Numbers 1:9-12 Of Zebulun; Eliab the son of Helon. 10 Of the children of Joseph: of Ephraim; Elishama the son of Ammihud: of Manasseh; Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur. 11 Of Benjamin; Abidan the son of Gideoni. 12 Of Dan; Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.

[21] Numbers 1:13-16 Of Asher; Pagiel the son of Ocran. 14 Of Gad; Eliasaph the son of Deuel. 15 Of Naphtali; Ahira the son of Enan. 16 These were the renowned of the congregation, princes of the tribes of their fathers, heads of thousands in Israel.

- These were the RENOWNED or distinguished of the congregation or the church in the wilderness.

[22] Numbers 1:53 But the Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of testimony, that there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel: and the Levites shall keep the charge of the tabernacle of testimony.

- You see congregation over and over within the Bible.
- Pay attention to all of these as you read through the Bible again.
- And yes, this is the church because Acts Chapter 7 tells us this. It is a gathering of believers.
- Now, did every single one of them believe? No, they didn't.
- Not every church is filled with 100% believers on Jesus Christ.
- The 12 disciples weren't all believers of Jesus as CHRIST AND SAVIOR.

[23] Numbers 16:1-2 *Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men: 2 And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown:*

[24] Numbers 16:3 *And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?*

- Those men stated that all were HOLY in their congregation.

[25] Numbers 16:4-5 *And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face: 5 And he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even to morrow the LORD will shew who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto him: even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him.*

- Moses says, "Tomorrow we will find out who is holy. The Lord will show us."
- Last time I checked HOLY MEN OF GOD don't get swallowed up by the earth and taken straight to hell.
- That's what happened to Korah and all his family.

[26] Numbers 16:31-32 *And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: 32 And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods.*

[27] Numbers 16:33 *They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation.*

- Just because you're in a church or congregation, this doesn't mean all the people are good.
- This doesn't mean all the people have believed on Jesus Christ.
- Just because you send your kids to church, it doesn't mean some wicked man won't molest them.
- CHURCHES ARE NOT SAFE from wicked men and women. Understand that right now.
- Not all of these men and women in the congregation believed God.
- They went down alive into the pit. The earth closed upon them. These people were just like Judas Iscariot.

[28] Jude 10-11 *But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. 11 Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.*

- Core right there is KORAH from Numbers Chapter 16. Evil men and women creep into the churches.
- They creep into the congregations. That's what the entire Book of Jude is about.
- They wanted to oppose God and make it harder on Moses.
- Those wicked people are in the churches and the congregations. Most of them are the leaders now.
- They don't want to agree with God and His words. They want GAIN for themselves.

Two Or More Believers Gathered In His Name Form A Church

But, if you have 2 or more believers gathered together in the name of Jesus, you have a congregation of believers.

- Jesus Christ says so. With that said, let's look at the first time the word church is used in the entire Bible.
- As I said earlier, you don't see the word church in the Old Testament.
- But we do see CHURCH in Acts Chapter 7 referring to the congregation of Israel in Exodus with Moses.
- So, we know that the church existed all the way back to Moses.
- But, where is the first time the word church is used in the Bible. Is it Acts Chapter 2? No, it isn't.
- The first time is in Matthew Chapter 16 and the second is in Matthew Chapter 18.
- Third time is Acts Chapter 2. Let's look at the first two instances.

[29] Matthew 16:13-15 *When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? 14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. 15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?*

[30] Matthew 16:16-17 *And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.*

- Jesus asks the disciples, "Who do you say I am?" Peter answers first.
- "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Peter just confessed that Jesus is the Christ.
- Jesus is the Son of the LIVING GOD. "THE" living God.
- God the Father revealed these things to Peter. Next verse has the word church.

[31] Matthew 16:18 *And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

- So, what do we see here? This is a HUGE verse to many people.
- This verse alone was twisted by the Catholics. They believe Peter was the first pope.
- Peter was married. The Bible tells us this CLEARLY.

[32] Matthew 8:14 *And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever.*

- But the Catholics don't care what God actually says. They care about their own desires.
- Let's read Matthew 16:18 again very slowly.

[33] Matthew 16:18 *And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

- Jesus says this to Peter directly. That's what THEE means right there. He's only talking to Peter.
- "Thou art Peter, and upon THIS ROCK I will build my church;"
- "And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

So, there's many different interpretations of this Scripture. For example, some will say that Peter is the rock.

- Others will say that Jesus is looking at Peter and then pointing at Himself saying UPON THIS ROCK.
- We know 100% for sure that JESUS IS "THE" ROCK. But we also know that Jesus is the foundation.
- We build upon His foundation with other rocks. The name of Peter is Cephas or by interpretation STONE.

- No matter the correct interpretation of this, we know the church didn't start with Peter.
- We know that PETER is not the cornerstone or "THE" rock of the church.
- He can only be a foundational ROCK through Jesus Christ to begin with. Jesus is the first STONE laid.

[34] 1 Corinthians 3:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

- Jesus is THE FIRST of the church. Even back to Adam, Eve, Abel, and Moses, JESUS was there.
- Jesus is the eternal God. He was before all of them. He showed up face to face with many of them.
- They believed on Him. They didn't know His name as Jesus yet, but they knew He was God.
- He was their FOUNDATION. He was their STONE. They trusted that His sacrifice would come later.
- They knew He would do what He said He would do. He always has and always will do what He said.

[35] Ephesians 2:18-20 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. 19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

- HE IS THE CORNERSTONE. Actually, He is the CHIEF cornerstone. What does that mean?
- The corner stone is always laid first in building something. You MUST have that first to get a good building.

[36] Ephesians 2:21-22 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

- You MUST have the CHIEF cornerstone before you can build any CHURCH or BUILDING.
- This is the only way the building will be fitly framed together.
- Peter can't be the chief cornerstone. If he were, we'd all be in big trouble.
- He denied Jesus Christ 3 times. He did all kinds of things wrong. He's a man. He is not God.
- Men will fail you. Jesus Christ will not.
- If Jesus were not the foundation of Peter, he wouldn't have made it.

The Bible says that Jesus is the chief corner stone. That's very clear over and over again.

- THEN, we are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. ALL OF THEM.
- If you look at the foundation of the church from the very beginning, you'll see all saved there.
- JESUS is "THE" foundation. There can be no other foundation but Jesus Christ.
- Then, Abel is at the foundation. THEN, Abraham is there. Moses is there. Sarah is there.
- Jacob is there. Joseph is there. Joshua. Ruth. Boaz. David. Jeremiah. Isaiah. Daniel. Malachi.
- Matthew. Mark. Luke. John. Peter.

At the moment Peter believed on Jesus Christ, he was laid a STONE upon the foundation of Jesus Christ.

- That's what the confession is showing there. Peter believes. He is now a stone on the foundation of Jesus.
- You could say that Jesus was telling him that the church is built upon the foundation of Jesus.
- Jesus doesn't say that the church is starting on Peter. Let's read it again.
- You tell me if this Scripture says "THE CHURCH" is brand new and will be built on Peter.

[37] Matthew 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

- What FIRST ROCK was the church built upon? Jesus Christ. There is no other foundation but Jesus.
- Now, is Peter a rock in the foundation of the church? Yes, but Peter isn't the first rock in the church.
- Acts Chapter 7, again, proves that. Moses was a rock of the church before Peter.
- Abel was a rock for the church before Peter. Jesus is THE ROCK. Peter isn't THE ROCK. Seriously?
- Some false preachers are teaching this. Don't ever fall for this.
- "THE CHURCH" didn't start with Peter. It's so obvious.

Peter Led Many People To Believe On Jesus Christ

But did Peter lead other people to Jesus Christ? YES HE DID. A great, great number of people.

- He is a rock in the church of God, which is a gathering together of believers.
- Have I ever had church with Peter? No, I haven't. He's never been here in church with us.
- All believers of all time won't be gathered together until the first resurrection.
- Some people will say that it's only "THE CHURCH" from Acts Chapter 2 that will be gathered together.
- You have to understand what they're saying because it's evil.

They will say that King David won't be a part of the first resurrection because it's only the church.

- "And THE CHURCH started in Acts Chapter 2. Obviously, David wasn't a part of THE CHURCH."
- This is what these evil man-made doctrines are teaching. David will be there.
- At the rapture, David will receive a new and glorified body.
- He's been a member of God's church for a long time. David had church when he was alive.
- He gathered together with other believers for church. Constantly.

So again, did Jesus state in Matthew Chapter 16 that the church was starting brand new with Peter?

- Take a close look. He doesn't say that. Will Jesus build His church upon Peter? Yes, He did and does.
- When people read what Peter preached and believe on Jesus Christ, Peter is still building the church.
- Paul is a foundation in the church.
- When people read what he wrote and believe it, they have Paul as their foundation.

Same thing with all the prophets in the Bible. Isaiah.

- When you believe what he wrote, he is your foundation.
- I believe my foundation is John who wrote 1 John Chapter 5, which led to me being saved.
- But would any of them be there without THE ROCK of Jesus Christ? No, they wouldn't.
- When you preach the Gospel and people are saved, you're building upon your foundation or rock.
- But beneath your rock is all the others and Jesus is there holding all of us up at the foundation.
- Let's look at the second time the word church is used in the entire Bible.
- I want you to pay close attention to where we are in the Bible. Matthew Chapter 18.

[38] Matthew 18:15-16 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. 16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

[39] Matthew 18:17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

- That's Jesus Christ speaking right there. This is far before Acts Chapter 2.
- Remember, Acts Chapter 2 is AFTER Jesus Christ died on the cross, arose from the dead, and ascended into heaven.
- Jesus dies on the cross in Matthew Chapter 27. According to false preachers, the church didn't exist here.
- They will say, "We haven't reached the beginning of THE CHURCH." That's a lie.

Jesus says, "And if your brother won't hear you, tell it into the church." Isn't that what it says?

- "TELL IT UNTO THE CHURCH." Was Jesus referring to something that didn't exist yet?
- No, He wasn't. The church existed right there and we haven't reached Acts Chapter 2.
- Again, more proof that the church is a congregation of believers that are called brothers and sisters.
- I want you to see this so you aren't fooled ever again by dispensationalists and false religions.
- Is Acts Chapter 7 and Matthew Chapter 18 not enough to disprove these lies about Acts Chapter 2?
- This should be enough. We should also know that Peter isn't THE ROCK. Jesus is THE ROCK.

[40] Leviticus 8:4 And Moses did as the LORD commanded him; and the assembly was gathered together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

- That's church. An assembly gathered together unto the Lord.
- Does the church from the Old Testament look a little different than the church of the New Testament?
- Yes it does. But, in reality, there is no difference because it's all about Jesus Christ who is the same today, yesterday, and forever.

God had rules for the congregation of the children of Israel. You can read all about those rules.

- You can even see how they were organized. You can see who took care of the tabernacle.
- God was there in the middle of them. Then the Levites surrounded the tabernacle.
- Moses and Aaron were to be to the East of the Tabernacle. Let's take a look.

[41]

- The church in the wilderness changed on the outer appearance. God organized them differently.
- This went away, but the church has never went away.
- Members of the church are believers. When we gather together, church begins.
- Just because you're separate from the other believers, this doesn't mean church doesn't exist.

I don't believe that we're having church unless we're assembled together in His name.

- For example, I can't have church with Moses. Moses isn't here. We are members of God's church, though.
- We can't have church with someone in California today because we aren't gathered together physically.
- They are over there and we are over here. We must gather together to have church.
- What you see there is a gathering together of believers with God at the center.
- They were physically gathered together as believers.
- Not all of them were believers but there were enough believers. Moses and Aaron were there.
- Minimum requirement fulfilled.

Now, the church has changed its physical appearance again.

- We don't resemble the Israelites camp layout in the Book of Numbers.

- We don't have a camp with a tabernacle in the middle, Levites surrounding, and then 12 tribes surrounding the Levites.
- The church is still the same, though, in its spiritual makeup of believers.
- Jesus is THE FOUNDATION. Jesus is THE ROCK. But all the same people are members.
- When those members of the church gather together, we have CHURCH together.
- We worship God together.

[42] Acts 2:47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

- God adds to the church. It didn't just start right there. He didn't say those were the first church members.
- He always has added to His church from the beginning. The church has existed from the beginning.
- But there were different rules for the congregation in the Old Testament compared to the New Testament.
- After Jesus came, changes in the church were made. Changes for the congregation were given.
- Rules were provided. Why? Because God made the division of the old covenant and the new covenant.
- God made that division. He made the rules for the church in this day and age.

There Are True Local Churches All Over This World

There is a local church. If you read in the New Testament, there are churches scattered all over.

- If you read the Book of Revelation, you'll see there are different churches in different locations.
- We are not all gathered together in one location all the time like the children of Israel in that camp.
- Each local church is ruling over their own congregation with Jesus Christ at the center.
- He is the leader of the church and head of the church.

[43] Ephesians 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

[44] Colossians 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

- We know Jesus is the head of the church. HE IS THAT ROCK. Always has been. It didn't just start in Acts Chapter 2.
- In a local church, the Bible teaches us that we have bishops or what we call pastors today.
- A local church is a BODY of believers. Jesus is the BEGINNING of the church. Always has been.
- Not Peter. The Bible says, "And HE is the head of the body, THE CHURCH: who is the beginning."
- He has preeminence in all things and especially the church.

So, again, is Abel a part of the church? Yes, all the way back to Abel. He is a foundational rock.

- But he is not Jesus. Is Noah a rock in the church? Yes, he is. He is not excluded from THE CHURCH.
- Understand that today. The church looks different today.

[45] *Philippians 1:1-2 Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: 2 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

- God wants bishops and deacons in the churches.
- Notice this Scripture is talking about the church at Philippi.
- Yes, one church. And the Bible says, “with the BISHOPS and DEACONS.”
- PLURAL. Was there always just one BISHOP or pastor in these church examples? No, there wasn’t.
- As a very small church, do we need multiple bishops? No, we don’t.
- Do we need multiple deacons? No, we don’t. But as the local church grows, then we add.

[46] *1 Timothy 3:1-3 This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. 2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; 3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;*

- The churches today are to have 2 offices: bishops and deacons.
- The bishops or the pastors are the leaders.
- Notice this says, “If a MAN desire the office of a bishop, HE desireth a good work.”
- “The husband of one wife.” Why do people ignore these Scriptures?
- They do the same with the entire Bible. They ignore all the requirements.

[47] *1 Timothy 3:4-6 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; 5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) 6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.*

- HE must rule HIS own house well. HIS children must be in subjection. HIS, HIS, HIS.
- Children, children, children. He must have children. HE means man. He must be a man.

[48] *1 Timothy 3:8-10 Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; 9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. 10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.*

[49] *1 Timothy 3:11-13 Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. 12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. 13 For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

- Similar requirements for deacons. Those are the two offices in the church today.
- There weren’t bishops and deacons IN THE CHURCH until after the death of Jesus Christ.
- Things changed, but the church has existed from the beginning.
- Today, we don’t have priests that perform animal sacrifices. Jesus is THE SACRIFICE.

So, I hope I’ve answered the question today: “When did the church begin?”

- The church has existed ever since there were 2 believers gathered in HIS NAME.
- Acts Chapter 7 says there is a church in the wilderness with Moses.

- Jesus says to take your matter to the church before Acts Chapter 2.
- So, obviously, Jesus did not tell Peter that HIS CHURCH was starting brand new with him.
- That is 100% false doctrine. The church started with Jesus and He is the cornerstone.
- Without Him, there wouldn't be a Savior to believe in and on.

Let's pray.