

A Biblical View of the Church



*In the beginning God created the heavens
and the earth. – Genesis 1:1*



The Heavens and the Earth

- God categorized everything as
 - All things have an eternal (heavenly) purpose
 - This heavenly purpose is to reflect on earth
 - The enemy wants us to be heavenly *or* earthly
- God's goal is to restore fallen earth (people)
 - He has chosen to do this through His people
 - When He is finished (Revelation 21:1-2)...
 - The Church is called the Bride of the Lamb
 - The Church is called a Holy City (new Jerusalem)
 - These are the two purposes of the Church

What is the Church?

- God created individuals (male and female)
- God created the family through marriage
- God then created the anti-type (foreshadow) of the Church in Genesis 8:20-22
 - Noah built an altar (as a priest) to offer sacrifices
 - Noah then interceded in prayer as a king
 - The result was an intervention of heaven to earth
- God created civil government (state) to protect rights that He gave, starting with life

The Abrahamic Covenant

- Genesis 12:1-3 – blessing and curse...
- There were two parts of this covenant:
 - Receiving a blessing – *circumcision* (Ge. 17:10)
 - Being a blessing – *generational continuity*
- Receiving was the priestly part (Ro. 2:29)
- Blessing the nations was the kingly part
 - Genesis 18:17-19 - training three generations
 - Knowing God's Law (His standard); and Equity (*how to strategically get there*)

Exodus 19 - Mt. Sinai Convocation



An Ekklesia gathering as Priests and Kings

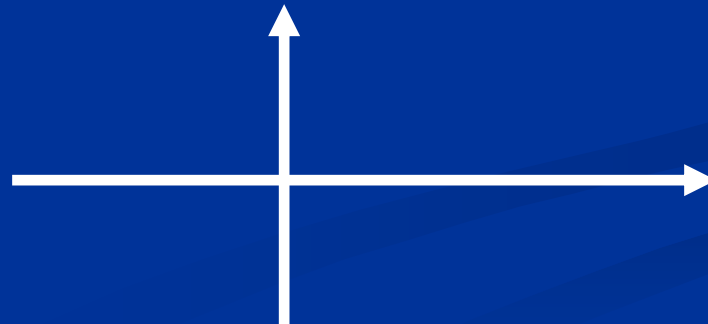
An O.T. Ekklesia Assembly

- Acts 7:38 – *This is he (Christ in OT) who was in the congregation (ekklesia) in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, the one who received living oracles to give to us.*
- The foreshadowing of the Church
 - Christ in the midst of the Church as Prophet
 - The congregation a Priest (commune with God)
 - The congregation a Kingdom (impact culture)

The Identity of the Church; *a Bride and a City*

“And I John saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” – Revelation 21:2

The Bride of Christ



Holy City

In Summary, the Church is...

- God's "called out people" for the purpose of being priests and kings in the earth (Rev. 1:6)
- 1st Peter 2:2-9 – the Church is *both* a spiritual house (priest) *and* a holy nation (king)
- Great Commission (Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-20)
 - Jesus has all authority in heaven *and* earth
 - Go and make disciples (learners) – cultural impact
 - Preach the gospel to everyone – make priests

Matthew Henry on the Great Commission

How far his commission is extended; to all nations. Go and disciple all nations. Not that they must go all together into every place but by consent disperse themselves in such manner as might best diffuse the light of the gospel.... that Christianity should be twisted in with national constitutions, that the kingdoms of the world should become Christ's kingdoms, and their kings the church's nursing-fathers.

Matthew Henry continues...

What is the principal intention of this commission; to disciple all nations. 'Admit them disciples; do your utmost to make the nations Christian nations'... Christ the mediator is setting up a kingdom in the world, bring the nations to be his subjects; setting up a school, bring the nations to be his scholars; raising an army for the carrying on of the war against the powers of darkness, enlist the nations of the earth under his banner.

The Church as the Bride of Christ

“...tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen and a publican.” – Matthew 18:17

- Local church harmony cultivates Christ's presence
- Harmony a basis for sharing the gospel - evangelism
- Letters of Commendation – member accountability
- The Church is a court of reconciliation (purity)
- Discipleship advances the Kingdom relationally:
“what is bound in heaven shall be bound on earth”

The Church advances Christ's Kingdom of heaven on earth through reconciling relationships

Jay Adams on Reconciliation

Reconciliation is a change of relationship between persons (God and man; man and man) that involves at least three elements: (1) confession of sin to God and to any others who have been offended; (2) forgiveness by God and by the one who has been offended; (3) the establishment of a new relationship between the offender and God and between the offender and the offended party (parties). In reconciliation, enmity and alienation are replaced by peace and fellowship.

The Church as a Holy City

“....thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it...” – Matthew 16:18

- Universal Church – every believer who confesses the Rock (boulder) of revelation in Christ
- Christ builds the Church to manifest His Kingdom
- Gates of Hell *cannot withstand* the Church
- Keys of the Kingdom applied to culture: *“whatever has been bound in heaven shall be bound on earth”*

The Church advances on the Gates (authority) of Hell;
bringing some of heaven to earth

What is Culture?

“...labor ...to improve good qualities... or growth of the mind... of virtue.” - Webster’s 1828 Dictionary

*“Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the **issues** of life.”* – Proverbs 4:23

Issues – (Hebrew) – *“to go out, to go forth”* –
produce, germinate, promulgate

Issues – *“event, consequence; end or ultimate result.”*
– Webster’s 1828 Dictionary

Culture is the atmosphere created by behaviors that flow from the heart

What is the Mission of the Church in relation to the Culture?

“...thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.” – Matthew 6:10

...manifest the Kingdom (rule) of Christ

“...the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant” – Matthew 20:25-27

How? ...by influencing culture through service

Rushdoony on the Church and Culture

Every culture is a religion externalized, a faith incarnated into life and action. The mainspring of every culture is its basic faith, its religious beliefs which undergird its hopes, action, and perspective.

When that faith begins to decay, the culture decays... If a religion is isolated from its world and is confined to its church or temple, it is irrelevant to that world because it is not its motive force. The religion of a culture is that motive force which governs human action in every realm and embodies itself in the life, institutions, hopes, and dreams of a society.

Beatitudes – *attitudes toward the culture* (a godly disposition toward others)

- (1) – Poor in spirit (humble) – kingdom of heaven
- (2) – Mourn (burdened) – comforted
- (3) – Meek (tamed) – inherit the earth (culture)
- (4) – Hunger and thirst (for righteousness) – filled
- (5) – Merciful (show kindness) – receive mercy
- (6) – Pure (selfless motive) – see God move
- (7) – Peacemaker (reconcile) – called child of God
- (8) – Persecuted (falsely) – rejoice – great reward

“Make you friends with the riches of iniquity, that when you shall want, they may receive you...” – Luke 16:9

The Similitudes; *the Church's responsibility to the earth*

(1) The Salt of the Earth

“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.” - Matthew 5:13

Attitude – actively serving; sometimes speaking

Influence – preserving righteousness; creating thirst (flavor); cleansing and redeeming

The Similitudes; *the Church's responsibility to the earth*

(2) The Light of the World

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid... Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” - Matthew 5:14-16

Attitude – salt before light; inside-out; bottom-up

Influence – individuals, then homes, churches and finally states and nations are influenced by the rule of Christ