

". . . qahal, when translated ekklesia, is always used in reference to an assembly or meeting of some description in one locality, i.e., a physical assembly, and the word is never used to represent the idea of a mystic company of saints joined in a spiritual way, though scattered geographically. The idea of the church as an ecclesia composed of individual saints widely scattered geographically is never found in the Old Testament."

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"Of the major significance is the declaration, 'I will build my church.' What is here contemplated is obviously not a continuation of that which had begun in the Old Testament In the face of national rejection on the part of Israel, He proclaims a new divine purpose, namely the formation of a new assembly to be delineated on a spiritual rather than racial lines and without the territorial or political characteristics. It was to be composed of those who, like Peter, had confessed Jesus Christ as the Son of God."

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"Most expositors agree that the New Testament church in some sense began on the Day of Pentecost The church could not properly begin until after His death and resurrection and the coming of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, the prophecy of Christ that they would be baptized by the Spirit 'not many days hence' (Acts 1:5) was fulfilled and with this the New Testament church formally began. . . . The apostolic church could be distinguished as having two major aspects: (1) its outer testimony as a body of professed followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and (2) the spiritual church composed of all true believers and referred to as "the body of Christ" (I Corinthians 12:13, 27). The distinction is one of a sphere of profession in contrast to a sphere of reality, the outward in contrast to the inward, the geographic or local in contrast to the universal."

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"The program for the church was unfolded in principle on the last night Christ spent with His disciples prior to His crucifixion and is contained in the Upper Room Discourse (John 13-17). Here is the great Magna Charta of the church Prominent in the revelation given by Christ to His disciples is the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost and in the subsequent experience of the church. Christ announced this in John 14:16-17 In these verses Christ anticipated that the Spirit of God would come after His ascension to heaven and would take up the task of building a church or a body of true believers composed of both Jews and Gentiles the Spirit thus given is promised to abide with believers in this present age forever, in contrast to the ministry of the Spirit in the Old Testament in which he would come only in a temporary way as in the case of King Saul Christ contrasts what was true before and after Pentecost in the expression, 'for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.' Here is the theological distinction between the work of the Spirit before Pentecost and after Pentecost. . . . prior to Pentecost . . . it is described as the ministry of one who dwells with the saints. After Pentecost, a new relationship is described as the Holy Spirit being in you (John 14:17)."

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