

# *Did the Body of Christ Begin at Pentecost?*

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*M*any Christians assume the Body of Christ began on the day of Pentecost. Without ever stopping to prove why (I Thessalonians 5:21), they then move ahead to establish their doctrines concerning this dispensation with this as the key. Have you ever considered what actually took place on Pentecost? What follows is a list of fourteen reasons why the church could not have begun at Pentecost.

1. There was already a church in existence on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41, 47). This church was *not* the church which is His Body (Ephesians 1:22-23), because this was hid until it was revealed to Paul (Ephesians 3). This church, to which the believers of Pentecost were added, was the kingdom church and was based on the confession of Peter that Jesus was the Christ (or Messiah). Peter was then given the keys to this kingdom church and the power to “bind” and “loose” (Matthew 16:15-20; c.f. John 20:23).
2. Peter preached the “*Last Days*” of Israel on Pentecost and not the first days of the church which is His Body (Acts 2:16-17).
3. There is no indication in Acts 2, or anywhere in Scripture, that the Body of Christ is being formed on Pentecost.
4. Pentecost was a Jewish feast day given in the Law of Moses (Leviticus 23; Deuteronomy 16). In the dispensation of the Grace of God there is no observance of days, and they are spoken of as “*weak and beggarly elements*” and “*bondage*” (Galatians 4:9-11). It is inconceivable that the Lord would begin a church on— a feast day which He had for another economy.
5. There was no casting off of the nation Israel on the day of Pentecost, as was necessary for the establishing of the Body of Christ (Romans 11:11-15, 32). On the contrary, the first real offer of the kingdom was made by Peter on Pentecost. The kingdom was not offered during the Gospels; it was only said to be “*at hand.*” It actually was impossible for it to have been offered until after the New Testament was established by the death of Christ (Luke 17:24-25; 24:26). Christ must first have suffered and then have entered into His glory (I Peter 1:11).
6. The Body of Christ is a joint body of Jews and Gentiles. Peter only addressed Jews at Pentecost. Notice the words, “*Ye men of Judea,*” “*Ye men of Israel,*” “*Ye,*” “*You,*” “*Your,*” “*Men and Brethren,*” and the “*House of Israel*” throughout the passage (Acts 2).

7. Part of the Pentecostal celebration was the two wave loaves of Leviticus 23. This is used as a type of the “*Jews and Gentiles*” by many dispensationalists, but this cannot match the clear teaching of I Corinthians 10:17, which shows that the body of Christ is one bread.
8. Part of the message that Peter preached on Pentecost involved water baptism as a requirement for salvation (Acts 2:38). Water baptism has no part in the gospel message committed to Paul for the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 1:17; Ephesians 4:5).
9. On the day of Pentecost the promise of the Father was fulfilled to Israel. This was a spiritual baptism where Christ was the baptizer, and Israel was baptized into the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11-12; Acts 1:5). This spiritual baptism is quite different from the baptism of this dispensation, where the Holy Spirit is the baptizer and the believer is baptized into the Body of Christ. The student of the Bible should learn to make a difference where God makes a difference. There are two different spiritual baptisms: one is to the kingdom church, the other is to the church which is His Body. One is associated with signs and wonders, and the other is not (I Corinthians 12:13; Romans 6:3-4).
10. Pentecost was a fulfillment of prophecy (Acts 2:16, 33; 3:24), whereas the body of Christ was a mystery which had been kept secret since the world began (Colossians 1:24-26).
11. If there was any dispensational change, the Apostles were completely unaware of it, for they continued at the Temple (Acts 2:46; 3:1, 3, 8, 11; 5:20-21, 25, 42).
12. The Twelve and the kingdom church at Jerusalem also continued, throughout the book of Acts, to observe the Law (Acts 21:20-25; 22:12).
13. The kingdom church, in accordance with the kingdom teachings of Christ, sold their possessions and established a common treasury (Acts 2:44-45; 3:6; 4:32-35).
14. Peter, in his message on the day of Pentecost, did not preach the Gospel of the Grace of God, which is the clear and distinctive message of Paul given to him by revelation.

Some would argue at this point that God started the Body of Christ here, despite the accounts given in Acts 2, and that Peter was simply ignorant of it being formed. This is hard to believe since Peter had his understanding opened (Luke 24:45), the indwelling of the Spirit (John 20:22), the Baptism of the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:5), and the filling with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4). No, Peter was not ignorant – he was completely aware of the program which Christ was carrying out at Pentecost and was right on target.

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