

4 | FROM CHURCH TO EKKLESIA



In this study, we compare how God and His people come together in the Old Testament and the Ekklesia in the New Testament.

Old Testament - 3000 people

We have seen before that God made a covenant with His people. In that people, priests were appointed to serve God and the people. Thus, the Jews would become an example to the nations.

Moses was called by God to lead the people to the Promised Land, and he was chosen as a leader to have an encounter with God. In one of those meetings, Moses receives the 10 precepts of the covenant along with God and stays on the mountain for forty days and nights. When he goes back to the people, they have made an image of God. God's anger is great, and three thousand people die that day. (*Exodus 19:6 and 24:15-18*)

New Testament - 3000 people

In the New Testament we read a similar story, but with a totally different outcome. We read that Jesus goes to heaven on the fortieth day after his resurrection. Jesus' disciples also have to wait for what Jesus promised: the Holy Spirit.

As the Jews celebrate Shavuot (the feast of the beginning of the harvest, also called Pentecost) in the temple, the Spirit falls on one hundred and twenty people in the upper room.

This Old Testament feast, like many feasts, is a foreshadowing of New Testament events: Jesus fulfills the law and the Holy Spirit comes - the beginning of a spiritual harvest. For when these disciples go out with one another, they speak in foreign languages, and three thousand people come to faith that day. Exactly the opposite of what happened when the law was brought down from the mountain by Moses. In the Old Testament, three thousand people died; now the Holy Spirit comes upon the disciples and three thousand come to a living faith (*Acts 2:1-4*).

The hundred and twenty disciples trust what their friend and King has said, they come together, and so **from their relationship with Jesus the Ekklesia is born**. The Holy Spirit falls on ordinary people doing what Jesus told them to do.

The Holy Spirit did not fall in the temple, but in an upper room where people prayed in great expectation. It was not about rituals there, they followed their hearts and trusted that what their King had said would happen.

Temple - Church - Ekklesia

In the New Testament, we see Jesus going to the temple regularly. However, the place where He speaks to people turns out not to be so important, because everywhere He goes the Kingdom of God

becomes visible. Jesus shows that life is not to be found in the place of gathering, but in the words He speaks.

We see throughout the centuries that the Holy Spirit is sometimes poured out in church buildings, but more often it happens outside. When the Holy Spirit is poured out, the building with its rules also becomes less important, and the proclamation and demonstration of the Word regain their rightful place.

'Ekklesia is a building of living stones meeting together. That is where Jesus will be.'

The revolution of the Ekklesia

Already during his time on earth, Jesus speaks of a revolutionary change to come.

Jesus looked different from what people expected of their Messiah. Jesus tells them that the Ekklesia will be the place where He will be. The Ekklesia that Jesus instituted is not a building of stone where rituals are performed and religious rules apply, it is a building of living stones who meet together. In them dwells the Holy Spirit of Jesus, who guides them. So the Ekklesia is a group of people, living stones, with authority, with power that is life-changing and can change the community. *(Matthew 18:16-18)*

EXERCISE:

1. Do you come to an Ekklesia that helps you discover who you are yourself and encourages you to spread the Kingdom in your sphere of influence?
2. What can you personally do to create such a nurturing environment?
3. Do you recognize in yourself the need for a leader who stands between you and God?
To what extent do you depend on such a leader?
4. Are there habits in your life that you have built up that God, from a relationship with you, does not need anymore? Do you see certain rituals that you can break off?
5. How can you work toward a relationship with Jesus himself and how can your leader encourage you in this?



LESSON LEARNED:

We have come home to the Father and the Father has come home to us, His church.

