

Systematic Theology session 67

The Church, Part 2

- The gathering of God's people in community as normative, in both the Old and New Testament.
 - The core of the covenant as "I will be your God, and you shall be my people" (Exodus 6:6-8; Hebrews 8:10).
 - The people of the Old Testament nation of Israel as being a mixed people.
 - God had chosen Israel as a nation, but the elect individuals who truly belonged to God were a remnant – the "Israel within Israel" (Romans 9:6-8).
 - The two sides of the nation of Israel.
 - The "children of promise," who are the true, spiritual offspring of Abraham, those who belong to Christ.
 - The "children of the flesh," who had physical descent from Abraham but not spiritual descent.
 - The fact that Christ does not have two separate peoples, the church and Israel.
 - The error of the interpretative system of dispensationalism.
 - The error that after national Israel rejected Christ, God instituted the New Testament church as a separate people on a parallel path to national / geopolitical Israel.
 - The fact that Christ has only one people, one flock.
 - The original flock as being elect and believing Jews, then with Gentiles from every nation being converted to be part of the one flock of Christ, with one shepherd (John 10:14-16).
 - The continuity of the New Testament church with the Old Testament congregation.
 - The metaphor of the "olive tree" as God's people through history, the natural "branches" as Jewish believers, with Gentiles "grafted into" this one "tree"; the Jews had the privilege and dignity of the gospel coming to them first (Romans 11:17-18; Romans 1:16).
 - The fact that both Jewish and Gentile Christians are supported by the "root" of the tree, the promised blessings to Abraham (Romans 11:17-18; Galatians 3:13-14; Galatians 3:7-8).
 - The two possible errors to avoid:
 - The error of thinking that the New Testament church supersedes or replaces the true Old Testament people of God.
 - The other error, of softening the truth that Christ has always been the gate of the sheep, in both the Old and New Covenants (1 Timothy 2:5-6).
 - The fact that God has always had a true people, His true people throughout history.
 - The distinctions between the Old Testament congregation and the New Testament church.
 - The newness of the New Testament church as signaled by Christ speaking of building His church in the future tense (Matthew 16:15-18).
 - The newness of the New Testament church as signaled by the use of the word *ekklesia* rather than the established word "synagogue."
 - The difference in form between the New Testament church and the Old Testament congregation.
 - The Old Testament congregation as having both a religious face and a political face. The palace was not the temple; their functions were separate (2 Chronicles 26:16-21).

- The New Testament church does not present a political face among the nation-states of the world.
 - The kingdom of God is spiritual in nature, without borders on a map or a military (Luke 17:20-21; John 18:36).
 - The church greatly affects the world, but not as a political entity among the nation-states of the world.
- The Old Testament congregation as being a national church, limited to one nation.
- The New Testament church as expanded to all nations (Isaiah 2:1-3).
- The Old Testament congregation as having authorized worship limited to a geographic location (1 Kings 11:36).
- The New Testament church as no longer limiting authorized worship geographically (John 4:19-24).
- The New Testament church as no longer worshipping using the types and shadows of the ceremonial law, but instead, worshipping in spirit and truth (John 4:19-24).