

# The Assembly of God

by H.J. Vine

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*The sermon explores the origins, significance, and structure of the Assembly of God, emphasizing Christ's role and the inclusion of all believers.*

**Scripture:** Acts 1:15, 1 Corinthians 3:10, Galatians 1:13, Ephesians 4:11, Colossians 1:18

**Topics:** "Church Government", "Ecclesiology"

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## Description

H.J. Vine delves into the origins and composition of the assembly of God, emphasizing that it began with Christ giving the Spirit to His disciples at Pentecost. The assembly, or church of God, is united with Christ as its exalted Head, who secured eternal redemption through His work on the cross. Paul, a special minister of the truth about the assembly, highlights the importance of understanding its vital beginning and power, distinct from mere instruction. The foundation of the local assembly is Jesus Christ, with all apostles and prophets playing a part in its structure.

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## Transcript

Answer to Correspondence--"When did the assembly of God begin, and of whom was it first composed?"

The church of God, or more correctly the assembly of God, began when Christ gave the Spirit at Pentecost to His own disciples. These first composed the assembly. "The number of names together were about an hundred and twenty" (Acts 1:15). With one accord they were all together in one place, when the Spirit came both upon them and within them.

To say that to understand Paul's writings is to know the truth of the assembly, just as to understand John's is to know the truth as to the flock and the family of God, is true in a certain sense. But to understand the assembly in the essential and vital sense we must know Him who is the exalted Head of the body, which is the assembly. Having secured eternal redemption by His work upon the cross, Christ rose from among the dead victorious over sin, Satan, death, and Hades; and "He is the Head of the body, the assembly, who is THE BEGINNING, the Firstborn from among the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence" (Col. 1:18). Exalted in heavenly glory, He gave the Holy Spirit as we have seen; thus uniting His own livingly with Himself as Man in heaven; they becoming members of His body, the assembly. Nothing like this had ever been known before.

To complete the thought of God as to the assembly (the ek-klesia, the out-called) we find a number from among the Gentiles also baptized in Acts 10:44. (Read also 11:16-17, which unites with Acts 1. Those at

Pentecost were from among the Jews only; and the assembly (which was to be out of and not of the nations) was to embrace those of both Jews and Gentiles. In Old Testament times God had dealt nationally; now the assembly is called out as something new entirely. Not seeing this, many fall short both in spirit and practice of the truth.

Paul was the special minister of the truth concerning the assembly of God; but that it began before he was converted is proved both by Acts 2:47 and by his own words--I excessively persecuted the assembly of God and ravaged it (Gal. 1:13, N.Tr.). To unfold truth and instruction as to the assembly of God is one thing: its vital beginning, existence, and power another. For the former, how important are the writings of the Spirit by Paul for those who are truly Christ's. How they preserve those who truly heed them, amid the ecclesiastical snares and strifes of today; also guiding them, as belonging to this new thing, in regard to their deportment towards the powers that be, in the different nations where they are found.

As regards the foundation of the local assembly at Corinth, where Paul laboured so much, he wrote, "I have laid the foundation . . . which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:10-11). But when writing of the whole structure, which embraces all the saints, he shows that all the apostles and prophets of the New Testament times, given from Christ the ascended Head of the body (Eph. 4:11), have their part in the foundation of it, "Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF BEING THE CHIEF CORNER STONE" (Eph. 2:20).

Before Christ came it was a time of promises, but the Gospel today is a proclamation of facts.

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