THE CHURCH IN PROPHECY

I. THE UNIQUE NATURE OF THE CHURCH
   (Seven Reasons why the Church is not the Israel of God)

1. The church is the distinct body of Christ

   Eph 1:22-23 the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

2. The Church alone partakes of the Lord’s Supper

   Since the Lord’s Supper was not instituted until Jesus’ crucifixion, the body of Christ cannot have already been in existence. The Lord’s supper is celebrated by the church only until he comes again. It a memorial supper between the two advents of Christ and properly belongs only to His church.

   1 Corinthians 11:26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

3. The church is created by the baptism of the Spirit

   The spiritual body of Christ was created at Pentecost by the baptism of the Holy Spirit

   1 Corinthians 12:13 “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.” This is a ministry unique to this age.

   The Baptism of the Spirit was still future in both John and Jesus’ ministry.

   John the Baptist predicted the baptism of the Spirit in all four gospels. Matthew 3:11
   “As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

   If the baptism of the Spirit was an OT event, why does John predict it rather than insist that it is present?

   Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16
   “I baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

   John 1:33-34 “And I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, ‘He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.’ “And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”
Jesus predicted the baptism of the Spirit as a still future event

Acts 1:4-5   And gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, “Which,” He said, “you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

The baptism of the Spirit arrived on Pentecost Day in Acts 2 forming the unique Body of Christ to which Jews, Samaritans (Acts 8) and Gentiles (Acts 10) were subsequently added.

Although Acts 2 calls this event “the filling of the Spirit,” Peter referred to this event at Pentecost as the beginning as well as a fulfillment of the promise Jesus made to baptize his disciples with the Holy Spirit. It was both the initial coming of the Spirit in this new baptizing, body-producing way, as well as a full empowerment for service. i.e. Acts 10:15-18.

   Since the church is Christ’s body, welded together by the baptism of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13), the church’s birthday occurred when this baptism took place (Acts 1:5; 2). [Bible Knowledge Commentary]

4. The church was still future in Jesus’ ministry

The church was not in existence while Jesus was ministering on earth because he predicted that he would build it in the future.

Matthew 16:16-18   And Simon Peter answered and said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.

5. The church is a new creation never before seen because it united Jew and Gentile in one new entity which is the body of Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:14-16   For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace,16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.

Gal 3:27-28   For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
7. The church is a mystery not revealed until New Covenant times

This reconciliation by Christ of Jews and Gentiles to God in one body is a mystery revealed only in Christ and by the Apostles, not the OT.

_Eph 3:4-8_ And by referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; 6 to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel,

This summary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary says it well:

“The church was unknown in the Old Testament because it had been kept hidden for ages and generations. In fact, said Paul, it is only now disclosed to the saints. Since the church is Christ’s body, resulting from His death on the cross, it could not possibly have been in existence in the Old Testament.

The “mystery” of the church, however, does not mean that Gentile salvation and blessing was unforeseen before Christ (cf. Luke 2:29-32; Amos 9:11-12). The mystery was not that Gentiles would be saved but how they could be “fellow-heirs” (Eph. 3:6, KJV), on the same level with Jews, with no middle wall of partition between them (Eph. 2:12-14). In the Old Testament Gentiles who believed and became a part of Judaism were still considered lower than Jews. This special union in which there “is neither Jew nor Greek” (i.e., Gentile, Gal. 3:28) was nonexistent before Christ died and the Spirit descended to baptize all believers into this new body.”

II. THE CHARACTER OF THIS AGE: Matthew 13 & Rev 2-3

The 7 parables of Mt 13 reveal prophetic truth about the course of this present age. Matt 12 records the absolute rejection of Jesus as Messiah by Israel’s religious establishment and Jesus wholesale condemnation of that generation for doing so. After Mt 12 the kingdom is no longer “near,” but is postponed and Jesus turns to establish the church instead. It will be a spiritual kingdom in the intervening age. Matthew 16:18 is the first mention of “church” in the book. The promised Millennial kingdom is still coming (Mt 17:1-10), but it is postponed for a future day. Meanwhile the kingdom of heaven will be manifest in the church. The parables of Mt 13 reveal 7 truths about the church age.

A. The 7 Prophetic Parables of Matthew 13

1. Sower: The Word of God will be sown like seed in the world.
2. Wheat and Tares: It will be imitated by a false counter-sowing producing unbelievers mixed with believers in the professing church.
3. Mustard Seed: The church will assume huge outward proportions
April 2, 2017; Lesson 5 Chapel of the Lake Sunday School Larry Dyer: Class Notes

4. Leaven The church will be marked by deep, inner corruption.
5. Treasure Hid The Lord will gain for himself believers from Israel and from among the Gentiles
6. Pearl The Age will end in a judgment where the unrighteous are excluded but the righteous are allowed to enter and enjoy the Kingdom

Rev 2-3 predict the historical characteristics of the church throughout the age

THE PROPHETIC VIEW OF THE 7 CHURCHES

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<th>Church</th>
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<td>Christianity moves from a Jewish sect to a Gentile faith</td>
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<td>Laodicea</td>
<td>The Apostate Church</td>
<td>Higher Criticism Evolution Liberalism Postmodernism</td>
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Both Philadelphia and Laodicea are probably present at the end of the age. The Promise of Rev 3:10 to keep that church out of the hour of testing that will come upon the whole world- may refer to the pre-tribulational rapture. A vast portion of the church unfortunately fits the character of lukewarm Laodicea.
III. JESUS FINAL WARNING - THE OLIVET DISCOURSE IN LUKE

1. Prediction of the Destruction of the Temple  21:5-6

The entire Temple will be torn down and not one stone will be left on another! That was an amazing and unbelievable prediction in 30 AD when the massive Temple complex was still under construction. The prediction itself decrees judgment upon Israel similar to the 586 BC destruction of the Temple. If the Temple is going to be destroyed, then the city must be as well and the nation because every Jew would fight to the death to prevent their Temple from such desecration.

The Disciples' Question:
When will these things be? When will the destruction of the Temple occur and what will be the sign it is about to happen?

-A Long Absence: 8-11 a brief outline of the coming age. The absence of Jesus from his disciples is implied in verse 8 with many coming in his name, deceiving many. Jesus' words imply possibly a long but undetermined period between his Advents.

-Persecution and Witness 12-19 “But before all these things… persecution by rejecting Israel and witness before kings and governors, while Jesus gives them wisdom and power. Betrayal, hatred by the world yet ultimate salvation of their souls. (16-19)

2. Coming Destruction of Jerusalem  20-24

The sign of imminent judgment is Jerusalem surrounded by armies (20) Believers are to flee Jerusalem to avoid God’s vengeance (21-22)
Note the contradictory nature of that sign. Once you actually see a city surrounded by armies the siege has already begun. It is too late to flee then! This “sign” does not make sense until you read history.

-The Jewish War
The Jews revolted from Rome in 66 AD. The War lasted from 66 AD to 74 AD. The Romans came against Jerusalem and laid siege. In the midst of the siege, the emperor of Rome died and General Vespasian became a contender for the throne. The armies around Jerusalem were withdrawn to help settle the question of power and it looked like the Jews had won by divine intervention. Believers however remembered Jesus’ prediction and fled the city while unbelieving Jews celebrated their “victory.” Soon Titus returned to lay siege to the city again and in 70 AD it was defeated and the Temple burned in spite of Titus’ orders to the contrary. The nation was in fact led captive into all the nations after 70 AD. The world-wide dispersion of Israel is still a fact 20 centuries later!
- **Gentile Domination:**

The *times of the Gentiles* is the period of Gentile domination over Jerusalem. It actually began when the Babylonians took the city and the nation into Captivity in 586 B.C. Jerusalem will again fall under Gentile domination in the Tribulation (Zech. 14:1-2) just before the Messiah returns to restore Jerusalem. It is that restoration of which Jesus spoke next (Luke 21:25-28).¹

- The *conditions in 70 AD parallel conditions at the end of the age.*

The Great Tribulation will precede Jesus' Second Coming. At least some of the Jewish people will be back in the land of Palestine. The City of Jerusalem will be occupied once again by Jews and the Temple once again reconstructed. (Armies will once again surround Jerusalem and Israel will once again be defeated. Only this time, they will call for Messiah and He will come!

3. **The sign of the end** 25-33

a. Astronomical Signs mark the end of the age: Sun, Moon, Stars
b. Dismay among nations and fear as the powers of heaven are shaken
c. The Son of Man comes in power and great glory- visible and literal
d. Israel’s redemption is at hand and arrives with the 2nd advent of Christ
e. Then the Promised OT kingdom of God is “near” (once again).

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