

# The Local Church 1 - Part 2

by William MacDonald

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*William MacDonald emphasizes the distinct identity of the Church compared to Israel and advocates for unity among all believers in Christ without denominational divisions.*

**Duration:** 9:25

**Scripture:** John 3:3, Acts 2:1-4, Romans 12:5, 1 Corinthians 12:12, Galatians 3:28, Ephesians 1:22-23, Ephesians 2:14, Colossians 1:26, Revelation 20:6

**Topics:** "Church Unity", "Israel Distinction"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the distinction between Israel and the church, emphasizing that they are not a continuum but rather distinct entities in God's plan. It highlights how Israel is not a mystery and has an earthly focus, while the church is a mystery, entered by spiritual birth, and has a heavenly focus. The unity of the universal church, comprising believers from all backgrounds, is also underscored as a powerful testament to the gospel's transformative nature.

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## Transcript

The Apostles and Prophets and also in Colossians chapter 1 verse 26 some people argue from Ephesians they say well it wasn't made known in the Old Testament as it has now been made known but turn to Colossians chapter 1 and verse 26 Colossians 1 26 he says the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations but now has been revealed to his saints it just says it it doesn't qualify it as it has now been revealed it just says flatly it was not revealed the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations but now has been revealed to his saints now a lot of people think that the church today is just a continuation of Israel they use that word a continuum they say well Israel's going along here and all of a sudden it just metamorphosized into into the church in the

New Testament no Israel and the church are very distinct if somebody were to ask me what are two of the subjects that probably would open up the Bible more than any others one of those subjects would be the difference between Israel and the church because as you might know there are many Christians today that believe that that we are the Israel of God and all the promises made to God in the Old Testament apply to us and God has no further dealings with the nation of Israel the nation of Israel blotted out as far as God is concerned all the promises made to Israel are for us today they don't say all the curses made in Israel are for us today that's very convenient for them to leave that up let me give you some differences between Israel and the church first of all Israel is not a mystery

from Genesis 12 right down to the end of Malachi it's all told out there Israel nothing secret about it at all but the church as we've already emphasized is a mystery a truth never hitherto known Israel began with the call of Abram the church began with the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost Abraham is the head of Israel nominal head of the nation of Israel it all began with him Christ is the head of the church you entered Israel by natural birth you became an Israelite by having the blood of Abraham flowing in your veins at least some portion of it but churches entered by spiritual birth quite different isn't it entered by spiritual birth remember Jesus said except a man be born again he cannot see or enter the kingdom of God and there is a phase of the kingdom of God which is

contemporary with the church but we can't go into that now Israel is God's earthly people now don't misunderstand me I don't mean that Israel didn't have a heavenly hope it says that Abraham looked for a city which have foundations whose builder and maker is God there was a heavenly hope but that the emphasis in the Old Testament with Israel is Christ reigned here on earth the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus on earth there are very few passages in the Old Testament which speak clearly about for instance life after death or the heavenly hope very few Job had it and Dave had it but I couldn't name ten verses in the Old Testament clear verses that speak about the heavenly hope of the nation of Israel they were God's people the church is God's heavenly people heavenly people crisis going

to come and take his church home to be with himself that where he is there may be also where is that the father's house where there are many mansions as far as the future kingdom is concerned Israel will be subjects of the kingdom whereas the church will reign with Christ over the earth at that time and in these in other ways the church is distinguished in the scriptures from the nation of Israel the universal assembly there's only one body this is interesting there's only as far as God is concerned there's only one church the universal church as I said made up of all true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and one of the marvelous features of this church is Jew believing Jew and Gentile I made one new man in Christ you know that's marvelous we think of some of the racial strife in this

country we think of that's probably the biggest chasm in human relations but it isn't the biggest chasm in human relations was the difference between Israel and the Gentiles in the Old Testament and if you told a Jew in the Old Testament that by believing in the Messiah he would become a fellow heir with if he would laugh at you ridiculous couldn't be so but that's the truth of the gospel that when a Jew believes in Christ and a Gentile believes in Christ they become one new man in Christ Jesus and I could take you over to Haifa Israel to a little assembly there in Haifa and you'll see converted Arabs and you'll see converted Jews and they're all worshiping the Messiah together it's really beautiful though it's the solution to all the problem of the Middle East and it's right there in

Haifa but they don't want it the people in general don't want it well this truth of only one body is something that we have to bear witness to and we do we believe that there's only one true church and that's why we don't like denominational names we don't like any name that separates us from other believers in the Lord Jesus Christ we feel this is good to testify to the unity of the body of Christ it's interesting I could take this expression Roman Catholic you know that word Catholic means universal but Roman that's not so universal is it Roman that narrows it and so the two words are contradictory well some other words that are contradictory would be Plymouth brethren I mean brethren is pretty expansive isn't it it takes in all the people of God but the minute you put Plymouth before

it you'd almost have to put Plymouth car to make it applicable wouldn't you to most people today Plymouth brethren a Christian brethren he said well Christian brethren sounds pretty good to me yes it's good as

long as you don't use it to separate yourself from other believers it's good I think if you have brethren with a small B instead of a capital B and you say well what do you say to people when they ask you what you are well I say I'm a Christian they said of course you're a Christian but I'm sorry I'm a disciple of the Lord Jesus well of course you are we're all that but what else are you and you know they can never rest at night until they get you into some pigeonhole some denominational pigeonhole but frankly I refuse to be put into one of those denominational pigeonholes and they

say well you're brethren well I see if you're a believer you're a brethren too you know I like what Ironside used to say when they asked him what what denomination he belonged to he said he said I'm a companion of all those who love you and who keep your precepts that's the right attitude I'm a companion of all of those who love you and who keep your precepts sometimes when people try to get me in a corner as to what the nomination I belong to I say well what denomination did Paul belong to that rather stops people because I mean if you read your New Testament Paul didn't belong to any denomination did he there's only one church and that's the church made up of all true believers all born-again believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and we want to bear witness to that fact no denominations no

denominational headquarters where do you find that in the New Testament denominational headquarter you don't find it at all but in that fact you see the wisdom of God the wisdom of God

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