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Description

You ask me, were there not churches in scripture? I answer, there were; but what are churches? The effect of the question is to bring out the state of the mind. Most Christians would immediately think of what are called churches in the religious world, perhaps in Christendom at large. They would think of the Presbyterian Church, or Congregational and Baptist churches, or else of the Church of Rome, or the like. The person who lived habitually in the mind of scripture would think of Corinth or others which we meet with in Scripture. Are then the facts which exist in Christendom, or the thoughts there current, different from the facts found in Scripture, or the thoughts formed by it? Let us inquire into this, not with a haughty heart, but if we find all gone far away from the scriptural state in principle and practice - if we find all ruined, instead of power in the Holy Ghost and unity - a fair show in the flesh, let us mourn in heart, and cry to the Lord. He will meet us in our need.

What were churches in scriptural times? "Church" means simply an assembly, or, from local use in Greek, an assembly of privileged persons, of citizens. The whole multitude of believers gathered into one by the Holy Spirit formed the assembly or church. Only here of course it was God's assembly; of course those in Rome or Corinth could not meet in Jerusalem. Hence there were assemblies in different places, forming each locally God's assembly in the place. It may be well very briefly to examine how the assembly is viewed in scripture as a whole, before we speak of local assemblies. It is viewed first as the habitation of God; and then as the body of Christ. In one sense the church is not yet formed, not complete. All that shall be united to Christ in glory form part of it.

"I will build my church," says Jesus, "and the gates of

9 pages – Pamphlet – Author: J. N. Darby