

A low-angle shot of a forest with tall, slender trees reaching towards a bright sky. A person in a dark jacket is walking away from the camera on a path covered in fallen leaves and branches. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF HIS CHURCH

DIGGING DEEPER, BUILDING STRONGER.

DAVID LYON



**“WHAT AN AWESOME
PLACE THIS IS!
THIS IS NONE OTHER
THAN THE HOUSE OF GOD.
THIS IS THE GATE OF
HEAVEN.”
GENESIS 28:17**

■ ANTICIPATION: BETHEL

‘First mention’ of **God’s House** (Genesis 28) gives vital clues:

- Heaven and earth connected (v12)
- Angelic activity/involvement (v12)
- History and destiny; legacy and inheritance (v13)
- Promise of growth and multiplication (v14)
- To be a blessing to all nations (v14)
- God’s presence and provision (v15-16)
- An awesome place (v17)
- The House of God (v17)
- The gate/gateway go heaven (v17)
- Resulting in worship and honour (tithes) (v22)

■ ANTICIPATION: HOREB

‘First mention’ of **“My people”** (Exodus 3) gives more clues:

- Known and seen by God (v7,9)
- Presence of God (“I have come down”, v8)
- Rescued from oppression (v8,9)
- Promised an inheritance (v8)
- Brought into a good and spacious place (v8)
- Led by a ‘saviour’ sent from God (v10)

Cf. Exodus 6:5-8

JESUS AND HIS CHURCH

First **mention** of the *ekklesia* - **Matthew 16:13-19**

**CRUCIAL
QUESTION!**

WHO DO
PEOPLE SAY
THE SON OF
MAN IS?

JOHN...
ELIJAH...
JEREMIAH...
PROPHET...

WHO DO
YOU SAY
I AM?

YOU ARE
THE
MESSIAH,
THE SON OF
THE LIVING
GOD!

BLESSED ARE
YOU!

MY FATHER
REVEALED
THIS TO YOU!

AND ON
THIS ROCK
I WILL BUILD
MY
EKKLESIA

AND FORCES
OF DEATH WILL
NOT
OVERPOWER IT

I WILL GIVE
YOU THE KEYS
OF THE
KINGDOM

1

2

3

Revelation

Response

BUILDING ON THE ROCK

Jesus responds to Peter's God-given revelation:

- By changing His name/identity - to "Peter" (*petros*, a 'stone' or 'boulder') and in so doing by giving him a new destiny...
- By declaring He will build His Church on this "rock" (*petra*, 'bedrock', 'solid or native rock, rising up through the earth')

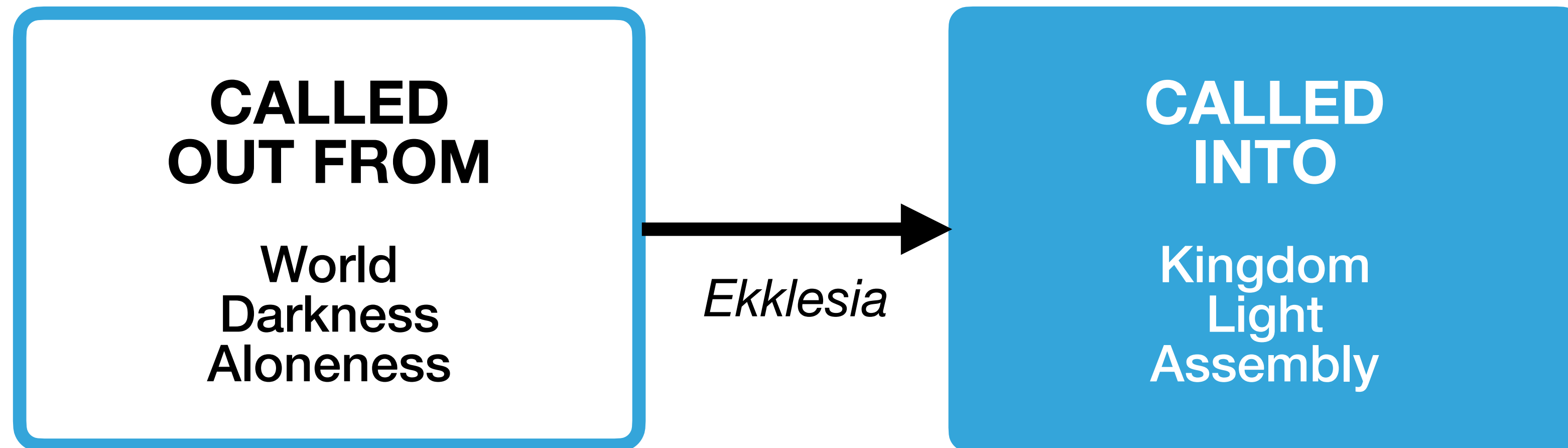
The *petra* (bedrock) is **Christ Himself** (cf. Mt 7:24) and Peter's **revelation** of this fact ("*You are the Christ*")! Thus:

- Whilst Peter *himself* becomes a foundational ministry (a 'rock') in the early church (cf. Acts 2)...it's *his revelation* of Christ (the 'bedrock') that makes him so, and it's this that the Church is built on!
- The same revelation ("*You are the Christ*") is the foundation of the faith of every believer.

‘EKKLESIA’

- The NT word translated ‘church’ is *ekklesia*, from *ek* (out from, out to) and *kaléō* (to call) - hence ‘called-out’ and specifically ‘an assembly’ of those called-out.
- *Ekklesia* was a secular word meaning: a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place; an assembly of the people convened at a public place for discussion/decision (cf. Ac 19:39) or for religious purposes (cf. Ac 7:38; Heb 2:12), etc.
- In the NT it is people *called out from* the world and *to* God, the outcome being the Church! Vitally, *ekklesia* is used to describe both the total/universal church (**Mt 16:18**) as well as any of the specific local expressions/congregations thereof (**Mt 18:17**).
- Note: whereas (eg) the French *eglise* is derived from *ekklesia*, the English word ‘church’ actually derives from *kyriakos* (‘belonging to the Lord’).

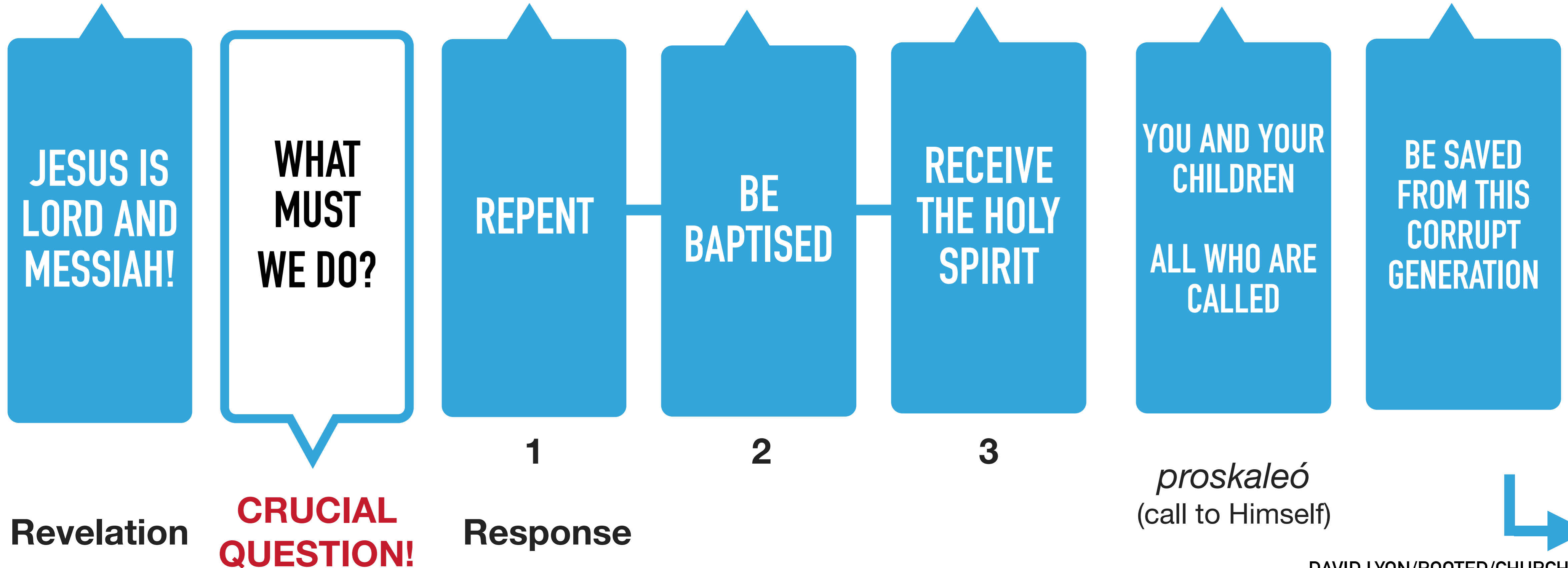
DIVINE CALLING



“BUT YOU ARE A CHOSEN RACE, A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, A DEDICATED NATION, [GOD’S] OWN PURCHASED, SPECIAL PEOPLE, THAT YOU MAY SET FORTH THE WONDERFUL DEEDS AND DISPLAY THE VIRTUES AND PERFECTIONS OF HIM WHO **CALLED YOU OUT OF DARKNESS INTO HIS MARVELOUS LIGHT.” 1PETER 2:9 (AMP)**

PETER AND HIS REVELATION

First **massive movement/momentum** of the *ekklesia* - **Acts 2:36-40**



OUTCOME? MEET THE CHURCH!...

SO THOSE WHO **ACCEPTED** HIS MESSAGE WERE BAPTISED, AND THAT DAY ABOUT 3,000 PEOPLE WERE **ADDED TO THEM.** (ACTS 2:42)

AND THEY **DEVOTED** THEMSELVES TO THE **APOSTLES' TEACHING**, TO THE **FELLOWSHIP**, TO THE **BREAKING OF BREAD**, AND TO THE **PRAYERS** (42)

THEN **FEAR** CAME OVER EVERYONE, AND MANY **WONDERS AND SIGNS** WERE BEING PERFORMED THROUGH THE APOSTLES. (43)

NOW ALL THE BELIEVERS WERE **TOGETHER** AND HELD ALL THINGS IN COMMON. THEY SOLD THEIR POSSESSIONS AND PROPERTY AND DISTRIBUTED THE PROCEEDS TO ALL, AS ANYONE HAD A NEED. EVERY DAY THEY **DEVOTED** THEMSELVES TO **MEETING TOGETHER** IN THE TEMPLE COMPLEX, AND **BROKE BREAD** FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE. THEY ATE THEIR FOOD WITH A **JOYFUL AND HUMBLE** ATTITUDE, **PRAISING** GOD AND HAVING **FAVOUR** WITH ALL THE PEOPLE. (44-47)

AND EVERY DAY THE LORD **ADDED TO THEM** THOSE WHO WERE BEING SAVED. (47)

Growth



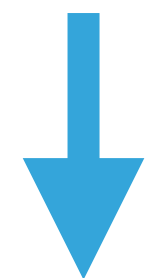
Devotion



Wonder



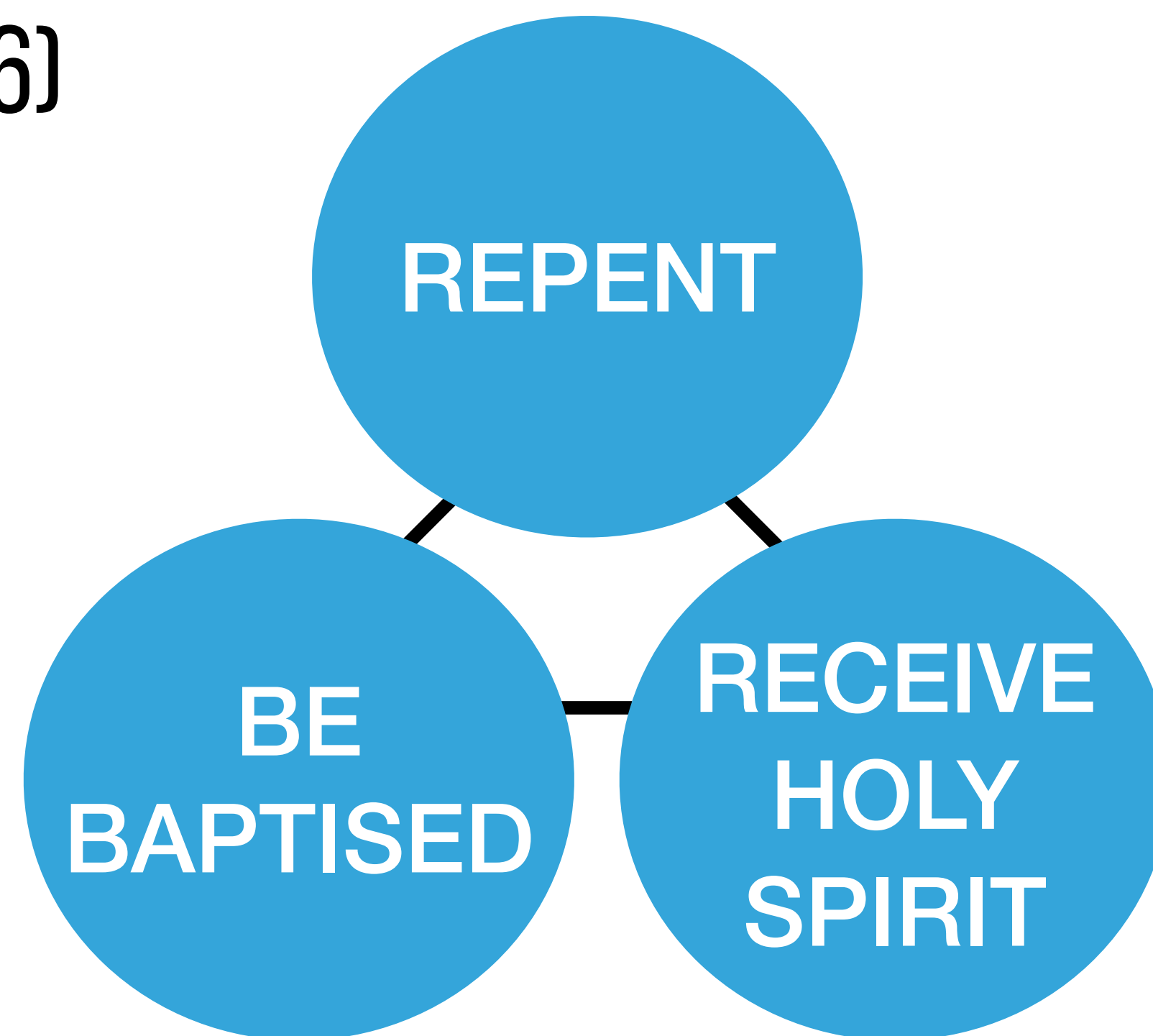
Community



Growth

ACTS 2:38 FOUNDATIONS

“BROTHERS, WHAT MUST
WE DO?...” (ACTS 2:36)



“REPENT,” PETER SAID TO
THEM, “AND BE BAPTISED,
EACH OF YOU, IN THE
NAME OF JESUS CHRIST
FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF
YOUR SINS, AND YOU WILL
RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT.” **(ACTS 2:38)**

THE FOUNDATION OF REPENTANCE FROM DEAD WORKS, FAITH IN GOD, TEACHING ABOUT RITUAL WASHINGS, LAYING ON OF HANDS.... (HEB 6:1)

REPENTANCE



- **Repentance** is a ‘change of mind’ (*metanoieó*) leading to a change of direction.
- It involves a **recognition** of sin, a Spirit-enabled **remorse** and a **redirection** of our lives in which we turn away from sin and turn towards God, by putting faith in Christ alone and producing “the fruit of repentance” (Mt 3:8).
- Repentance is from “dead works” (Heb 6:1) and is therefore always **life-giving**; it acknowledges that Jesus is King and Lord over our lives, and is the first step of entering His Kingdom (Jn 3:5).

BAPTISM



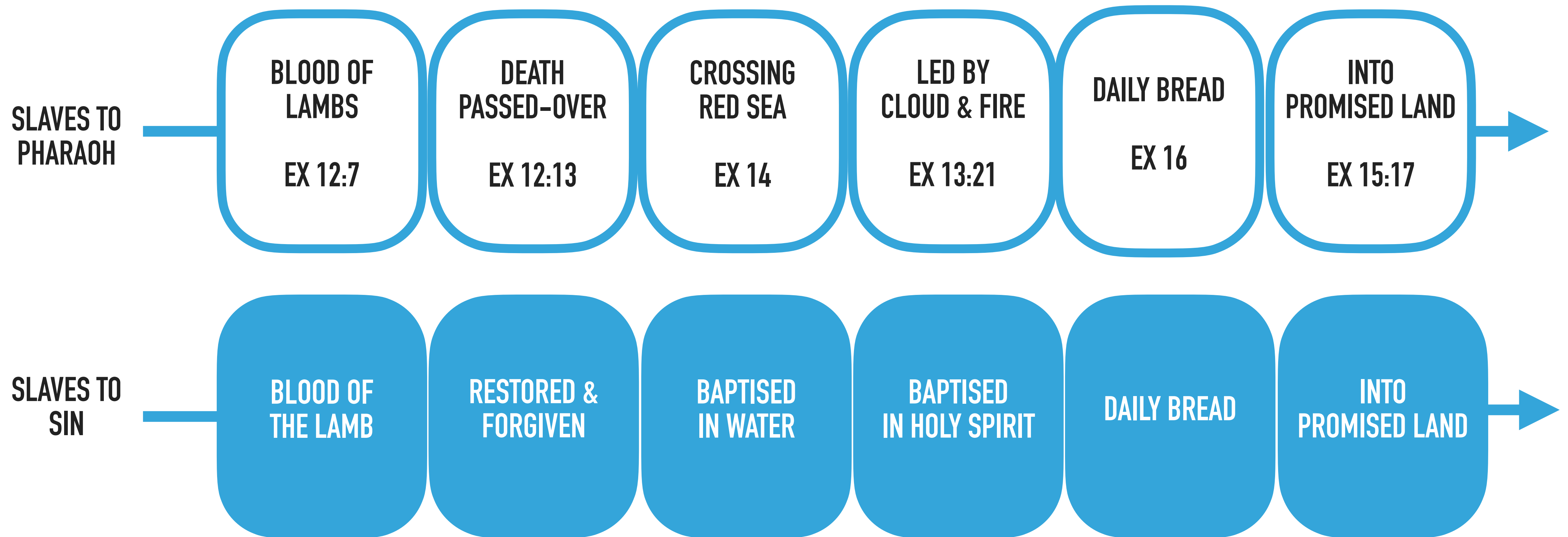
- **Baptism** is a ‘means of grace’, with **real power** to enable new believers to make a clean-break from their past (Ac 22:16), burying the old man and beginning to live in resurrection power (Ro 6:1-14)
- It’s always by **full immersion**.
- Repentance and faith are the preconditions of baptism, but otherwise there is no biblical warrant for delaying it. It is the expected, commanded and **immediate next step** of all who have repented (cf. Ac 8:36, 9: 10:47f, 16:33, 22:16).

RECEIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT



- **Receiving the gift of the Spirit** is the “baptism in the Holy Spirit” that John anticipated (Mt 3:11, Mk 1:8, Lk 3:16, Jn 1:33) and Jesus affirmed (Ac 1:4f).
- It's a **distinct** experience, and not the equivalent of repentance or water baptism (Ac 9:17, 10:47f). By His own baptism in water and the Spirit (Lk 3:21f, 4:1,14) Jesus sets the example.
- It is God’s promise and provision for all believers (Ac 2:17f, 39), and is repeatedly evidenced in the NT by the gift of tongues (Ac 2:4,10:45f, 19:6). It is **essential** (cf Ac 19:1-2).

AN EXODUS FROM SLAVERY



NOW I WANT YOU TO KNOW, BROTHERS, THAT OUR FATHERS WERE ALL UNDER THE CLOUD, ALL PASSED THROUGH THE SEA, AND ALL WERE BAPTISED INTO MOSES IN THE CLOUD AND IN THE SEA. THEY ALL ATE THE SAME SPIRITUAL FOOD, AND ALL DRANK THE SAME SPIRITUAL DRINK. FOR THEY DRANK FROM A SPIRITUAL ROCK THAT FOLLOWED THEM, AND THAT ROCK WAS CHRIST. **1CO 10:1-4**

THE 4TH DIMENSION

THEN THE LORD GOD SAID, "IT IS NOT GOOD FOR THE MAN TO BE ALONE..." (GE 2:18)

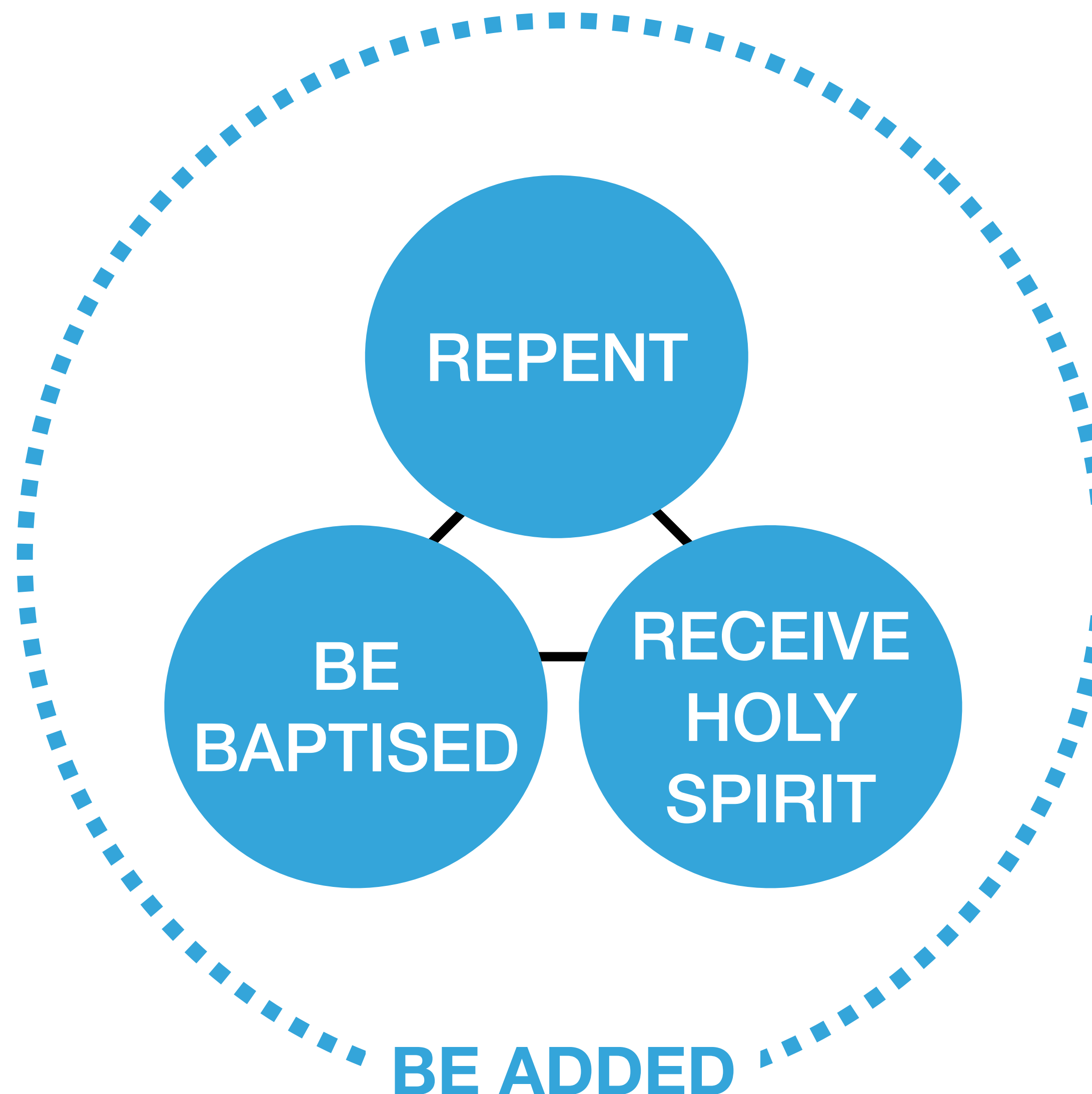
SO THOSE WHO ACCEPTED HIS MESSAGE WERE BAPTISED, AND THAT DAY ABOUT 3,000 PEOPLE WERE ADDED TO THEM. (ACTS 2:41)



- *The Lord* adds people to His Church (Ac 2:41,47).
- We're born *from above*; the work of the Spirit (Jn 3:3-7).
- But every believer should be meaningfully added and joined to a local expression of His Church.

TOTAL SALVATION!

THEREFORE HE
IS ABLE TO
SAVE
COMPLETELY
THOSE WHO
COME TO GOD
THROUGH HIM...
(HEB 7:25, NIV)



- **Repentance** saves us from eternal death - *forgiven!*
- **Baptism** saves us from the power of the past - *freed!*
- **Baptism in the Spirit** saves us powerlessness in the future - *filled!*
- **Being added** to His Church saves from being alone - *functioning!*

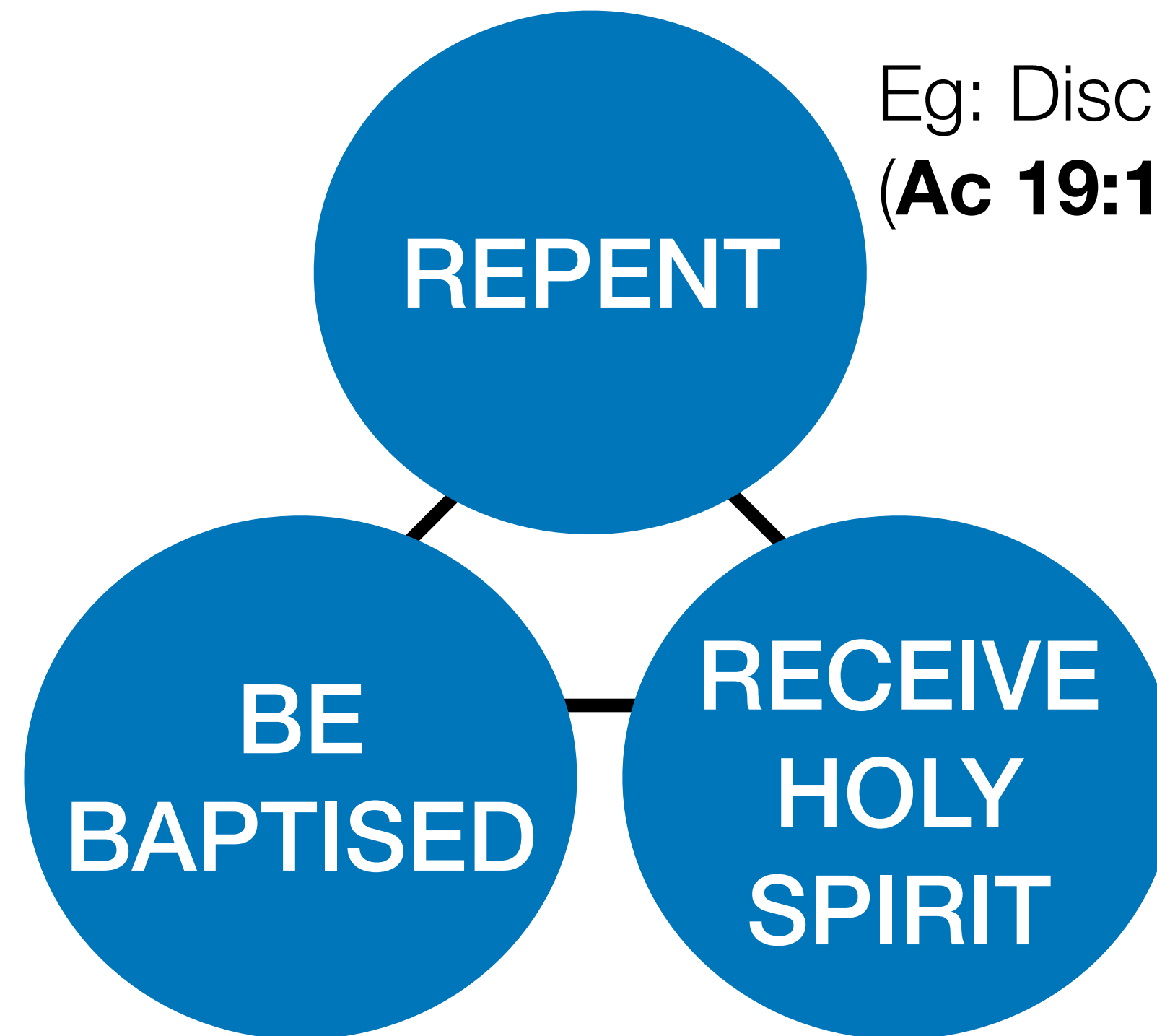
LAYING FOUNDATIONS

“WHAT MUST WE DO?” (ACTS 2:36)

PETER: “REPENT, BE BAPTISED, RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT...” (ACTS 2:38)

APOSTOLIC TASK: ENSURING NO GAPS!...

Eg: Cornelius’s household (**Ac 10:47-48**); Disciples in Ephesus (**Ac 19:14-17**)



Eg: Disciples in Ephesus (**Ac 19:14-17**)

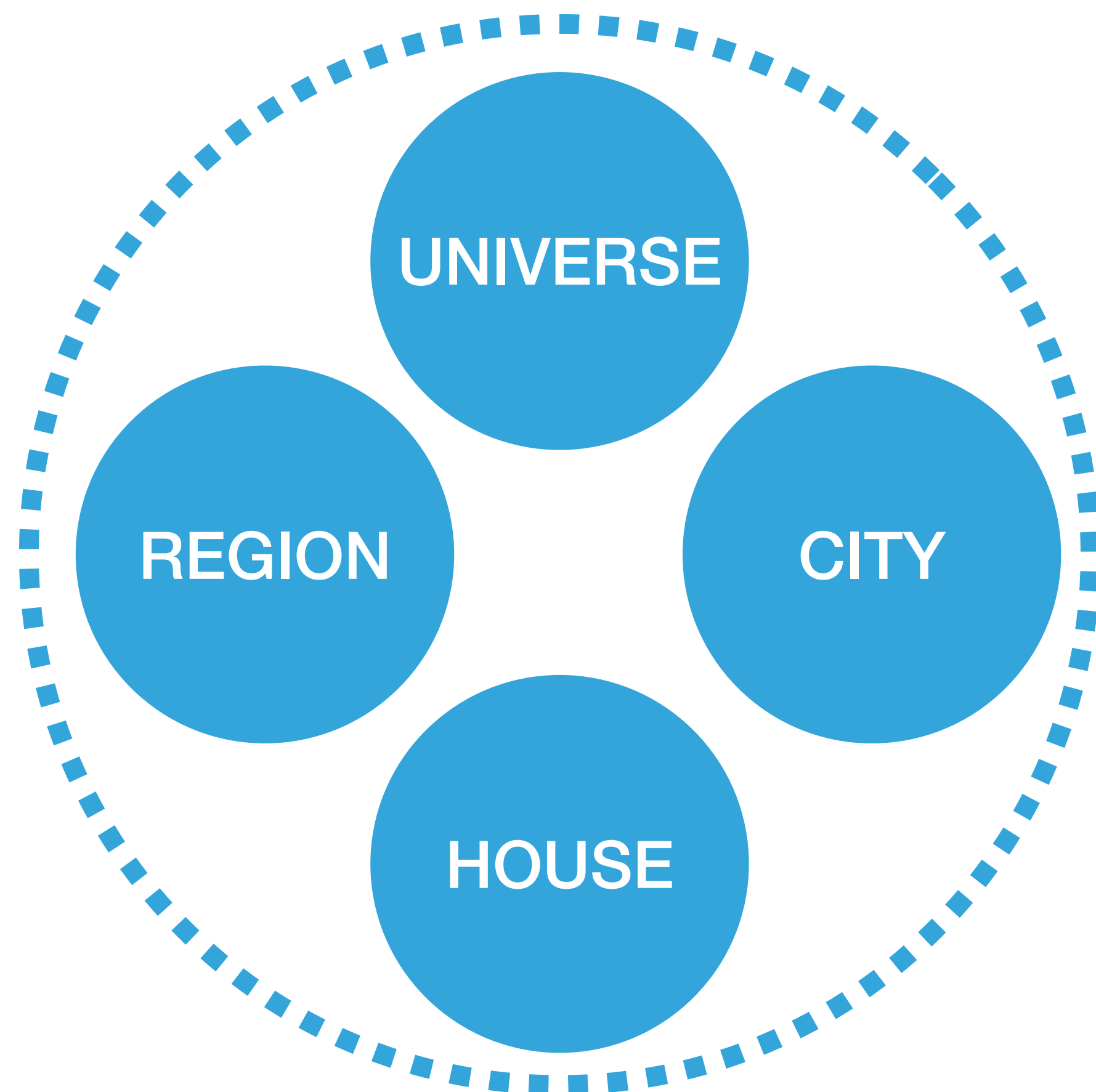
Eg: Disciples in Samaria (**Ac 8:14-17**); Disciples in Ephesus (**Ac 19:14-17**)

APOSTLES: LAY FOUNDATIONS
UPON WHICH CHURCHES ARE BUILT

AC 2:42, MATT 16:18
EPH 2:20, 3:5, GAL 1:8
1 COR 4:17, 7:17, 11:16, 14:33

TOTAL CHURCH!

Throughout the NT, *ekklesia* is used to describe both the total/universal church as well as any of the specific local expressions/congregations/gatherings thereof (**Mt 18:17**). Eg:




- The Church *universal* - Mt 16:18, Eph 1:22, etc.
- The Church in a *region* - Ac 9:31, 1Co 16:19
- The Church in a *city* - Mt 18:17, Ac 11:22, 2Co 1:1, 1Th 1:1, 2Th 1:1, etc.
- The Church in a *home* - Ro 16:5, 1Co 16:19, Col 4:15, Phlm 1:2

VITAL: It's the same *ekklesia* wherever it's gathered. Each local expression is not a *fragment* of the whole, but rather *the whole* church (in formation, nature and mission) *expressed in a locality*. Not 'a local church' but rather 'the Church localised'.

ONE CHURCH

- There is only **ONE CHURCH** (1Co 12:13, Eph 4:4). Jesus is building His Church (Mt 16:18), not *many churches*,
- The ONLY distinction between local expressions found in the NT is on the basis of their *geography or place* (region, city, home...)
- Denominational, sectarian or tribal names and designations are at best unbiblical and at worse divisive.
- Because of this *inherent unity* of the Spirit (Eph 4:3), we must oppose 'denominationalism', which divides the Church by claiming an identity based on something *less than* the beautiful whole.



“NOTHING IN THE
THOUGHT OF GOD
IS LOCAL,
DEPARTMENTAL,
SEPARATE OR
INDEPENDENT....

...IN THE THOUGHT OF
GOD EVERYTHING TO
DO WITH HIS CHURCH
IS UNIVERSAL,
RELATIVE,
INTERDEPENDENT;
THE CHURCH IS ONE...”

T AUSTIN SPARKS,
1888-1971

ONE CHURCH, MANY PICTURES



PLUS: City, Flock, Priesthood, Vineyard, etc..

- Although the Church is 'ONE', multiple complementary pictures are necessary, to convey its multi-faceted aspects and dimensions (**Eph 3:10**)
- Each metaphor/image is *corporate* and reveals the church as a *community*
- Each points to Jesus as the *source* - Head, Builder, Commander, Firstborn Son, Groom, etc...

I “KEYS OF THE KINGDOM” ...

- On *both occasions* in the Gospels where Jesus speaks of the *ekklesia* He proceeds immediately to assure us that we have power (keys) to “bind” and “loose” things on earth...
- This is a fundamental ministry of the Church.
- The things we can bind/loose on earth are those things “*already* bound/loosed” in heaven. We must therefore understand what heaven is like in order to see things “on earth as in heaven”.

I WILL GIVE
YOU THE KEYS
OF THE
KINGDOM

MT 16:19

WHATEVER
YOU BIND IS
ALREADY
BOUND

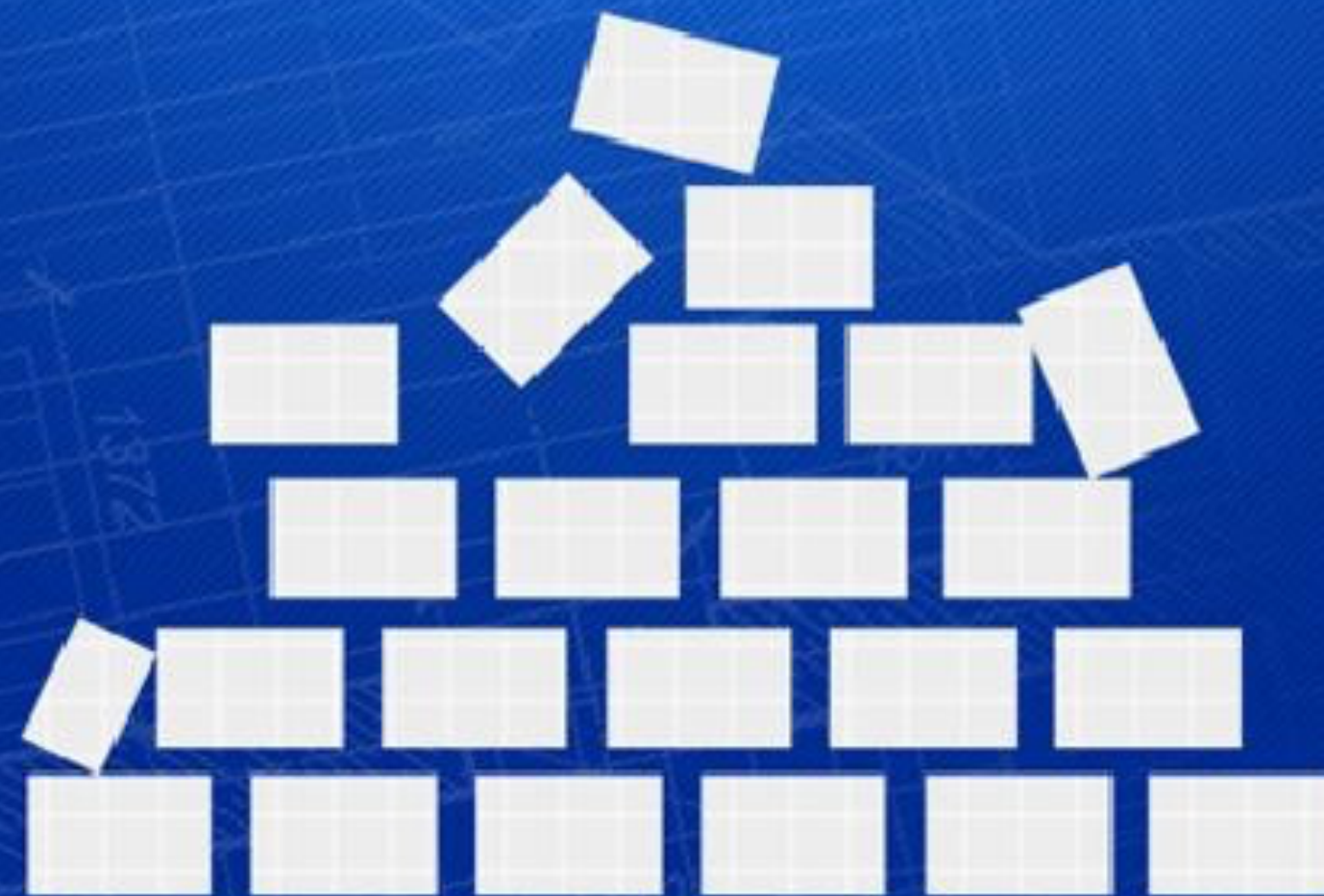
MT 16:19
MT 18:18

WHATEVER
YOU LOOSE IS
ALREADY
LOOSED

MT 16:19
MT 18:18

BUILDING HIS HOUSE

SO THEN YOU ARE NO LONGER FOREIGNERS AND STRANGERS, BUT FELLOW CITIZENS WITH THE SAINTS, AND MEMBERS OF GOD'S HOUSEHOLD, BUILT ON **THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS**, WITH CHRIST JESUS HIMSELF AS THE CORNERSTONE. THE WHOLE BUILDING, BEING PUT TOGETHER BY HIM, GROWS INTO A HOLY SANCTUARY IN THE LORD. YOU ALSO ARE BEING BUILT TOGETHER FOR **GOD'S DWELLING IN THE SPIRIT**.



EPH 2:19-22

DESIGN: FOUNDATIONAL MINISTRIES

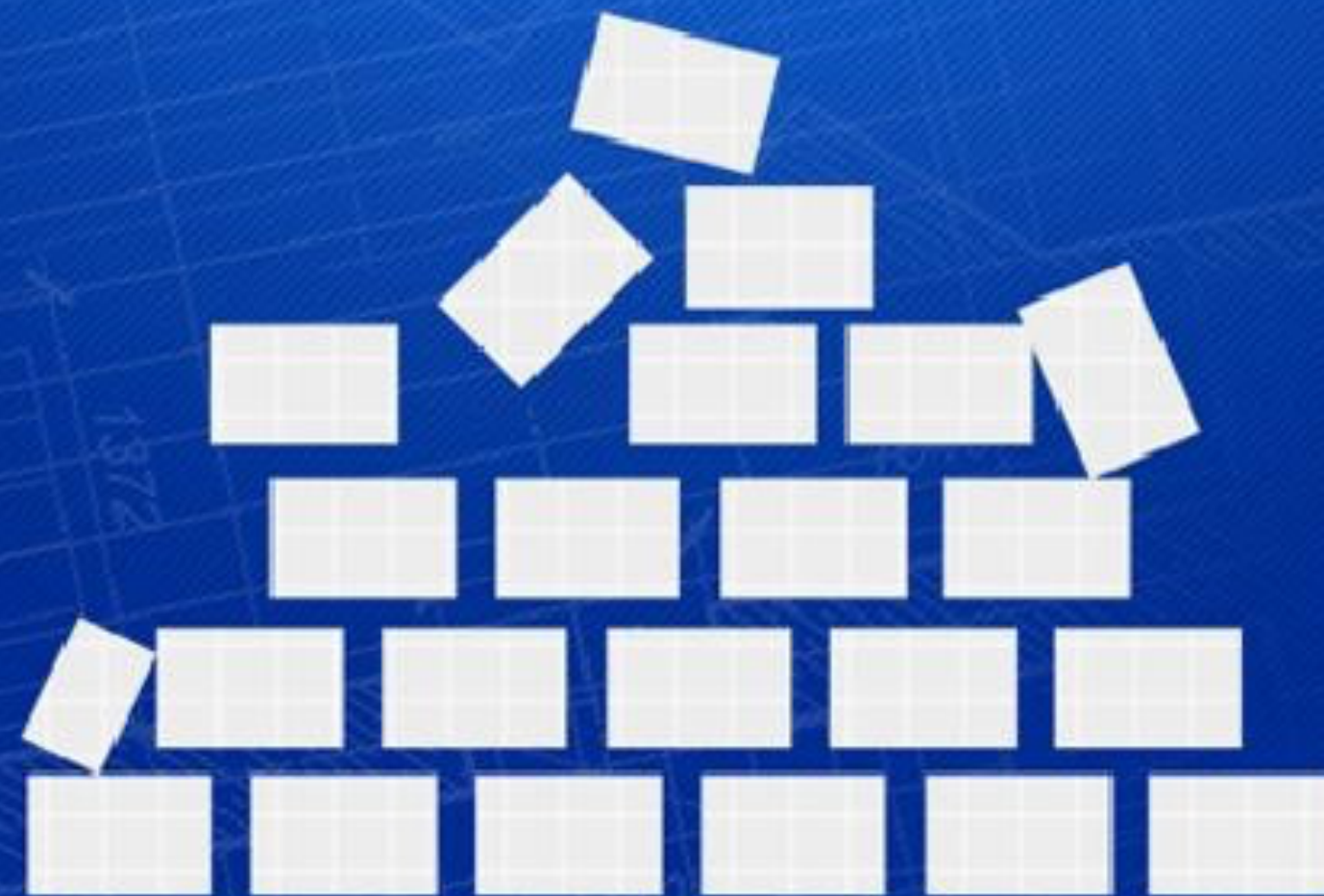
- Jesus is THE foundation of His Church and it's our *revelation of* and *response to* Him that secures our place in it (Mt 16:18, Ac 2:36-41).
- But Jesus also lays *other foundations alongside Him* in His building work - Apostles and Prophets (**Eph 2:20**)
- They are 'foundational' because of the revelatory nature of their gift (**Eph 3:5**); they secure the churches in doctrine (**Ac 2:42**) and in practice.
- Apostles and prophets are *functionally* "first" and "second" (**1Co 12:28**) in the planting, building and establishing of the churches. They lay foundations so others can build upon them (**1Co 3:10**).
- They function together (**2Pe 3:2**), bringing "wisdom" and "understanding" so that the House can be filled with treasures! (cf. **Pr 24:3-4**)

DESIGN: FILLED WITH HIS SPIRIT

- The Church is “God’s dwelling in the Spirit” (**Eph 2:20**, HCSB) - also “a dwelling place for God by the Spirit” (ESV), “a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit” (NIV) - the primary expression and manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the earth.
- Every expression of the Church (in a city or in a home) should be characterised not only by His transforming *fruit* (Gal 5:22f), but also by His dynamic *gifts* (1Co 12:7ff).
- To sideline or suppress these charismatic expressions is to *dishonour* the Spirit and to *disfigure* and *disable* the Body.

BUILDING-UP HIS BODY

AND HE PERSONALLY GAVE SOME TO BE APOSTLES, SOME PROPHETS, SOME EVANGELISTS,
SOME PASTORS AND TEACHERS, FOR THE TRAINING OF THE SAINTS IN THE WORK OF
MINISTRY, TO BUILD UP THE BODY OF CHRIST, UNTIL WE ALL **REACH UNITY** IN THE FAITH AND
IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S SON, **GROWING INTO A MATURE MAN** WITH A STATURE
MEASURED BY CHRIST'S FULLNESS.



EPH 4:11-13

DESTINY: FUNCTIONAL UNITY

- It is the task and function of the fivefold Gifts of the ascended Christ to train the saints and build-up the Body (**Eph 4:12**).
- And the GOAL of this is so that we “reach unity in the faith” and in our “knowledge of God’s Son” and grow in maturity, until we attain “a statute measured by Christ’s fulness” (**Eph 4:13**).
- These Gifts are the antidote to denominationalism and ecumenicalism: unity of faith comes not by finding our ‘lowest common denominator’ but by *recognising and releasing these precious Gifts* to function as Jesus intends!...
- The Church is already ONE *in the Spirit* (**Eph 4:3**); and enabling a ‘one-ness’ *in the faith* is the task and function of these Gifts...

DESTINY: FULNESS & STATURE

- The fivefold Gifts are given to the Church by Jesus as part-and-parcel of His plan for our destiny...
- Our ultimate unity and maturity will be evidenced by attaining “a statute measured by Christ’s fulness” (**Eph 4:13**); or “attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (NIV), “measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ” (NLT)
- The word is *pleroma* meaning ‘completeness, full-measure, abundance, entirety; dense, thick, full-pressed.’ It is used several times by Paul in Ephesians and Colossians to unveil the cosmic plan!!...
 - All of God in Christ (**Col 1:19, 2:9**); *and*
 - All of Christ in His Church (**Eph 1:23, 3:19, 4:13**); *so that*
 - The whole universe will be filled with Christ! (**Eph 4:10**)