"The following is a direct script of a teaching that is intended to be presented via video, incorporating relevant text, slides, media, and graphics to assist in illustration, thus facilitating the presentation of the material. In some places, this may cause the written material to not flow or sound rather awkward in some places. In addition, there may be grammatical errors that are often not acceptable in literary work. We encourage the viewing of the video teachings to complement the written teaching you see below."

Ekklesia

There is much talk about Israel and the Church. But who is Israel? Who is the Church?

What if we were to tell you they were one and the same? We know that may sound difficult to hear at first for many. But let's examine this some. Is Israel just lines on a map? Is Israel those who live within those lines?

Likewise, is the Church a building? Is the Church all those individuals who attend meetings in that building?

So what are the definitions of the words "Church" and "Israel"?

For a long time we have been told that these two names have different definitions, that they are completely two different entities.

Israel is obviously first identified in the Old Testament.

Exodus 5:2

> But Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord (YHWH), that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord (YHWH), and moreover, I will not let Israel go."

And also given this title from YHWH Himself...

Exodus 9:4

> But the LORD (Yahweh) will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and that of Egypt, so that no animal belonging to the Israelites will die.

Then after the Exodus as well....

Exodus 12:37-38

> And the people of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on

> foot, besides women and children. A mixed multitude also went up with them, and very much livestock, both flocks and herds.

So, others went with them. But, what happened to these "other people"?

Well, we notice that they begin being considered a part of Israel right away.

Consider what is said at the time Pharaoh pursues all those who left just after he released them.

Exodus 14:19-20

> Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness. And it lit up the night without one coming near the other all night.

They were considered as a part of Israel. They were truly the first who were grafted in.

Remember, the land that Israel went in to conquer was divided amongst the twelve tribes. Not the twelve tribes and those who joined them, only the twelve tribes. Plus they are informed that they are not to be considered different or follow their own laws. They are instructed to follow the same instructions as those who were native born.

Numbers 15:15-16

> For the assembly (*qahal*), there shall be one statute for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you, a statute forever throughout your generations. You and the sojourner shall be alike before the Lord (YHWH). One law and one rule shall be for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you."

So there we have it.

"You and the sojourner shall be alike before the Lord (YHWH)."

They are the same. They truly were grafted in as Israel.

So what does this tell us? Israel is anyone who chooses to follow YHWH.

Let's not forget this.

Now, what about the church?

The Church is first mentioned in the New Testament of course, by Jesus (his Hebrew name being Yeshua)

Matthew16:18

> And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church (*ekklesian*), and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

He also mentions it again in chapter 18:

Matthew 18:17

> And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church (*ekklesia*). And if he refuses to listen even to the church (*ekklesias*) let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector…

The Greek word "*ekklesia*" actually means "assembly." Had the interpreters used the word "assembly," as *Ekklesia* means, instead of the word "church," there would be no confusion on this issue.

We encourage you to look up the word "assembly" in the Old Testament. You'll find it's referring to the "church" of the Old Testament.

Compare even Stephen's referral to Moses in Acts.

Acts 7:38

> He was in the assembly (*ekklesia*) in the desert, with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers; and he received living words to pass on to us.

The word for assembly here is *ekklesia*. That's right. The exact same word used for "church" throughout the rest of the New Testament

Why didn't the translators make this *ekklesia* say "church" like all the other ones in the New Testament?

Because that would put Moses in the "church." And most all want to separate the church from Israel. When nothing could be further from the truth.

If "assembly" was used like it should have been for "*ekklesia*" in the rest of the New Testament, the flow between the Old and New Testaments would be seamless. For then we would see that the "church" is truly the continuance of the assembly of the Old Testament, the TANAKH, and not some supposed new creation from our Messiah Yeshua.

Even the Septuagint, which was the Greek translation of the TANAKH (again, the Old Testament) actually uses *ekklesia* for assembly throughout the translation. And in case you didn't know, the Septuagint was written hundreds of years before Yeshua came.

So, what does this mean? It means that *ekklesia* was understood by all in the first century to be the assembly of Israel.

This truly can't be overlooked anymore.

To further this point, we see in the New Jerusalem that there are twelve gates, all for the twelve tribes.

Revelation 21:12

> It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.

We must take note that there is not a gate for the gentile "church." Meaning what? We are grafted in to Israel AND Israel is the church.

Biblically speaking, we can't separate Israel and the church. There is no such thing as "Israel" and the "church" because Israel IS the church.

Remember, as in the days of the first exodus, Israel was anyone who chooses to follow YHWH. And so it is today. We encourage you to watch our teachings titled "Grafted In", "What is the Mixed Multitude?", "What is the Gospel?" and "The Lost Sheep" for more detail on that topic.

Again, Israel is the church and the church is Israel. You will enter the New Jerusalem through one of the twelve tribes, or you won't enter it at all.

We pray you have enjoyed this study. Remember, continue to test everything.

Shalom.

For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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