

THE CHURCH THAT NEVER EXISTED

By Dr James Trimm

There has been a great deal of confusion over the years over what the "church" is. Some have taught that the Church is a new entity which replaces Israel. Others have taught that the Church is a new body which is totally independent of Israel. Still others have taught that the Church and Israel are two different but overlapping entities. With all of the misconceptions about the identity of the "Church" the time has come to set the story straight and reveal what the "Church" really is.

ORIGIN OF THE WORD "CHURCH"

The English word "Church" comes originally from the Old English word KIRKE. The Old English word KIRKE was the word the Anglo-Saxons used to refer to their pagan places of worship. When they became Christianized the Anglo-Saxons continued to call their places of worship KIRKES and as the language evolved "Churches". You may have heard that the word "Church" originally referred to the people and later came to refer to the building. This is not true. The word "Church" originally referred to the building and later came to refer to the people. Moreover the word "church" is of pagan origin.

MEANING OF THE WORD "CHURCH"

Now if you look up the English word "Church" in Webster's dictionary you will find the following meanings:

1. a building set apart or consecrated for public worship, esp. one for Christian worship.
2. All Christians as a group
3. a sect or denomination of Christians

In short a "church" is either a building or a group of Christians.

Now wherever we see the English word "church" in an English Bible we would expect the underlying Greek word would be a Greek word that also means "a group of Christians". Since the English uses such a technical theological term one would expect that the Greek has also used a technical theological term. But the reality is that the Greek word that appears wherever the English has "church" is not a technical theological term and DOES NOT mean "a group of Christians" at all. That's right, a technical theological term of pagan origin meaning "a group of Christians" has been inserted in your English Bible despite the fact that the corresponding Greek word is not a technical theological term and does not mean the same thing as the word "Church".

The Greek word that appears where our English Bible's have "church" is EKKLESIA. EKKLESIA is just the Greek word for "assembly". Although it comes from a root meaning "to call out" there is no special theological significance to this word. In fact this is the same Greek word which was used for "assembly" by the classical Pagan Greek writers. Inscriptions in ancient Greek auditoriums where pagan ritual dramas were performed by the Bacchus cult have the audience section inscribed with the sign "EKKLESIA". This same Greek word EKKLESIA is used throughout the Greek Septuagint translation of the Tanak as the word for "assembly". There are also many places where the Greek word EKKLESIA appears in the NT but which the KJV and other translators did NOT translate the word as "church". This same Greek word is even used in Acts 19:32-

41 to describe an unruly mob, yet here the translators suddenly translate the word as "assembly" rather than "church".

There is therefore no such thing as the "church" because the Greek word translated "church" does not mean "church" at all but "assembly".

THE ASSEMBLY WHICH IS MESSIAH'S BODY

Now there are some who claim that the "Church" was a new entity born in Acts 2 at Pentecost of 32 C.E. . However if we examine the events of Acts 2 we find that at that event persons were "added to" the "church" (Acts 2:47) which means that the "church" had to have already existed at that time. If we turn to Acts 7:38 we see that it speaks of Moses as "he that was in the church in the wilderness". Certainly this "church" could not have been a new "New Testament" entity.

Now while the term "church" is a mistranslation for a word simply meaning "assembly", there is an entity which is commonly referred to as "The Assembly" in the New Testament. Let us examine the Scriptures and determine what the true identity of this "Assembly" is.

To begin with we must understand that this Assembly is also known as the "Body of Messiah" as we read:

"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."
(Col. 1:18 - KJV)

"And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all."
(Eph. 1:22-23 - KJV)

Now one may ask what "Assembly" is the allegorical Messiah? To find the answer to that question lets look at Matthew 2:14-15:

"When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son. "
(Matthew 2:14-15 - KJV)

Now here Matthew is citing a prophecy in Hosea 11:1 and applying it to Messiah. Now let us go back and look at this prophecy in Hosea 11:1 in context:

"When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt."
(Hosea 11:1 - KJV)

Here Hosea is referring to Israel as the son who is called out of Egypt. This points us back to a passage in the Torah:

"And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn: And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn." (Ex. 4:22-23 - KJV)

From these two passages we learn that Israel is the firstborn son of Elohim who is called out of Egypt. However in Matthew it is Yeshua the Messiah who is called up out of Egypt and in Col. 1:18 Messiah is the "firstborn". Moreover Hebrews speaks of the "church of

the firstborn"
(Heb. 12:23 - KJV).

Thus Israel is allegorically equivalent to the Messiah. There are some very important reasons for this allegorical relationship:

Both are the "firstborn Son of Elohim".
Both made a major impact on the world.
Both were born through a biological miracle on their mother's womb.
Both were taken into Egypt to save their lives.
Both were called up out of Egypt.
Both were despised and rejected by men.
Rome attempted to destroy them both.
Both are resurrected.

Thus Israel is the allegorical "Body of Messiah". Moreover in the Tanak, Israel is commonly called "The Assembly of Israel" and wherever the phrase "The Assembly of Israel" appears in the Tanak the Greek LXX has "EKKLESIA of Israel".

The so-called "church" which is the "Body of Messiah" is in reality "the Assembly of Israel". Yeshua did not come to create a new religion, but to be Messiah of the old one. Wherever your English New Testament refers to a "church" (i.e. a group of Christians) the Greek has "EKKLESIA" a term which commonly refers to the "Assembly of Israel". The "Church" as most Christians have understood it never existed. All of the passage people have thought were talking about the "Church" were actually talking about Israel.

ARE ALL SAVED PERSONS PART OF THE BODY OF MESSIAH?

Now let us look at Exodus 12:43-49:

"And the LORD said unto Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the Passover: There shall no stranger eat thereof:

But every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof. A foreigner and an hired servant shall not eat thereof. In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof.

All the assembly of Israel shall keep it. And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. One law shall be to him that is home born, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you. "

(Ex. 12:43-49)

Now there are a number of things we can learn from this passage:

1. All the "Assembly" of Israel must eat the Passover.
2. No uncircumcised male can eat the Passover.

From these two facts we may conclude that:

If all the Assembly eat the Passover, and if no uncircumcised males eats the Passover, then no uncircumcised males are part of the Assembly.

This is an inescapable categorical proposition drawn from the plain statements in Exodus 12:43-49.

Now from Acts 15 we also know that one does not have to be circumcised to be saved. Thus we can add another fact to our reasoning:

3. Some uncircumcised males are saved.

Now if no uncircumcised males are part of the Assembly, and if some uncircumcised males are saved, then some saved persons are not part of the Assembly.

Again this is an inescapable categorical proposition drawn from the facts plainly laid out in Ex. 12:43-49 and Acts 15.

There are in fact some saved persons who are not part of the Body of Messiah, the Assembly of Israel.

Now this brings us to the Immersion of the Ruach HaKodesh: Paul writes of this immersion:

"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Messiah. For by one Spirit are we all immersed into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (1Cor. 12:12-13)

From this we can determine that all members of the Body of Messiah, the Assembly of Israel have received the immersion of the Ruach HaKodesh. Since we have already determined that some saved persons are not part of the Body of Messiah then it stands to reason that some saved persons who are not part of the Assembly of Israel may not have received the immersion of the Ruach HaKodesh. This is a fact confirmed in Acts 8:15-17 where we read about a group of Samaritans who had been saved, but had not yet received the immersion of the Ruach HaKodesh:

"Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Ruach HaKodesh: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were immersed in the name of the Lord Yeshua.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Ruach HaKodesh. "
(Acts 8:15-17)

Thus also Acts refers to "...the Ruach HaKodesh which Elohim has given to them which OBEY him." (Acts 5:32).

Dr James Trimm