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Ekklesia

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

What if I were to tell you they were one and the same? I 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

Pharaoh said, “Who is (Yahweh) the LORD, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know (Yahweh) the LORD and I will not let Israel go.”

And also given this title from Yahweh Himself..

Exodus 9:4

But (Yahweh) the LORD 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

The Israelites journeyed from Rameses to Succoth. There were about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children. Many other people went up with them, as well as large

droves of livestock, both flocks and herds.

So, others went with them. 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 had been traveling in front of Israel’s army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel.

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

As for the assembly (quhal), there shall be one statute for you and for the alien who sojourns with you, a perpetual statute throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the alien be before (Yahweh) the LORD. ‘There is to be one law and one ordinance for you and for the alien who sojourns with you.

So there we have it.

“As you are, so shall the alien be before (Yahweh) the LORD”

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

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

Let’s not forget this.

Now, what about the church?

The Church is first mentioned in the New Testament of course. By Yeshua Himself.

Matthew 16:18

And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church (ekklesian); and the gates of Hades 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 refuse to hear the church (ekklesias) also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican.

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 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 the "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 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.

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 Yahweh. And so it is today. We encourage you to watch our teaching titled "Grafted In" 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.

EMAIL: Info@119ministries.com

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/119Ministries

WEBSITE: www.TestEverything.net & www.ExaminaloTodo.net

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