

Did Yeshua Come to Build a Church? (Part I)

The King James Version records Yeshua saying, “I will build my church” (Mattityahu/Matthew 16:18). This is the first occurrence of “church” in the KJV.

The Question

Did Yeshua really say that he would build his “church”?

The Importance of Words

What difference does it make what words we use?

- Mattityahu/Matthew 4:4 (Devarim/Deuteronomy 8:3)
- Mattityahu 12:36-37
- Mishlei/Proverbs 30:5-6

Greek: The word “church” appears over 100 times in the KJV, and each time it is translated from *ekklesia*. *Ekklesia* is made up of two smaller words *ek*, (“out of”) and *kaleo* (“to call”). Therefore, the word *ekklesia* literally means, “called out” (or “the called out ones”). It does not mean building, religious institution, or church.

Hebrew: The Septuagint has *ekklesia* for the Hebrew word *qahal*, usually translated “congregation” or “assembly.” *Qahal* does not mean building, religious institution, or church either.

Qahal and *ekklesia* do not mean “church,” but rather “assembly or congregation.”
Qahal (assembly) = *ekklesia* (assembly) church

Origin of “Church” in the English Bibles

Tyndale, who translated the first “New Testament” printed into English (1525-26), did not use “church,” but rather “congregation.” He did use the word “churches,” though, but only once, when referring to pagan temples (Ma’aseh/Acts 19:37).

Tyndale’s students continued with his project and produced the first printed, complete Bible in the English language—the Coverdale Bible (1535). Two years later, the Matthews Bible appeared. Both of these used “congregation,” as did the Great Bible (1539).

The first English Bible that regularly used the word “church” was the Geneva Bible (1557-1560). The first English Bible printed in England was the Bishops Bible (1568). This used the term “church,” as did almost all subsequent translations, including the KJV (1611). In fact, King James ordered that the word “church” appear in his newly authorized translation. One of the fifteen edicts that he required of his translators was: “The Old Ecclesiastical Words to be kept, viz. the word Church not to be translated Congregation &c.”

Why was this so important to the king? Starting with Henry VIII, the king was the

head of the Church of England. Since King James was the head of the Church of England, it was important for him to make sure that the word "church" was in the Bible in order to justify his jurisdiction over the people, the flock. After all, what would be the point of being the "head" of a religious institution that is never mentioned in the Bible?

Moshiach's Mission

Notice an example of the terrible ramifications of King James' edict:

- A true statement in Tehillim/Psalms 22:22-23. The *qahal* (translated accurately as "congregation") is defined as the seed of Jacob/the seed Israel.
- A false statement in Ivrim/Hebrews 2:12 where *ekklesia* is incorrectly translated as "church."

The prophecy of the suffering Messiah in Tehillim/Psalms 22:22-23 is connected to the prophecy of the coming "Prophet" in Devarim/Deuteronomy 18:15-19. Notice these similarities:

- my brethren/thy brethren
- the assembly [*qahal*]/the congregation [*qahal*]
- thy name/in my name

Both of these prophecies are to be fulfilled by the same man. Therefore, what is the *qahal*/*ekklesia*? It is the nation of Israel. That is where Messiah Yeshua is in the midst. This is what Yeshua said he would rebuild.

The Origins of the Church

Quotations from *Come Out of Her My People* by C.J. Koster (p. 34-35):

Whence the word "church," then? Ecclesiastical sources give the origin as *kuriakon* or *kyriakon* in Greek. However, to accept this, one has to stretch your imagination in an attempt to see any resemblance.

Also, because *kuriakon* means a building (the house of *Kurios*=Lord), and not a gathering or meeting of people, as the words *ekklesia* and *qahal* imply, therefore this explanation can only be regarded as distorted, even if it is true. Our common dictionaries, however, are honest in revealing to us the true origin. They all trace the word back to its Old English or Anglo-Saxon root, namely *circe*.

And the origin of *circe*? Any encyclopedia, or dictionary of mythology, will reveal who Circe was. She was the goddess-daughter of Helios, the Sun-deity! Again, another form of Sun-worship, this time the name of the daughter of the Sun-deity, had become mixed with the Messianic Belief.

...Latin rules of grammar demands a pronunciation of "sirke." The Old English word

circe could have been pronounced similarly to "kirke," or even "sirse."

However, Circe was in fact originally a Greek goddess where her name was written as: Kirke, and pronounced as such—just as in numerous similar cases of words of Greek origin...The word "church" is known in Scotland as *kirk*, and in German as *Kirche* and in Netherlands as *kerk*. These words show their direct derivation from the Greek *Kirke* even better than the English "church." However, even the Old English *circe* for "church," reveals its origin.

Let us rather use the Scriptural "assembly" or "congregation," and renounce the word that is derived from Circe, the daughter of the Sun-deity!

Here's a quotation from *Fossilized Customs: The Pagan Sources of Popular Customs* by Lew White (p.100):

The Old English word was CIRICE, and you will see it spelled CHIRCHE written above many old "church" entrances throughout England. This is from the West Germanic KIRIKA, which is based on the Greek deity's name, CIRCE. Circe was famous among Pagans for turning men into pigs, or other animals, using drugs.

Conclusion

We find the parable of the prodigal son educational and revealing in this regard. He went off and found himself feeding swine, even being willing to eat swine food. Was he, metaphorically speaking, in the process of being turned into a pig by Circe, but he came to his senses just in time? How prophetic was this parable? Yeshua knew what was going on and what would happen. How apt that the name of this false religious system is called by the name of an ancient Greek female elohim who turned men into swine. This is not a judgmental statement on anyone of us, but rather a statement of historical record, the implications of which should not elude us. Babylon is huge and worldwide, and it isn't just in Islam. On a spiritual level, Christianity is a part of it too.

- Shemot/Exodus 23:13

Did Yeshua Come to Build a Church? (Part II)

Review

Contrary to the KJV of Mattityahu/Matthew 16:18, Yeshua did not say that he would build his "church."

Greek: *Ekklesia* means assembly. It does not mean building, religious institution, or church.

Hebrew: The Septuagint has *ekklesia* for the Hebrew word *qahal*, usually translated congregation or assembly. *Qahal* does not mean building, religious institution, or church either.

Qahal (assembly) = *ekklesia* (assembly) church

Purpose

- To show the origins of and the identity of the scriptural *ekklesia* or *qahal*

Body

Tehillim/Psalms 22:22-23 states that Moshiach will declare the Father's name in the midst of the *qahal*, the seed of Israel. Moshe's prophecy in Devarim 18:15-19 says the same thing. The "day of the assembly [*qahal*]" is Shavuot [Pentecost], the *moed* [appointed time] when Israel received the Torah at Mt. Sinai.

- Ma'aseh/Acts 19:21-41

Ekklesia refers to the non-Messianic citizens of Ephesus in 19:32 ("the *ekklesia* was confused"), 19:39 ("a lawful *ekklesia*"), and 19:41 ("he dismissed the *ekklesia*"). This shows that *ekklesia* is not a uniquely spiritual or Messianic term. Where is the first place in the Scriptures where we encounter the *qahal*?

- Bereshit/Genesis 28:1-4

A "multitude of people" should be "an assembly [*qahal*] of peoples." The *qahal* is to be the descendants of Jacob, i.e. Israel. This agrees with Tehillim 22:22-23.

- Shemot/Exodus 12:6

The *qahal* existed when Israel were slaves in Egypt. The whole *qahal* killed the Passover while in Egypt. Although the *qahal* gathered at Mt. Sinai later, it didn't come into existence at that time. It was already in existence.

- Shemot/Exodus 16:1-3

On the way to Mt. Sinai, Moses was accused of trying to kill "this whole *qahal* with hunger."

- Devarim/Deuteronomy 18:15-16

The "day of the assembly [*qahal*]" was the day when Israel received the Torah at Mt. Sinai.

- Devarim/Deuteronomy 5:22

Adonai spoke unto "all your assembly [*qahal*] in the mount out of the midst of the fire."

Clearly, the *qahal* is the Nation of Israel. Yet, those who trust in Yeshua as their Messiah form a unique subset or assembly [*qahal*] within that larger *qahal*.

- Bereshit/Genesis 49:8-10

Shiloh (understood as "Moshiach") acts as a gathering point for those in Israel. Interestingly, although Shiloh (Moshiach) comes out of Judah, Shiloh was also a

city in Ephraim where the tabernacle was erected after Israel conquered the land. To the tabernacle (a symbol of Moshiach) at Shiloh, the people gathered.

- 2 Thessalonians 2:1

Sha'ul mentioned that Moshiach would be a gathering point for us.

- Ephesians 2:11-13

The *ekklesia* that Yeshua spoke about in Mattityahu 16:18 is here referred to as the “commonwealth of Israel.” Of course! It is the same thing.

- Ma'aseh/Acts 7:37-38

Notice that Stephen/Tsephanyah quoted from Deuteronomy/Devarim 18:15! The *qahal* was in the wilderness and received the Torah.

- Mattityahu/Matthew 16:13-18

Yeshua was not saying that he was going to build something that had no relationship to the *qahal* of Israel, the *ekklesia* that gathered at Mount Sinai. Rather, he was indicating that he was the Prophet prophesied by Moses in Devarim/Deuteronomy 18:15, 18. He was going to do what Moshe could not do. The word “build” comes from *oikodomeo*, which means to “erect a house or building from the foundation or to restore a building by rebuilding and repairing.”

- Ephesians 2:19-20

The foundation of the *qahal* is the apostles and the prophets, not just the apostles. As chief cornerstone, Yeshua is both apostle and prophet.

Conclusion

Yeshua came to “build again,” as Ya'akov indicated.

- Ma'aseh/Acts 15:13-17

What is the tabernacle of David, and when did it fall down? It is the monarchy of the House of David (i.e. the Messiah) ruling over all twelve tribes, i.e. over the House of Judah and the House of Israel. It fell down when Jeroboam and the House of Israel broke away from the United Kingdom of Israel and formed their separate kingdom in the days of Rehoboam, son of Solomon. That breach must and will be repaired. That is what Yeshua meant. “I will rebuild my *qahal*.”

Did Yeshua Come to Build a Church? (Part III)

Review

Contrary to the KJV of Mattityahu/Matthew 16:18, Yeshua as the Moshiach prophesied in Devarim/Deuteronomy 18:15-19 and Tehillim/Psalms 22:22-23 did not say that he would build his church, but rather rebuild his assembly (*qahal* or *ekklesia*). Scripture (Bereshit/Genesis 28:3) defines this assembly as the people of Israel (the seed of Jacob). It is not a building, religious institution, Christian organization, or church. Moshiach was prophesied to be a gathering point for the people of Israel (Bereshit/Genesis 49:10). Moshiach's mission is to rebuild the nation of Israel with the protective covering of the Davidic Dynasty over all twelve tribes (Ma'aseh/Acts 15:14-17). This is the meaning of the "tabernacle [sukkah] of David" that fell in the days of Rehoboam when Jeroboam led the ten northern tribes in a rebellion against Judah.

Purpose

- To explain the qualities of the renewed and rebuilt assembly of Israel

Body

What was wrong with the assembly that it would come to need rebuilding? Other than the obvious fact of Jeroboam's rebellion, there is a much broader answer.

- Ivrim/Hebrews 8:6-8

Both Israel and Judah transgressed. And the assembly that Adonai led through the wilderness died. Most of them did not choose to live by the terms of the covenant. They needed a renewed heart—a heart of flesh—a heart that would hearken to Adonai.

- Yechezqel/Ezekiel 11:14-19

Even though the House of Israel is not in the land or near Jerusalem, the city of *Beit ha-Miqdash* (the Temple), Adonai promised to be a little *Miqdash* [sanctuary] to the House of Israel in exile. This provides background to Sha'ul's words in 2 Corinthians 6:16-18.

The detestable and abominable things will be cleansed out of the and after we return. This will involve the cleansing of our hearts/minds. There is a need to remove our independent streak and our stubbornness. No longer will we say that it is okay for every man to do that which is right in his own eyes. The new heart and *ruach* will be connected to our desire to keep the Torah.

- Yechezqel/Ezekiel 36:21-31

The promised return of the House of Israel is not because of our righteousness, but because of Adonai name's sake. The cleansing of our filthiness and "ball" idols is symbolized by immersion [baptism]. Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 17:13-14 refers

to Adonai as the “mikveh of Israel,” the fountain of living [running] waters. If we pray for the return of our people and the restoration of all things, i.e. Yeshua rebuilding his assembly, Adonai promises to hear us. Even though we have been in rebellion for 3000 years, he promises to hear this specific prayer (Yechezqel/ Ezekiel 36:37-38).

Do you want to be in the place where the curse upon the House of Israel will be reversed? That place is the land of Israel.

- Hoshea/Hosea 1:10-11

The covenant will be renewed by people who want to enter it and have made it their priority. Adonai promised a “renewed” covenant, a covenant to write the Torah in their hearts and in their minds (through the power of *ruach ha-qodesh*), guaranteeing the ultimate gift of eternal life. But don’t forget the context of this renewed covenant. Look at the entire first part of this chapter. It deals with the return of Ephraim to the land!

- Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 31:31-34

The renewed covenant, the Torah (all the commandments, not just the “ten”) written in our minds, is made with the same people that the first covenant was made with, the House of Israel and the House of Judah. It is not made with a church.

Yeshua’s point was that the assembly, i.e. his assembly, the assembly renewed in the *ruach*, would not die. Not only would the assembly not die, but the people of it would be resurrected. Adonai would resurrect the people of the assembly and give them the gift of eternal life through Yeshua, the mediator of the renewed covenant.

- Ivrim/Hebrews 9:15, 12:23-24

In short, Sha’ul was contrasting Yeshua with Moses, the mediator of the first covenant.

Conclusion

The talmidim who meet with Yeshua are an assembly (*ekklesia/qahal*), not a church. What is its foundation and who is its head?

- Ephesians 2:20, 5:23
- Colossians 1:18

The *qahal* is built on the foundation of the prophets and the apostles, and Moshiach is its head. Yeshua’s assembly does not oppose the covenant people Israel. Neither does his assembly replace Israel as the people of Elohim, a misguided Christian teaching called “replacement theology.”

Yeshua told his disciples that he “will build his assembly,” and he will do just as he said.

- Mattityahu/Matthew 16:16-18

The rock is not Peter/Kefa. The rock is either Yeshua or the statement that Kefa said, “Thou are the Moshiach, the son of the living Elohim.”

Has it been done yet? Hardly, but when it gets rebuilt, the gates of the grave will not prevail against it.

Let us learn to speak the truth and cast aside erroneous words based on false ideas. We do not need to encumber ourselves with unprofitable doctrines that enslave. On the contrary, let us seek freedom in the truth by living in accordance with the word of Adonai.

- Yochanan/John 8:31-32