

# THE CHURCH

Arnold Kennedy

[aekennedy@xtra.co.nz](mailto:aekennedy@xtra.co.nz)

Early in the Christian life, the convert is told something about “The Church”. The word *ekklesia* may be used, and it may be correctly spoken of as *that which is called out*. So far, so good, but then the problem begins. Called out of what? The usual explanation given is *called out of the world*. Fair enough, but what is the meaning of *the world*? The chapter entitled, *Which World Did God “So Love”?*, was written to show that there are different “worlds” in Scripture, not just the one world supposedly consisting of everyone of every race who is not converted. Then we looked at “adoption” to show who was adopted from where, concluding that the Sons of God were *placed as sons* (not adopted) out of the genetic seed of Abraham, through Isaac. We also looked at “strangers”, considering whether or not genetic stock other than Abraham’s seed could join themselves to Israel, and become *as Israel* by keeping the Law, Circumcision and the Passover. We found that there were different words for “strangers” and showed that this proposition was basically invalid. Consideration of the matter of “seeds” showed that there is no such thing as a *spiritual seed*, as is commonly presented, and that the genetic seed of Abraham cannot be spiritualised away. We will now see that “the Church” is called out from amongst Israel. In this chapter, “The Church” is placed in quotation marks, because it is commonly used in a way that is un-Biblical. The Greek word translated “church” means *a called - out assembly*. It is sometimes translated as *assembly*.

Thayer

*A gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place, as assembly.*

## SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT “THE CHURCH”

To find out what we are talking about, we have to ask some questions:

1. Can the church really be separated from Israel?
2. Is it called out from every race?
3. Can all men of all races be potential inheritors of the Kingdom of God?
4. Is there prophecy to support the current common theory that *The Church* has replaced Israel?
5. Could the “wife” be other than Israel?
6. What was the *church in the wilderness*?
7. What is the *church of the firstborn*?
8. What about the promises made to David and David’s eternal throne?
9. Does *of your brethren* as found in the New Testament suddenly change somehow to be *spiritual brethren*?
10. Why are there so many references to *the fathers* in the New Testament when *the fathers* have no connection with non-Israel races?
11. Why is national Israel still separate in the Book of Revelation?

In looking into these questions, we will find that our normal religious education impedes our understanding and that what is being presented here is at variance with the popular teachings.

## *the origin of the word “church”*

The word originates from the Greek word *kuriakos* which means *belonging to the Lord*. From this word has developed the German *kirche*, the Dutch *kerke*, the Scottish and northern English *kirk* and the southern English *church*. The word is first found in the Great Bible of 1570. In no way does the word originate from *ekklesia*, even if tradition would like to say that it does.

In *The Book of Revelation* by R.K. and R.N. Phillips, 1992:

*The term ekklesia is the combination of two Greek words, ek – out of, or from, and klesis – to call. Ecclesia simply means an assembly, any assembly of people who are called out from other peoples and from which all aliens and slaves have been excluded [see Ellicott’s comments on Matt 16:18].*

*Hence it is used of the whole nation of Israel, as distinct from other nations. For those who claim that trying to limit ekklesia to Israel is a biased view, please read Dr. E.W. Bullinger [The Apocalypse of the Day of the Lord] from which these notes are summarised.*

The Old Testament equivalent is the Hebrew word *cahal* [or *qahal*] which means to call or to assemble together, but there is not one place where it is rendered “church”. *Cahal* is used seventy times and is mostly translated as “congregation”, this being the congregation of Israel. An interesting feature is that this word is used for those called out of Israel to assemble before the Tabernacle and Temple, and it denies or excludes the “mixed multitude” (*edah* - which is also translated as *congregation*) which comprised of those from other races who had joined themselves to Israel.

In the New Testament there was a parallel situation of there being a “mixed multitude” in the Judean nation.

## THE FOUNDATION OF “THE CHURCH”

The word *church* is usually thought of traditionally as being a New Testament word, because it is supposed to be a multi-racial entity, whereas in the Old Testament, Israel was a single race. Let us look at the foundation of the Church as given by Jesus.

*Matt 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

This is after Jesus asked two questions, *Who do men say that I am?* and *Who do you say that I am?* Peter replied, *Thou art the Son of the Living God.* Jesus then said to Peter, *Thou art petros* [masculine] *and upon this petra* [feminine] *I will build my assembly.* Therefore *petra* and *petros* cannot refer to the same thing. The latter word must refer to something within the preceding conversation. However, the two traditional views are:

[a] The Roman Catholic view – that “The Church” is built upon the Apostle Peter.

[b] The Protestant view – that “The Church” is built upon the rock itself. The translators of the KJV did not give the word *rock* a capital “R” as might have been expected. The traditional teaching from this verse is that Jesus is the rock upon which He builds His Church. This sounds quite reasonable until we look into the words used in the verse. [Please note that it is not being said that Jesus is not the cornerstone of the foundation].

The word, *petros*, is simply a small rock or stone that came from a larger rock. The second word for rock is *petra*, the feminine of the very same word but it refers to a huge immovable mass of rock. Now, if Jesus is the rock in question upon which the church is founded, then Jesus would also have to be feminine! So, we had better look further into some *petra* verses to find out in what sense the *rock* is used.

Vine says: ***Petra*** denotes a mass of rock, as distinct from ***petros*** a detached stone or boulder, or a stone that might easily be thrown.

For example:

*Matt 7:24 Therefore whosoever hears these sayings of mine, and does them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock* [petra].

*Rom 9:33 As it is written, Behold I lay in Sion a stumblingstone* [lithos], *and a rock* [petra] *of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*

Jesus’ words are the stumbling stone Israel could trip up on. This never applies to peoples other than Israel. But the stone in Romans 9 is not *petra* or *petros*; it is *lithos*. The *stumbling stone* and the *rock* are not the same words. Jesus said those who build their houses in response to *these sayings of mine* are those who build on the feminine *petra*. Jesus was then addressing his disciples [Israelites all], and not the Scribes and Pharisees in the mixed multitude.

The people who are the subject of the discussion in both verses, are stated to be Israel [and they are Israel only].

Peter also uses the two quite different words for *stone* or *rock* in the same manner and in the one context.

1 Peter 2:7,8 *Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone [lithos] which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone [lithos] of stumbling, and a rock [petra] of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.*

*Lithos* is a stone or rock that has been fashioned or worked over, for example, a corner stone, a tomb stone or a mill stone. So, there can be no mistake. In these verses we see three distinct terms:

<i>petros</i>	a rough, unfinished, unsophisticated stone that is a chip off a large lump of rock - like the rubble at the bottom of a cliff.
<i>lithos</i>	a worked, piece of stone that has been produced for a particular purpose.
<i>petra</i>	a huge, unmovable mass of rock - like Ayer's Rock in Australia. It is more than foundation rock - it is awesome in its immensity.

The great immovable rock of Matt 16:18 was the statement: *Thou art the Son of the living God*. For a human being, like Peter, to reach a point where this statement can be made is a momentous occasion. It is the dawn-breaking realisation that Jesus is no ordinary man. It is the actions taken in response to this discovery that shows what we believe. This is why the called-out ones are the ones who believe this rock solid statement and build on it.

To be wise, we must consider well Jesus' words.

### COULD “THE CHURCH” TAKE OVER THE PROMISES MADE TO ISRAEL?

In the last chapter of the Book of Romans, it is sometimes claimed that the dispersed of Israel rejected the salvation of God, and when Paul turned to the “Gentiles” [v28], he was supposed to be turning to non-Israel stock. “The Church” is thus said to contain non-Israelites and to have taken over all the promises that had been made to Israel. We need to consider three issues in connection with those verses:

1. Paul was speaking with Judeans who were then in Rome. He turned to the House of Israel because *they will hear it*. In all of Paul's epistles, he writes to Israelites [see the chapter, *That Unfortunate Word “Gentile”*].
2. There is only one set of promises in prophecy and these are made to Israel. There is no separate set made for any non-Israelite church. The fulfilment can only be made in the same people, or as Paul puts it, *in us, their children*.
3. The doctrine of the Kinsman-Redeemer would have to be ignored. God is faithful not to break His own laws. Jesus is the Kinsman-Redeemer **of Israel**, not of others who are not kinsmen. The called-out ones are those of Israel who believe Him and change their lives accordingly. They had previously been *under the Law*. These from among Israel are the members of the *ekklesia*, the assembly, (not church!).

### WHO is “THE assembly”?

When Stephen was addressing the Judean leaders, he related the history of Israel to them. This is what “got them going”. These leaders were a mixture of *men* and *brethren*, both appearing jointly as *elders*. Stephen reminded them of the prophecy that Moses had made about a prophet being raised up unto Israel *like unto me* and that *him shall ye hear*. Jesus was to be raised up unto the very same [like] racial group of people. Stephen then goes on to say:

Acts 7:38 *This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the Mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give to us.*

Here we find mention of the church [*ekklesia*] which also existed in the Old Testament. This means that they are the same entity. Stephen isolates *the church* as having *our fathers* in a genetic way. This is not what is taught in our Bible schools and churches, because it does not fit with the multi-racial conception of “The Church”. The Israelites were on their own, separate from the other races,

in the wilderness. Stephen tells of the lively oracles given to *us*. That these oracles were given to Israel alone has been shown from many Scriptures.

Let us go on to look at other places where we find the word *ekklesia*.

*Acts 20:28 ... and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers, to feed the church (ekklesia) of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

We could look at this flock later because it adds to what is being said. Israel as *sheep* in prophecy ties up with sheep in the New Testament. They isolate Israel as being the same people in both Testaments. In this verse Paul is addressing *the church of God*. The church has been purchased, or bought back, by Jesus' blood. *Bought back* signifies that they were previously a possession of God. Without going into this as a subject, it can be stated that this can apply only to the nation of Israel. As Zacharias prophesied, *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed His people ...to remember his holy covenant, and the oath which he sware to our father Abraham [Luke 1:67,73]*. All this identification could not possibly apply to other races. *The assembly (ekklesia)* is of Israel, and of Israel only, and these are the ones who *he hath purchased with his own blood* as quoted above.

There are a number of references to the local assemblies [*ekklesia*] in various towns and even in houses, but there is no need to quote these verses. But, there are things about these assemblies that are significant.

*1 Cor 1:2 Unto the church (ekklesia) of God which is at Corinth, to them which are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, ...*

This qualifies who are the members of the assemblies. The calling is essential. *Both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren [Heb 2:11-13]*. God's name is declared among the brethren ... *in the midst of the church (ekklesia) will I sing praise unto thee ... I and the children which God has given me*.

This assembly can never be stretched beyond this to include everyone on earth.

*1 Cor 14:34 Let your women keep silent in the churches (ekklesia): for it is not permitted for them to speak, but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.*

Here we see a connection between the Law given to Israel and the persons being addressed. The assemblies consist of the same people who knew the Law. Therefore they must be the Israel people.

### *WHAT IS THE assembly?*

His *body*, is the one word which describes *the assembly* in Scripture.

*Eph 1:22,23 ... and gave him to be the head over all things to the church (ekklesia) which is His body, ...*

*Col 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church (ekklesia): ...*

*Col 1:24 ... for His body's sake, which is the church (ekklesia): ...*

*Eph 5:23 for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church (ekklesia), and he is the saviour of the body.*

The word *soma* (body) has a similar connotation as the human body in many verses where it is used, according to dictionaries and lexicons:

Vine *soma* The word is also used for physical nature, as distinct from *pneuma*; the spiritual nature.

Strong G4983 *soma* From 4982; the body [as a sound whole], used in a very wide application, lit. or fig.: bodily, body, slave.

In Eph 5:23, there are the masculine aspects, the "husband", "head and "christ" with the feminine aspects, the "wife", "church" and the neuter noun "body". The assembly has a head and a body. The spoken voice comes only from the head, from the husband aspect. The feminine aspect, the

body, has no words of its own; it is subject to the head in all things. The head controls the body. Where this is not so, then what is found is not the true assembly.

Paul says Israel would remain in that darkness until they were *made nigh in Christ Jesus by His Blood* [Eph 2:13]. But they are not spoken of as being *the body* until they are *made nigh*. These that are made nigh are the assembly. They come out from Israel only, and not from that which was given to Satan. Israel had been dead in their trespasses and sins through the broken Law and had walked according to the course of *this world*, but some were now quickened [or made alive] and saved by Grace. This is no different than what has been written in the chapter entitled *Adoption*. The story is the same.

So far we have the one body which is the *ekklesia*. This is one single body. In the New Testament, the KJV translators translated the singular word *ekklesia* as “churches” 37 times. It would have been better if the translators had used the word “congregation” or “assembly”. Congregation is not used by the translators as a New Testament word, apart from Acts 13:43. Here we have the start of a problem with the word *church*. Because of the translations, we wrongly associate the word *church* [as a place] with *congregation* [as people]. This gives problems when reading through the Word. Sometimes our conception of the church as a place where we go to is adequate, although in reality each person there must be a *called-out one*. They must all be of the *ekklesia*; they must all be of Israel. The place of the meeting is the *sunagoge* [used 58 times].

In the Old Testament there are three major words that have to do with the assembly. These words are:

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <i>Mowed</i> | Refers to the meeting place or the meeting itself. The translators had “a lot of fun” translating this word, giving it meanings such as <i>assembly, appointed, seasons, congregation</i> and <i>solemn</i> . There are 24 references. All these translations do not help to make understanding easy. It means an appointed meeting or their coming together. This word is inclusive of everyone within the Israelite camp, both Israelite and non-Israelite. |
| <i>Cahal</i> | <i>An assembly called together – invited out of whole congregation.</i> <u>The word only relates to racial Israelites</u> , and so does not include any of the mixed multitude within the Israelite camp. These are the called-out ones who alone applied the blood of the Passover lamb.   |
| <i>Edah</i>  | The whole assembly inclusive of both Israelites and the mixed multitude. Unfortunately, both <i>edah</i> and <i>qahal</i> are translated as “congregation” and this gives rise to the misconception that the mixed multitude had the same total position as the Israelite bloodline. A parallel situation of mixture applied in Judea at the time of Jesus and a similar position is found among our assemblies today.  |

In both Testaments, the *cahal* and *ekklesia* are used exclusively of the seed of Abraham.

*1 Tim 3:15* *But if you tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church (ekklesia) of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*

The ground or *hedraioma* of the truth, means *to make stable, settle firmly, a stay or support* [Thayer].

## THE ASSEMBLY OF GOD

*1 Cor 10:32* *Give no offence, neither to the Jews (Judeans), nor to the Gentiles (Hellen: Greeks), nor to the church [assembly] of God.*

Three groups are mentioned in this verse:

1. Unconverted “Jews”, or the Judeans of Israel.
2. Unconverted “Gentiles” of the Dispersion of Israel.
3. The converted ones from these two who are *the assembly of God*.

The popular reasoning from this verse is that assembly is comprised of converted people from out of the “Jews and Gentiles”. This is thus thought to encompass every race on earth. But, as these

“Gentiles” are the House of Israel, the assembly must be comprised of those who are from the House of Judah plus the House of Israel, who are redeemed under the terms of the New Testament made to Israel. Scripture says the New Testament is made with these two Houses alone [Heb 8:8]. This confirms what we saw under the chapter *Adoption*. In the above verse, then, no offence is to be given to any of Israel stock from either House, whether converted or unconverted. The context as given in verses 1 and 2 of this chapter in Corinthians is Israel. Those being addressed in the first verse of chapter 10 had “fathers” who were associated with Moses; this means that they were Israelites.

## THE CHURCH WHICH IS THE SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN

Today, although we have open, unashamed, so-called “churches” of Satan, these are not our concern here. The Synagogue of Satan is an imitation and a counterfeit of the real thing. Jesus spoke about the synagogue of Satan in Rev 2:9 and 3:9. This synagogue of Satan co-exists with what is translated as the “churches”. If we venture to say that the members of Satan’s synagogue are such because they are not of the seed of Abraham, some might object and they might object loudly. Jesus says that these of Satan’s synagogue call themselves Judeans *and are not*. They profess to be of God’s people but they are not. Jesus says so, and in the Gospels He also points to the *children of the wicked one*. This indicates that they are of a different seed. This distinction must be kept in mind.

*Matt 13:38 The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the Kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one.*

Here we see two differing ‘children’. Jesus says that a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. It is absolutely impossible. Peter tells of two differing seeds, the corruptible and the incorruptible. This compares the natural man of Genesis 1 with the spirit carrying man, of Genesis 2. The *good seed* is the only seed which can be quickened by the Word of God. So, is there a corruptible seed and an incorruptible seed or not? Peter is writing to the “elect” (chosen) nation and he tells about the salvation that should come to this people. The prophets of Israel searched for the grace that was to come to Israel [1 Peter 1:10]. Is God not allowed to make such choices? Is God not allowed to be merciful to those whom He will? Is God not supposed to harden whom He will? Yes, but we are taught this is not so and that every kin is the same and has the same opportunity. The tares, like the trees from corrupt seed, have the destiny of being *cast into the fire*.

Amongst Israel were and still are:

- [a] The false prophets which come to you in sheep’s clothing [Matt 7:15].
- [b] Men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the truth [2 Tim 3:8].
- [c] Those who lay in wait to deceive [Eph 4:14].
- [d] Men speaking perverse things to draw away disciples [Acts 20:28-31].

These are the false teachers who can be identified by:

- [a] Their *winds of doctrine*. [Eph 4:14].
- [b] Their Christian doctrines from seducing spirits with *doctrines of devils* [1 Tim 4:1].
- [c] Their perversion of *the right ways of the Lord* [Acts 13:10].

These all look like the real thing in outward profession! They use God’s word in the way Satan does. They say *Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your Name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and done many wonderful works?* This would be enough to convince the average church-goer that these were so-called *spirit-filled* [present tense] and *born again* Christians [perish both expressions]. They are one thing outwardly, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. The outward *wonderful works* claimed are works, and not Grace. Works are not fruit; only the good seed can produce that. Fruit is produced, by God, as the good seed abides in the Vine. The seed is manifested by actions; it is by their *fruit ye shall know them*.

Wonderful works, in themselves, prove absolutely nothing. Jesus says of them, *I never knew you. Never is oudepote*.

Vine

*oudepote*

from *oude*, not even, and *pote*, at anytime and is used in definite negative statements.

He never ever knew them. But who will agree with Jesus today? So let us now see how Satan's synagogue also has wonderful works.

As it has been said, these things, such as the prophesying in the name of Jesus, the casting out of devils and the wonderful works, might deceive even the elect.

*Mark 13:22 For false Christs and false prophets shall arise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.*

*John 4:48 Then said Jesus unto him, except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.*

*Matt 12:39 An evil and adulterous generation seek after a sign; ...*

The latter two verses were addressed to the Pharisees. The false christs and false prophets who are not of the elect, seek by signs and wonders to deceive the elect.

What does the average church-goer flock to see today? What do they seek after? How would they know and discern what is deceit and seduction? Are they taught? Or do they and their pastors pray saying, *Lord, give us miracles; Lord, show us your power; Lord, pour out your spirit; Lord, send us out.* Listen to Church-goers at prayer meetings. What is it that many of the people want most? They want signs and wonders! Their actions and behaviour can be impressive! But, these can be seen as mechanisms of deception.

*Rev 13:13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on Earth, in the sight of men.*

How much closer to the truth could he appear to be? Satan is shown as doing wonders in the sight of men! Look at the order of service at many modern Pentecostal-type meetings. There is a similar technique to that found in parts of the entertainment world to raise an atmosphere. The old nature is quickened. First we have the loud music and the clapping to the beat of drums. Choruses are sung proclaiming what we are; how we are a mighty army and all these things. The songs are what they call affirmations; such as, *We are a people of power.* Now, what is the thought that is being instilled in the congregation's mind? What is being whipped up? What is the ambition? Is it not to raise enough fervour to prophesy, then to *cast out devils* [deliverance] and then do mighty works? Then they shout supposedly binding demons but there is no change. They have done this for years. It all sounds so good. It sounds alive, but again, there are no changes. They want a name that they are alive, *but are dead?* The net result of this activity is disillusionment, defeat and apathy. The local assemblies hold a majority of disillusioned and apathetic people.

These three things, the power, the signs and the wonders, are what some people seek above all else. Satan can do it! Satan can make fire come down from heaven, in the sight of men, we are told [Rev 13:13, taking this literally]. So they sing, *I'm calling down fire* to get the meeting all fired up. Their fire has to come from the outside. They do not already have it within. God's people, the elect, can easily be led astray in this area.

One thing more might be said. Consider the worship service on Mt. Carmel [1 Kings 18]. Study the worship order of the prophets of Ba'al. The Word of the Lord did not matter to them. They cried out; they cut themselves, they prophesied, but there was no fire for them. Elijah did what he did, because God's Word had told him to. He just prayed a simple prayer and the fire fell. And the ratio there was one true prophet to 450 false prophets. Could we have a similar ratio today? Although all professed to worship a god, the prophets of Ba'al did not address their god the same way Elijah addressed his God. Elijah knew his God as the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, not the Ba'al of all races. Is this the same in the noisy so-called Christian world today? Almost always it is *Christ this, and Christ that, it is Lord this, and Lord that.* They are forever saying the *Lord, Lord,* but they are not ever doing the will of God. Their actions do not support their words. Seldom is the precious name of Jesus heard in their worship, apart from trying to use the name of Jesus to cast out demons [see Acts 8:9:24]. That they do wonderful works *in My Name* proves nothing!

The grand old songs of the Church, the songs of Redemption, the songs of Calvary and the songs of the Saviour's Love are not popular. No, power, signs and wonders are paramount, to them. These are what they like to sing about. They have much in common with the New Age!

We read of a “false Jew” in Acts 13:10 who ceased not *to pervert the right ways of the Lord*. He could not help it.

*Jude 12,13*    *These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear, clouds they are without water ... to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.*

Does our charity deny the Word of God which says *to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever*. Darkness is reserved for them even as surely as Israel’s inheritance is reserved for Israel [1 Peter 1:4]. There is one great thing wrong with these people, even if they profess to be Christians. Yes, they separate themselves, but they *are not having the Spirit* [Jude 19].