

Is the Kingdom Here Now?

A popular televangelist, as well as many others,
proclaims that the “church” is the Kingdom. Is this true?
Is the body of called-out ones the same as the Kingdom?
Does Scripture tell us?

In the study of end-time events, the rulership of Yahshua upon this earth is often referred to as the millennium. Several forms of millennialism or millenarianism (also known as chiliasm) are widely believed. These are found in three major views of the future thousand-year reign of the Savior. Variations are also found within each view.

POSTMILLENNIALISM The teaching that the Second Advent of the Savior will occur after the thousand-year millennium. As a result of the preaching of the evangel by the “church,” a period of righteousness would be established upon earth. Since World War II, many have become disillusioned with society’s moral and spiritual decline. The day when the knowledge of Yahweh will fill the earth as water covers the sea has been but a dream.

PREMILLENNIALISM The most popular view held by many evangelicals wherein the Savior will literally rule over the earth. This concept dictates that Yahshua must appear before the millennial kingdom is set up. Premillennialists believe in the literal interpretation of Revelation and Old Testament related verses.

AMILLENNIALISM A symbolical interpretation of Revelation chapter 20. It says Yahshua will return to set up His reign after the present earth is destroyed in judgment and a new heaven and earth is established. Rulership of Yahshua takes place upon His return.

Broken Date

William Miller (1782-1849) is remembered as among the first in more recent times to preach the return of the Savior to this earth. After a deep study of Daniel and Revelation, this Calvinist Baptist concluded that the Savior would return in 1843.

He said that if Nehemiah 2:1 refers to 457 B.C.E. in Bishop Usher’s chronology, then “seventy weeks” comes out to C.E. 33, the Messiah’s impalement. Thus, 2,300 “days” (years) later would be in 1843—His second coming! (William Gentz; *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, p.693, Miller, William.)

Miller published his lectures in 1836, dating the Second Coming of the Messiah between March 1843 and March 1844, with the final date set at October 22, 1844. Rejected by the Baptists, in 1845 he and others formed the Adventists Association.

Kingdom Comes to Earth

While Miller’s dates were wrong (and we should never set dates, for that is Yahweh’s prerogative), the religious world was challenged with a new concept. Instead of believing Satan’s lie that we have an immortal soul that leaves the body and goes to heaven (or hell) immediately upon death, attention was now given to the many prophecies that the Savior was coming back to this earth to set up His Kingdom.

We do not die and go to heaven, but believe that Yahshua is coming from heaven to resurrect the saints and establish His Kingdom on earth. *And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward [is] with me, to give every man according to his work shall be*, Revelation 22:12.

Thus began a new search for truth known as “eschatology,” the study of latter-day events.

The question is, are we already in the Kingdom? Is the “church” synonymous with the Kingdom, as some prominent preachers are teaching? The disciples asked the resurrected Savior. “Will You at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?” Acts 1:6. Yahshua did not deny that the Kingdom would eventually be restored to Israel, but He said it was not for them to know the time when the Father would bring it to pass. It is clear from the study of the Scriptures that the “church” and the Kingdom are not the same.

Startling Meaning of ‘Church’

The word “church” is a poor rendition of the Greek “*ecclesia*” (also “*ecclesia*”), literally meaning “called out.” The Hebrew *kahal* and ‘*edah*’ mean virtually the same: an assembly of a congregation, meeting, community of called-out believers.

In the Old Testament, Israel was known as *kahal* Yahweh (Deut. 23:1-3). In the New Testament, believers were called *ecclesia* Yahweh (1 Cor. 1:2). The nation of Israel was known as the “called-out ones” in Acts 7:38.

The word “church” does not come even close to properly describing the *ecclesia*, meaning “called-out ones.”

Owen Barfield in His book, *History in English Words*, says of “church”:

“Even church...may have been brought home by German mercenaries on service in the East. The Greek ‘*Kuriakon*,’ from which is said to be derived, was in use in the Eastern provinces, as opposed to the ‘*ecclesia*’...adopted by Latin Christianity, and our pagan forefathers probably picked it up accidentally while they were pillaging the sacred [pagan] buildings in which their posterity was to kneel.”

Other sources trace the word church to pagan sources such as *Homer’s Odyssey* and the worship of Circe (*Kirke*), a goddess of pagan Greek mythology. When Christianity amalgamated with paganism and accepted sun worship and other heathen rites, pagan temples dedicated to Kirke were changed to houses of worship for these converts. They continued to go to “Kirke’s house for worship, which eventually became the “church.” *Kurios* (the Greek word for “lord”) is Zeus.

The *American Heritage Dictionary* (and other unabridged dictionaries) gives for the root of the word church: “Middle English *chirche* from Old English *cirice*, ultimately from Medieval Greek *kurikon*, from late Greek *kuriakon* (*doma*), the Lord’s (house) from Greek *kuriakos*, of the lord, from *kurios*, lord.”

Church is then the “house of *kurios*,” which is “the house of Zeus!”

We prefer “assembly” or “congregation” rather than *church* to identify the called-out ones, which is the meaning of *ecclesia*. The *ecclesia* or assembly is being called today to replace those Israelites who have been cut out of the olive tree of promise. Yahweh is still working with Israel! (Rom. 11:7, 11).

A New Program Now?

In general, churchianity teaches that Yahweh has given up on the Jews because they rejected the Savior. They teach that Israel’s mantle fell to Christendom, even as EliYah’s upon Elisha (with a *double portion*). We are erroneously told that the Old Testament has been set aside and the New

Testament teachings have superseded and done away with the Old Testament laws. Now all that is required is a conversion to and belief in Yahshua as the Savior of the world.

“Sola Fide” was the rallying cry of the reformation at the time of Martin Luther, “Faith Alone.” No works required, nothing to strive for, no keeping of the law, no obedience. Only believe in the Savior and one’s salvation is assured.

The book of James was not a popular book at that time, for James wrote:

But will you know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? See you how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? James 2:20-22.

The Savior Himself will bring His reward to this earth to give to His saints at His coming. Notice by what standard the faithful will be rewarded:

And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward [is] with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be, Revelation 22:12.

Called-Out, Israel Have Same Task

The mission of the assembly or body of Messiah is different from that of the Kingdom. The house of Judah had collectively rejected the Messiah as their Savior (John 19:15). Romans 11:26-27 tells us all Israel shall be saved according to the covenant made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Then the Kingdom will be restored to them.

Before that takes place, the Assembly, the body of Messiah or the ecclesia is to play a key role in establishing the Kingdom on earth. The calling out of a people began with Israel.

Peter admonished those gathered, “Save yourselves from this untoward [crooked] generation.” (Acts 2:40b) The same message is addressed to us today. Our mission as the ecclesia is to live Yahweh’s laws today as a witness to the world around us. We are to help perfect the saints for the future administering of the law of Yahweh on an earth made new; to prepare to be the kings and priests in the next age (Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6).

The Bible emphasizes that this will be a small group, a remnant, as we see in these New Testament verses:

- *Isaiah also cries concerning, Israel, “Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved,” Romans 9:27.*
- *Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace, Romans 11:5.*
- *Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom, Luke 12:32.*

Fleshly Israel failed in the task set before it, namely, to walk in Yahweh’s ways and learn of Him. Israel will yet be resurrected to the land with king David ruling from Jerusalem, (Jer. 30:9; Ezek. 34:23-24; Hos. 3:5).

Kingdom When?

Those of the *ecclesia* who are accounted worthy of that first resurrection will be made spirit, immortal, when Yahshua returns (1 Cor. 15:51-54). These resurrected saints, made immortal, will be given power over the nations (Rev. 2:26). Israel’s full opportunity to be a blessing will come later.

The Apostles wondered when the Kingdom was to be established. While with them before His death and resurrection, Yahshua had spoken frequently of the coming Kingdom. Now they asked

when the Kingdom would come and those detestable Romans would be driven out. Since the Savior's resurrection from the dead, He appeared able to perform even greater miracle, and this one would fulfill their dreams.

When they therefore were come together, they asked of Him, saying, "Master, will you at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" And He said unto them, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has put in his own power. But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and you shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth," Acts 1:6-8.

The Savior had arisen from the dead, but the Kingdom had not come upon the earth as yet. Israel had not been given the Kingdom, and Yahshua did not correct the disciples about their concept of the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel then.

The message of the Kingdom as given in the New Testament was that Yahweh's rule of this earth would be carried out by His special emissaries. One purpose of Yahshua's sojourn here on earth was to train His disciples for positions of rulership when the Kingdom was set up. They were to sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28).

Peter Given Kingdom Keys

Peter was selected to open the door for those who were chosen to become rulers in the Kingdom under Yahshua Messiah.

And I say also unto you, "That you are Peter, and upon this Rock I will build My assembly; and the gates of [the grave] shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto you the keys of the Kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," Matthew 16:18-19.

Peter confessed belief in the Savior and upon the bedrock of His confession Yahshua said He would build His assembly; His ecclesia. Peter was promised the "keys to the Kingdom of heaven." Just what did Peter do with the keys to the Kingdom?

It was Peter—of the tribe of Israel and upon whom the Holy Spirit had fallen—who first preached to Jews on that day of Pentecost:

Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Yahshua Messiah for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as Yahweh our Elohim shall call, Acts 2:38-39.

Peter first opened the door of salvation to the Jews whereupon 3,000 were baptized, becoming members of the assembly, the body of Messiah.

Next, we find it was Peter who with John came to Samaria and laid hands on the Samaritans (who were considered half-breeds and outside the promises).

Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of Yahweh, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit, (For as yet it was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the Name of the Master Yahshua), Acts 8:14-16.

Through Peter the Samaritans were also placed in the assembly, becoming members of the body of Messiah by laying on of his hands following baptism into Yahshua's Name.

Again, it was Peter who was instrumental in baptizing the family of Cornelius, a gentile, a Roman soldier (Acts 10:44-48). Peter got the point of a vision of a gigantic sheet of unclean and creeping animals. He now realized that not only Jews and Samaritans could become a part of the body of Messiah and inherit all things, but gentiles [considered unclean] as well: *Then Peter*

opened [his] mouth, and said, "Of a truth I perceive that Yahweh is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that fears Him, and work righteousness, is accepted with Him," Acts 10:34-35.

The keys to the Kingdom that were given to Peter were to immerse any believers into the Name of Yahshua Messiah. The door to the Kingdom is our Savior Yahshua. He calls Himself the door: *Then said Yahshua unto them again, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door; by Me is any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."* John 10:7-9.

‘Church’—Kingdom Differences

Only through Yahshua’s Name we have salvation (Acts 4:12). We accept His sacrifice through baptism, we become joint heirs with Him (Rom. 8:17), inheriting whatever He has. Becoming a part of the body of Messiah we are promised the Kingdom (Luke 12:32).

The promise of inheriting and rulership in the coming Kingdom is only through Yahshua Messiah, for He is the “Seed.” He is the only one who has qualified to receive all the promises given to Abraham and His progeny: *Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He said not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Messiah,* Galatians 3:16.

For as many of you as have been baptized into Messiah have put on Messiah. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Messiah Yahshua. And if ye [be] Messiah’s then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise, Galatians 3:27-29.

The following is a summary of appendix 113 of *The Companion Bible*, differentiating between the Kingdom and the called-out ones:

- The subjects of the *ecclesia* are spoken of as inheriting or being heirs of the Kingdom. But we do not inherit or become heirs of the *ecclesia*.
- We are told of “receiving the Kingdom,” but not the *ecclesia*. We read of “elders, messengers, or servants” of the *ecclesia*, but never of the Kingdom.
- The word *basileia*, rendered Kingdom occurs 162 times and only five times in the plural. *Ecclesia* occurs 115 times, 36 in the plural and 79 in the singular.
- We read of “the children or sons of the Kingdom”, but nothing of “the sons of the *ecclesia*.” Appellatives such as “Body of Messiah,” “Bride,” “Pillar and ground of truth,” etc. are not used of the Kingdom.
- The *ecclesia* is here now, in this world. The Kingdom is not here, it awaits the King.

Appendices 112 and 113 both reveal that the *ecclesia* is the entrance into the Kingdom—but the *ecclesia* is not the Kingdom.

A Kingdom is composed of a sovereign, subjects, and a realm. The *ecclesia* does not contain all of these elements, but Yahweh’s Kingdom to come to earth will. May you be a part of the faithful, called-out ones who will inherit the soon-coming Kingdom!

