

The EKKLESIA.

Introduction.

This morning I'd like to lay a foundation for what we're going to do for the next few weeks. We are going to look at the CHURCH.

What it is; why it is- its purpose and function; its validity in today's world, amongst other things.

There are many things that we have gotten rid of, as we journey along life's high ways and by ways. Because of the changing world, we have had to change some of our habits. People have coffee on the run; TV dinners; the fracturing of the family unit, not just because woman work, but because we have moved from an agrarian society to being industrialised and further still, we're living in a techno age. Some would say a nano-techno age.

However, there are some things that are timeless. It will never change. Not because it doesn't want to, but because it has been instituted, not just for time, but for eternity. And the CHURCH is one such thing.

Mt 16:17 Jesus replied, "You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being. **18** Now I say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it. [NLT]

This rock, this revelation of who I am, not on Peter. But the revelation that He is the Son of God.

THE Church is the WILL of God.

Not just a good idea. A plan B because the Jews didn't believe that Jesus was the Messiah. Before there was a Gentile or a Jew or any other ETHNIC GROUP, God had the Church in mind.

Eph 1:4, 5

V4 He chose us before the foundation of the world

V 5 predestined us to adoption of sons. [Predestined does not suggest an exclusion of some and an inclusion of others. It assures us of His appointed plan and guarantees a destiny for all who are redeemed.]

The Greek word that means Church is the word EKKLESIA.

It's a combination of two words, EK meaning "out of". And KALEO meaning 'to call'.

Hence the concept- being called out. The church is thus, THE CALLED OUT ONES.

In the scriptures it refers to the Nation of Israel and the community of Believers, whether in heaven or on earth.

The Hebrew text: KAHAL. Means to, 'summon'. It's the same word that means assembly or congregation.

I.e. "Gods people are called together, in order to listen to or to act for God.

KAHAL Jehovah, "the called and assembled people of God."

Num 10:7; 20:10; 1 Kings 8:14; 1 Chr 29:20; Ps 40:9.

They assembled at the door of the Tabernacle to hear God speak.

The key question we should ask ourselves and others is; "have we responded to that call.' Jn 3:6 as simplistic as it sounds, that is the foundation of being part of the EKKLESIA.

A congregation is therefore a company of people who have been called out of their tents or dwelling places, and have come together, to hear God speak, in order to do what He asks of us.

God has a plan for the Church.

The EKKLESIA/ Church are of great significance in God's plan. That's why He had/ has a great plan and pattern for the establishing of the Church.

He is the wise Master-Builder, we can't argue that fact. So when He says He has a plan, a model that He wants us to follow, we have to listen to that.

In the OT He gave Noah exact, specific details as to how the ARK/ a type of the Church should look like. Obviously, not the physical structure.

Gen 6:14-16. In the Hebrew text, the word FASHION is used, instead of the word make. That meant more than just to make a form or a model. It meant; A verdict judgement; a sentence or formal decree; a divine law; a divine style.

Apart from all the physical information God gave Noah, that had its place and its worth- the ark was a physical structure that was intended to keep Noah and his family safe, yes. But more than that, it was a type of the Church.

So the church is FASHIONED according to a MASTER PLAN. The MASTER'S PLAN. It is not an accidental activity or institution that happens or is because of habit or religious fervour. It happens because it has been predestined for purposes that God intended. Some of that we don't always fully understand.

The composition of the Church

The church is made up of Jews and Gentiles. I.e. it covers all ethnic groups under the sun. In the OT God called Israel out from amongst the all the nations, so now in the NT, He is calling unto Himself a people from every tribe, every tongue, and every nation. Hence the understanding that the NT church is the BODY OF CHRIST.

- He is the Builder of the church. Mt 16:18
- He adds to His church. Acts 2:47
- He is the Head of the church. Col 2:19
- Jews and gentiles are one new man in the Christ. Eph 2:15, 16

The significance of the church.

The church taken from every tribe, tongue, people and nation now constitutes Gods nation [Rev 5:9]

Salvation was offered to a nation not yet called by his name. Is 65:1; Rom 10:20, 21

All those who are new creatures in Christ constitute the Church.

- The Israel of God. Gal 6:15, 16
 - Gentiles, by faith in Christ are part of Israel. Eph 2:12
 - Believing Gentile is part of Israel. Rom 11
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- Abraham was called out of UR. Gen 12:1
 - Israel was called out of Egypt. Out of that religion, that life, that world. They were called to be a peculiar treasure to God. A chosen people, a holy nation unto God.
 - The house of Judah was called out of Babylon unto restoration of the temple at Jerusalem. These are examples to us 1 Cor 10: 6, 11
 - The NT church is called out of every tongue, tribe, and nation to be His church. Rev 18:1-4; 2 Cor 6:14-18

You and I have been;

- Called out of darkness into light. 1 Pet 2:9
- Called to vocation. Eph 4:1
- With a holy calling. 2 Tim 1:9
- High calling Phil 3:14
- Heavenly calling. Heb 3:1

The church consists of those who obey that call, world-wide regardless of culture, race, and nation. Called from the world, the flesh and the devil, they come to hear from God.

It is the church of the First born ones.