

Church?

or

Assembly?

by

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When someone enters True Worship and sees just how much paganism has saturated the truth, the transfer over into the modern-day extension of the Messianic assembly can be traumatic. One is staggered by JUST how totally different (than what the Scriptures teach) is the religion that is presented as the modern extension of the Messianic assembly.

When the Word of Yahweh gets through revealing the errors of our previous worship, it is almost as though Jeremiah 23:29 were fulfilled in a meaningful manner. "Is not My Word like as a fire? saith Yahweh; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" With systematic concentration, the Word of Yahweh demolishes many pet ideas which we formerly held, but then it builds a knowing faith after having swept away that ruin so that many lessons necessary to carry us through the coming tribulation can be learned.

The angelic cry from the heavens still echoes today, and even more strongly than ever, "Come out of her My people, that you be not partakers of her sins and that you receive not of her plagues," Revelation 18:4. By proving all

things, we will be able to avoid the pitfalls of affiliation with the spiritual Babylon that will be destroyed when the Messiah returns. Let us focus on just one more proven aspect of paganism which holds a tenacious grip on the religious world. The subject of this article is the word **church** which is of common usage. When we examine the subject with an open mind you will become so revolted with the meaning of the word that you will never utter it again in your conversation when referring to True Worship. It is probable that you have never really investigated the source of the word in question or you would already have discarded it as unworthy of being included in your Bible truth vocabulary.

When I was a young boy, the religious organization with which my family was affiliated frowned on the use of the word **church**. As a matter of fact, in my boyhood we were taught that we should not use the word since it denoted popular religion which had apostatized. In our conversation we used terms like **meeting**, **meeting house**, or **congregation** where the

average person never thinks twice about using **church**. Over the years as more mingling among the people of the community took place, the word **church** increasingly found its way into our communication. Later on as I was working in the business community, I once happened to be in a Jewish establishment on a Saturday. Upon asking for the owner, I was informed by an employee of the firm that he was in "church." Occasionally in some literary work the term "Jewish Church" is used, possibly the most outstanding example being Dean Stanley's noted work, **History of the Jewish Church**. So it would appear that few religions can escape the tentacles of this word as it is applied to them.

Etymology of the Word Church

Perhaps our first logical stop in launching a study such as this is to ask what the Hebrew and Greek words are from which this translation emerges. First of all, the Hebrew words, **kahal** and **'edah**, and the Greek word **ekklesia** mean exactly the same thing. They mean an assembly, congregation, meeting, community of believers.

Israel in the Old Testament was the **kahal Yahweh** (Deut. 23:1-3), just as the Messianic assembly of the New Testament is the **ekklesia of Yahweh**. You may check these facts in the **Strong's** or **Young's Concordances** or any other good lexicon at your disposal.

It is interesting that in Acts 7:38 we find the term "church" employed for the nation or congregation of Israel in the wilderness. Have you ever thought that we today are merely a more **refined extension** of biblical Israel when we are affiliated with the Assemblies of Yahweh? It is a fact that the Bible proves this conclusively. We are not a new religion in this Messianic age. We are people who live like Israelites by keeping the commandments of Yahweh, combined with the living faith of the Messiah and His government soon to come to this earth. Consequently, to summarize, we find that the words **kahal** and **ekklesia** mean assembly, congregation, meeting of True Worshipers.

Let us turn next to an examination of the word **church**. The **Webster's New World Dictionary** (as does practically every other reputable dictionary) lists the roots of the word in the following way: [ME. **chirche**, **kirke** < OE. **cirice** (& ON. **kirkja** < OE.) Gmc. ***kirika** < LGr.(Ec.) ***kyrike** < Gr. **kyriake** (**oikia**), Lord's (house) < **kyriakos**, belonging to the Lord < **kyrios**, ruler < **kyros**, supreme power < IE. base ***kewe-**, to swell, be strong, hero]. Immediately we are forced to admit to the fact that this word has nothing to do with a meeting, assembly, or congregation of believers, but rather it emphasizes the house OVER the occupants, who are the worshipers. While the Hebrew and Greek words mean a congregation of people, the word **church** traces its roots to the

building. Strangely, many organizations in nominal Christianity place great emphasis in their cathedral-like edifices and little on the membership. Perhaps this is the reason many of those buildings are so devoid of worshipers.

The following is a quote from the **Companion Bible**, Appendix 186, p. 207. "Church is derived from the Greek **kyriakos**, of or belonging to the Lord, house (Greek **oikos**) being understood. It comes to us through Anglo Saxon **circe** (Scotch **kirk**). Compare Hebrew **kikkar**, a circuit or disk." Here we arrive at yet another choice morsel of knowledge! If the Hebrew word **kikkar** (a circle or disk) is the ultimate root or a word with identical meaning, then the word **church** traces directly to sun worship!

Basis in Mythology

In ancient mythology the sun was the supreme deity. It was worshiped as Baal or Lord. It was always a full circle and never decreased in size as did the moon. Depicted in the religious art of much of churchianity is the circle or disk. It is seen in the halo on the people, depicted in sunbursts, on stained glass windows and may be viewed in frescoed ceilings, rising suns, or crosses superimposed in a circle to denote the sun, among other variations. When we observe that the churches of nominal Christianity worship on Sunday with absolutely no scriptural basis for doing so, and when we see the profuse use of the sun depicted in religious art, we should not be astonished at the reason why Almighty Yahweh promises to this contemporary age such severe judgment for their sins.

When the writer realized the seriousness of the widespread saturation of modern religion with

sun images and symbolism, he actually became nauseated with repugnance. Sun worship was the most basic form of ancient religion. If you would like to see more on this subject, turn to page 162 in the book **The Two Babylons**. Now be watchful as you view the structures and art of nominal "churchianity," and see how often this ancient Egyptian sunburst is duplicated in our worldly religion today. Therefore, by its very root association with sun worship, the word **church** is disqualified for use in True Worship. For more information on this subject you may read the article on the word "Church" in the **Encyclopedia Britannica** and you will find it most informative as a supplement to what has been written above.

Around the turn of this century, a Frenchman named Victor Berard, a scholar and statesman, had a unique idea. He was the president of the Sorbonne Graduate School of Oriental Studies who as part of his studies decided to make a journey on his yacht in an attempt to trace the route of the Odyssey of Homer. After much research and study in preparing for this journey he came to the conclusion that the epic poems of Homer were translations from Phoenician stories or religious traditions. His conclusions are based on the idea that the words have no meaning in Greek, but they do have meaning in the Semitic languages, especially Hebrew. This would tie in closely with what we have already seen to be the case with the word **church** and **kikkar**, since one of the mythological mighty ones described in the **Odyssey** is Circe.

Circe

We hope that you noticed the reference to the word **circe**, as a root word for **church**. It came



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through the Anglo-Saxon into English but can be traced ultimately to Greek mythology. In the *Odyssey*, Circe was a goddess who lived on Aeaeon Island. She was the daughter of the sun by Perse, who was the daughter of Oceanus. Circe's house was in the middle of a dense forest of trees. The house of Circe was made of stone hewn especially for this purpose from a rock quarry nearby. All around the house wandered once ferocious animals who had been tamed and drugged into subjection.

Circe had such an entrancing voice and sang beautifully as she worked at her loom, weaving a soft, filmy web of dazzling colors. She lured the men of Odysseus' crew into the house and fed them a meal which had been drugged with a stupefying potion. They forgot their homes, their families, their lives, and they were turned into pigs at the stroke of her wand. Circe shut them up in her pig sty and fed them hog food. Now when you take a little time and compare what nominal religion does to the average person, it is not hard to see the similarities between this deity and the church. Interestingly, the first suggestion which had been made by Circe to Odysseus when he visited her to free his men was to ask him to go to bed with her, bringing to mind the corrupt attitude of pagan religion and calling to mind the practice of the strange woman of Proverbs 7. Almighty Yahweh has always declared that a deviation from His truth was whoredom, spiritual adultery, and this is confirmed so far in this study. You should be well aware of these implications so that you can avoid the pitfalls. Incidentally, Berard saw Odysseus (Ulysses) as meaning Elijah (Eli-Yah). Now the picture should become even clearer!

Eliminate Corruption

It is obvious therefore that the True Worshiper must eliminate any word from his vocabulary which is proven to be a corrupting influence upon his spiritual life. He must avoid using **church** when he refers to the True Worship since even unknowingly, a mental image of corrupted worship will be conjured up in his mind. The basic building blocks of life's knowledge hinge on various hidden rules, rules that originated in the past in great antiquity, rules which you use unknowingly, but which direct every facet of life. Many times we do not even know what they are, and yet we follow them slavishly.

Almighty Yahweh wishes us to tear ourselves away from following corrupt rules if we wish to be faithful servants of His. He desires us to keep His commandments. Those basic forms of life's rules have resulted in dragging down True Worship to the point where today it is unrecognizable as the worship which was originated by the Messiah. Theologians, scholars, artists, writers, all call upon their general inherited knowledge of religion when they interpret the Bible. Frequently these people were unconverted and so allowed their previous religious knowledge to infiltrate their view of the Bible as they interpreted it; rather than sorting out the truth from the error and rejecting the error, students are unable to see clearly enough to do so. Therefore, if the Holy Spirit of Yahweh is allowed to show us the truth in these last days, we can have the ability to return to the faith which was once and for all time delivered to the favored ones of Yahweh.

The Assemblies of Yahweh

In conclusion, let us examine

closely the reason why the True Worshipers in these last days are calling themselves "The Assemblies of Yahweh." First of all, if we reject the term "church" as being a most inferior translation of the Hebrew and Greek words meaning **assembly** or **congregation** and substitute the correct translation when talking of worldly religious organizations, it emerges amusingly as the Assembly or Congregation of Luther, Wesley, or Menno Simon! Certainly they are admittedly organizations of men. One is reminded of 1 Cor. 1:11-13, "I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Cepha, and (no one says) I am of Messiah."

Who is the leader of our Assembly anyway? Is it not the Messiah, and we could conceivably select this term, Assemblies of Messiah, to designate the True Worshipers since it is used in Romans 16:16. But the more preferable designation of the True Worshipers is Assembly or Assemblies of Yahweh, used twelve times in the New Testament. In the Greek the word **theos** is a word comparable to the Hebrew **Elohim**. But we should ask ourselves, "Who is Elohim?" Psalm 18:31 reads, "For who is Eloah save Yahweh?" Psalm 100:3 lends further impetus, "Know you that Yahweh He is Elohim." There can be little doubt that the Elohim of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was Yahweh. Elohim means the strong, powerful, and mighty one. Therefore the Mighty One of Israel and of the True Worshipers is Yahweh, and we are the Assemblies of Yahweh. At various places in the Torah, Israel is called the congregation or Assembly of Yahweh (for instance Deut. 23:1-3) so this is where the New Testament term actually originated.

In Ephesians 3:14-15 we find additional substantiation to sup-

port the conclusion that we are called by His Name. Incidentally, Elohim is not a name for the Almighty, but a title, among a number of others which He has chosen. The Name by which He reveals His identity to His people, the way He identifies Himself to them, is through the NAME Yahweh. The following is a quote from Ephesians 3:14-15, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Master Yahshua the Messiah, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." What could be more candidly clear than this verse? We are to bow in reverence to the Father and we are to be called by His Name if we are in His family. Every member of His family must bear His Name to be one of His, Revelation 14:1. His Name is **Yahweh** and we are **the Assemblies of Yahweh**.

Make Your Decision

So once more we arrive at just another portion of knowledge which will be influential in separating us from nominal religion, if we are dedicated enough to obey what is being taught in the Word of Yahweh. We need not sift through the Bible for picky points to separate ourselves from the mainstream of popular religion. Those separating factors are so prominent that even a child can comprehend them. Must we wait until Almighty Yahweh judges us before we begin to obey Him? If we follow the truth of the Word of Yahweh, the True Worshipers will come into harmony with each other and we will be a unit to present this truth to the world. Are you one of those dedicated people who will no longer jump back and forth between two opinions? 1 Kings 18:21. If Yahweh is the Mighty One, follow Him with a whole heart and don't be ashamed to be called by His Name! □