

The composition of the people of God, as broad and deep as this sector of theology is, is a definite place where some important, imperative, and critical thinking and reflection are surely needed by today's Messianic Believers. Ecclesiology is not an area of theology that enough Messiah followers adequately understand *or* appreciate the importance of. To far too many, it is just a big word without a great deal of significance. Yet, given what many of today's Messianic Believers, Jewish and non-Jewish, are convicted of, have read in Scripture, and have had the witness of the Holy Spirit regarding the likely future of the still-emerging and still-developing Messianic movement, ecclesiology is something very important.

Ecclesiology widely affects a person's eschatology, or approach to end-time events that are supposed to occur prior to and subsequent to the Messiah's return. For today's Messianic movement, ecclesiology affects how Jewish and non-Jewish Believers read the Bible, and the instructions that God wants us to follow. Ecclesiology undeniably affects the unity of Jewish Believers and Believers from the nations as one in the Body of Messiah.

What does this mean in terms of the *ekklēsia*? Is the *ekklēsia* an actual separate entity known as "the Church"? Or, is *ekklēsia* no different than the assembly of Israel itself—which takes Bible readers back to the mixed multitude of physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, *and* the welcomed persons from the nations, who received His Ten Words and Instruction at the base of Mount Sinai (cf. Exodus 12:38)? Did Yeshua the Messiah come to found a separate group of elect called "the Church," or did He come to rebuild and restore His Father's assembly of righteous ones (cf. Matthew 16:18; Jeremiah 33:7, LXX), restoring the Kingdom to Israel (cf. Acts 1:6)?

Regardless of where you stand on Jewish and non-Jewish Believers in the Kingdom of God, a wide range of changes are approaching our Messianic faith community—which are going to leave a demonstrable impact on all of us, as we approach the final stages of time before the Messiah's return. The basic choices of ecclesiology we have are stark: either God (1) has two groups of elect, or sub-peoples: Israel and "the Church"; or God (2) recognizes us all as a part of an enlarged Kingdom realm of Israel. How are we to approach non-Jewish Believers in the Messianic movement, and things like the Commonwealth of Israel (Ephesians 2:11-13), the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16), or being grafted-in (Romans 11:16-18)? Will the Messianic movement emerge into something that tends to be exclusive *or* inclusive? There is much that we need to be considering from the text of Scripture, and what many have said and are likely to say, as we evaluate what our future beholds.

**Are Non-Jewish Believers Really
A PART OF ISRAEL?**

Are Non-Jewish Believers Really

A PART OF ISRAEL?

J.K. McKee

MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS
messianicapologetics.net

ARE NON-JEWISH BELIEVERS REALLY A PART OF ISRAEL?

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Abbreviation Chart and Special Terms

The following is a chart of abbreviations for reference works and special terms that are used in publications by Outreach Israel Ministries and Messianic Apologetics. Please familiarize yourself with them as the text may reference a Bible version, i.e., RSV for the Revised Standard Version, or a source such as TWOT for the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, solely by its abbreviation. Detailed listings of these sources are provided in the Bibliography.

Special terms that may be used have been provided in this chart:

ABD: <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>	DRA: Douay-Rheims American Edition
AMG: <i>Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament, New Testament</i>	DSS: Dead Sea Scrolls
ANE: Ancient Near East(ern)	ECB: <i>Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible</i>
Apostolic Scriptures/Writings: the New Testament	EDB: <i>Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible</i>
Ara: Aramaic	eisegesis: "reading meaning into," or interjecting a preconceived or foreign meaning into a Biblical text
ATS: ArtScroll Tanach (1996)	EJ: <i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i>
b. Babylonian Talmud (<i>Talmud Bavli</i>)	ESV: English Standard Version (2001)
B.C.E.: Before Common Era or B.C.	exegesis: "drawing meaning out of," or the process of trying to understand what a Biblical text means on its own
BDAG: <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich)	EXP: <i>Expositor's Bible Commentary</i>
BDB: <i>Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon</i>	Ger: German
BECNT: <i>Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament</i>	GNT: Greek New Testament
BKCNT: <i>Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament</i>	Grk: Greek
C.E.: Common Era or A.D.	<i>halachah</i> : lit. "the way to walk," how the Torah is lived out in an individual's life or faith community
CEV: Contemporary English Version (1995)	HALOT: <i>Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> (Koehler and Baumgartner)
CGEDNT: <i>Concise Greek-English Dictionary of New Testament Words</i> (Barclay M. Newman)	HCSB: Holman Christian Standard Bible (2004)
CHALOT: <i>Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>	Heb: Hebrew
CJB: Complete Jewish Bible (1998)	HNV: Hebrew Names Version of the World English Bible

- ICC: *International Critical Commentary*
- IDB: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*
- IDBSup: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement*
- ISBE: *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*
- IVPBBC: *IVP Bible Background Commentary (Old & New Testament)*
- Jastrow: *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature* (Marcus Jastrow)
- JBK: *New Jerusalem Bible-Koren* (2000)
- JETS: *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
- KJV: *King James Version*
- Lattimore: *The New Testament by Richmond Lattimore* (1996)
- LITV: *Literal Translation of the Holy Bible* by Jay P. Green (1986)
- LS: *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell & Scott)
- LXE: *Septuagint with Apocrypha* by Sir L.C.L. Brenton (1851)
- LXX: *Septuagint m. Mishnah*
- MT: *Masoretic Text*
- NASB: *New American Standard Bible* (1977)
- NASU: *New American Standard Update* (1995)
- NBCR: *New Bible Commentary: Revised*
- NEB: *New English Bible* (1970)
- Nelson: *Nelson's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words*
- NETS: *New English Translation of the Septuagint* (2007)
- NIB: *New Interpreter's Bible*
- NIGTC: *New International Greek Testament Commentary*
- NICNT: *New International Commentary on the New Testament*
- NIDB: *New International Dictionary of the Bible*
- NIV: *New International Version* (1984)
- NJB: *New Jerusalem Bible-Catholic* (1985)
- NJPS: *Tanakh, A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures* (1999)
- NKJV: *New King James Version* (1982)
- NRSV: *New Revised Standard Version* (1989)
- NLT: *New Living Translation* (1996)
- NT: *New Testament*
- orthopraxy: lit. "the right action," how the Bible or one's theology is lived out in the world
- OT: *Old Testament*
- PreachC: *The Preacher's Commentary*
- REB: *Revised English Bible* (1989)
- RSV: *Revised Standard Version* (1952)
- t. Tosefta
- Tanach (Tanakh): *the Old Testament*
- Thayer: *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*
- TDNT: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*
- TEV: *Today's English Version* (1976)
- TLV: *Tree of Life Messianic Family Bible—New Covenant* (2011)
- TNIV: *Today's New International Version* (2005)
- TNTC: *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*
- TWOT: *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*

UBSHNT: United Bible Societies'
1991 Hebrew New Testament
revised edition

v(s). verse(s)

Vine: *Vine's Complete Expository
Dictionary of Old and New
Testament Words*

Vul: Latin Vulgate

WBC: *Word Biblical Commentary*

Yid: Yiddish

YLT: Young's Literal Translation
(1862/1898)

Introduction

The *Confronting Issues* series began in 2007, as a selection of small stapled booklets, comprising a rather forthright article or two produced by Outreach Israel Ministries and (now) Messianic Apologetics. Today in 2012-2013, because of the significant wave of changes and transitions occurring within the broad Messianic community, the *Confronting Issues* series has been retooled a bit, into small books, addressing some of the major debates of the day. It would be our hope and prayer that these new releases are able to interject a well-needed perspective into the conversation regarding the different topics of importance, offering fair-minded and constructive solutions, which carefully address the Biblical text, and can sincerely help Jewish and non-Jewish Believers in their walk with Yeshua the Messiah.

The current Messianic Jewish movement has been around for a half century or so, since the 1960s. Along with this have been various non-Jewish Messianic offshoots, in various ways focusing on the Hebrew/Hebraic Roots or the Jewish Roots of Christianity, and/or Torah study and observance for Believers, on various levels. A great number of genuine positive things have been seen, as Jewish people have come to faith in Yeshua, and non-Jewish Believers have been exposed to the origins of their Messiah faith in Judaism. But in all of the time that has taken place, Messianic theology has not at all developed to the degree that it should have. With all of the years that have gone by, and with certainly all of the resources that have been invested into either Jewish ministry or Hebraic Roots, one would naturally expect much more to have been written and compiled on an entire array of important theological and spiritual issues— a transcribed legacy of documented research and worthwhile

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postulations to hand to the next generation, as they continue the work of the Kingdom of God.

In the 2010s, there is going to be a significant amount of “catching up” to do in Messianic theology, particularly as there are too many assumptions made by people in our broad faith community which need to be challenged, or at least evaluated on some significant level. A less charismatic and a more systematic approach to many, many issues is necessary. Many of the people, and even some leaders and teachers, within parts of the Messianic community, need to be less anti-intellectual than they might tend to be—and/or need to steadfastly avoid the great amount of problems caused by a group-think or horde mentality. Many people also need to steadfastly avoid the violent currents and eddies which have been caused by a rather uncivilized Messianic blogosphere, and an abuse of other online social media.

A distinct area of theology that Messianic people are likely to hear more and more about in this decade is **ecclesiology**. But other than being some technical term, what is ecclesiology and what does it involve? A standard definition of ecclesiology is provided by the *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*:

“The area of theological study concerned with understanding the church (derived from the Greek word *ekklēsia*, ‘church’). Ecclesiology seeks to set forth the nature and function of church. It also investigates issues such as the mission, ministry and structure of the church, as well as its role in the overall plan of God.”ⁱ

The composition of the people of God, as broad and deep as this sector of theology is, is a definite place where some important, imperative, and critical thinking and reflection are surely needed by today’s Messianic Believers. Ecclesiology is not an area of theology that enough Messiah followers adequately understand *or* appreciate the importance of. To far too many, it is

ⁱ Stanley J. Grenz, David Guretzki, and Cherith Fee Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999), 42.

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just a big word without a great deal of significance. Yet, given what many of today's Messianic Believers, Jewish and non-Jewish, are convicted of, have read in Scripture, and have had the witness of the Holy Spirit of regarding the likely future of the still-emerging and still-developing Messianic movement, ecclesiology is something that is very important.

Why is understanding ecclesiology so important? Initially, given the predisposition to describe the theological sector of ecclesiology as "The study of the church as a biblical and theological topic" (*Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*),ⁱⁱ the question for many Messianics is whether or not the term *ekklēsia* should even be translated as "church" in English Bibles. Given the background of the term *ekklēsia* via the Greek Septuagint, often rendering the Hebrew term *qahal*,ⁱⁱⁱ alternative translations such as "congregation" or "assembly" are vastly preferred. Still, there is much to be considered, explored, probed, and asked about ecclesiology.

Ecclesiology widely affects a person's eschatology, or approach to end-time events that are supposed to occur prior to and subsequent to the Messiah's return. For today's Messianic movement, ecclesiology affects how Jewish and non-Jewish Believers read the Bible, and the instructions that God wants us to follow. **Ecclesiology undeniably affects the unity of Jewish Believers and Believers from the nations as one in the Body of Messiah.**

While there are many important components of ecclesiology, such as those persons who are qualified to lead and teach groups

ⁱⁱ Donald S. McKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 85.

ⁱⁱⁱ Joseph H. Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003], 196 describes how *ekklēsia* "in the Septuagint [is] often equivalent to [*qahal*], the assembly of the Israelites," and would have been specifically employed by the Apostles to describe the First Century Body of Messiah's undeniable origins in Ancient Israel.

Cf. K.L. Schmidt, "*ekklēsia*," in Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, abridged (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), pp 397-402.