

SECTION 1

*Preparing for the King's Return By
Focusing on Things Above*

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Introduction



“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

SUDDENLY, heaven’s vault opens. A loud shout resounds throughout the earth. Simultaneously, a shofar reverberates with noise loud enough to break the sound barrier and so much so that it awakens the dead. Those once sleeping bodies of God’s righteous rise to meet with the living righteous in mid-air. Together, in an instant of time, each earthly body

transitions from their earthly form to their heavenly state. Together, they enter their eternal destiny.

This, the ultimate transition, far surpasses all earlier transitions recorded in the Bible. Transitions such as seen in Genesis, when humankind transitioned from their place of innocence to a fallen state. In that transition we witness the devastating effects and struggles of the human heart as sin and death entered the world, bringing forth, almost immediately, the first darkened act of cold-blooded murder.

In Exodus we watch as a people transitions from its small family beginnings to become a mighty nation. Before their transition we see the ills of slavery upon them. During their transition we hear of the miraculous hand of God dividing the waters of the Red Sea. Moving the nation through the open channel provided by the parted seas, God delivers the nation safely to the other side. After their transition through the water, we witness a mighty revelation of God at Mount Sinai as He gives His people the ten commandments, establishes a royal priesthood and commissions the tabernacle of God's glory which He desired His people to erect in the wilderness.

In Judges we recognize another transition as Israel veers away from the righteous paths of YeHoVaH to exchange the true God and decreed lifestyle for that of

idols and that which God considered corrupt behaviour.

Moving forward and into the books of Kings, Samuel and Chronicles, we witness Israel's struggles beneath an ungodly king. Then, we watch as God redeems the situation with the Messianic type of leadership of King David. Here, the nation transitions to that of a powerful entity effecting the world around them.

Transition after transition transpires throughout the biblical history of God's people. As we move along, and arrive at the end of the first covenant, we witness a powerful transition with the arrival of the Messiah. As this amazing transition unfolded, we discovered the first covenant people in need of a wakeup call. For centuries, their leaders misinterpreted the prophetic messages regarding the Messiah, and so much so, that the people expected a warrior king to restore the kingdom of David.

Instead, with the fulfilment of God's prophetic word, there came a servant king, Who lived a humble life and preached a very unexpected message. This Messianic transition, when completely fulfilled, differed from their prophetic interpretation promised. Thus, it posed many problems, including the rejection of Yeshua, God's true Messiah Whom they crucified.

After the cross, to receive the Messianic transition meant disregarding the common religious mindset propagated by the religious leaders of the day. Looking past a promised king enthroned upon the earth to receive the dynamics of a risen Saviour, seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, meant persecution. Leaders who failed to accept the transition vehemently persecuted those who did.

Even within the early church, leadership and followers alike, struggled to walk within the dynamics of that powerful and exciting transition as they embraced all the challenges that faith brought with it. While they arose to walk in victory, they did so only by following the leading of the Holy Spirit. He taught them to live within the parameters of New Covenant living and led them to turn the known world at that time upside down¹.

In summary, each promised transition outlined **within the Bible**, *starting at humanity's early beginnings and ending at the final transition, (the rapture) brings with it a set of its own unique, intriguing, and challenging circumstances. As each transition dawned on the horizon, it required arduous measures to recognize its beginning, assess its call, understand its dynamics and*

¹ Acts 17:6 "And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;"

then victoriously walk through it. This was true at Yeshua's birth, death, burial and resurrection, as each transition shook the world. It continued to be true as the early church received its biblical footings and then, as it transitioned throughout the centuries. It continues to be true, today too, as we move closer, day by day toward that final transition, *the one happening simultaneously at the last trumpet blast.*

As we move towards that final transition, we must recognize that *history repeats itself to those who do not learn from it.* Just as in earlier days, just prior to Yeshua's first coming, the Pharisees and Sadducees impeded the faith of many. They fed their listeners with false interpretations of the Messiah, gave them manufactured add ons of oral traditions and teachings. As a result, they caused many to stumble. So, too, today, we have many similar adds ons, which threaten to challenge believers.

Today, however, these add ons come with greater availability, due to the modern use of the internet and other technology. These propagate many doctrines and teachings, which a balanced view of scripture does not support. Today, more than in other generations, believers must be alert and well able to separate the teachings of God which are based on the Word, from those doctrines which sound good, but are fluff. We must do our due diligence to check things out with the source!

To ensure good scriptural principles, in the early chapters of this book, we take the time to lay a foundation. We begin by attempting to draw a definitive line regarding the almost impossible terms of *the church and the bride*. Additionally, we define the biblical view on the term end times and describe the final transition known as the rapture.

As you continue to read, you will find an overview of many transitions, some before the cross and some after. Then, with a good foundation in place, the book backtracks to present a beautiful prophetic picture in scripture. It shows the past, present and future transitions leading up to the final one. In short, it presents a prophetic explanation of the church and where it fits in within God's prophetic timeclock.

When finished reading this book, the ardent student of the Word should walk away with a biblical recognition of what is on the horizon for believers, so they can focus on things above, understand and fully embrace the reality of:

An End Time Church in Transition.
Preparing for the King's Return.

1



Church Defined

“Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people. Behold, YeHoVaH hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of YeHoVaH: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.”

Isaiah 62:10-12

Much confusion exists in the minds of believers, today, regarding the church and the bride. Some consider the terms interchangeable, while others consider them two separate entities. Before discussing who is right, we will consider the first use of the word translated as church within the New Covenant.

Matthew 16:18

“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church <1577>; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

Originally, according to early church fathers, Matthew wrote his gospel in Hebrew². Later, the church fathers translated it into Greek. That word translated as “church” in Greek is the word, ἐκκλησία, in English, *ekklesia*³. We pronounce it, “ek klah-see’-ah”.

This word *ekklesia* comes from two Greek words:

- “ek” meaning out of, and
- “kaleo” meaning to call.

Translating the word in simple terms, it means *“the called-out ones”*.

This term, in its early use within Greek culture, never implied our meaning of this word, today. Rather, than mean a body of Christian believers gathered, the word described a group of unique individuals convening in a public place of council for the purpose of conducting

² Much conversation exists today regarding Hebrew manuscripts, but Matthew’s writing has been known for some time as written in Hebrew.

³ Some spell the word *ecclesia*, while others use *ekklesia*.

legal business proceedings. This means the ekklesia body holds governmental authority.

Later, we will examine how Yeshua intended His ekklesia to operate and whether His ideal for his ekklesia aligned with the original meaning of this word, but first, we must identify what people today perceive when they hear the word substituted for the ekklesia, namely, the church.

Reactions vary when speaking about the church. Some people think of the word, church, and perceive a building which houses Christian followers. Others consider the services attended in a church building as having church. Still others consider the leaders of certain denominations as being the church, while others consider the church as the culmination of all believers in Christianity ... *but what does the Bible teach?*

In researching the New Covenant use of the term, we note that there two major uses of the word interpreted as church.

1. **As a body of believers connected by location.** Here, they acknowledge not the building, but rather *all believers within*. Many scriptures refer to those in leadership within certain locations to give guidance, physical and spiritual care of believers, as well as provide a

place of accountability to a leadership of elders. (*Matthew 18:17; Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 6:4*⁴ are just of few scripture references.)

2. **As an entire entity which God considers to be Messiah's functioning body on earth.** (*Romans 16:27 1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Corinthians 4:17 1 Corinthians 7:17* are a few references.)

Most believers, today, recognize these two aspects of the word church, as well as their intended meaning. Additionally, most believers know that within any given assembly, and *within the overall body of believers worldwide*, not every *professing believer* is a true believer. Even within the early church true believers and not true believers mixed. In fact, Yeshua even recognized and taught on the subject.

Matthew 13:24-30

"24 ¶ Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: 25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. 26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. 27

⁴ These are only a few references. Out of the 115 references approximately 80 refer to a body of believers connected by location. 32 refer to an entire entity of Messiah's body and 3 refer to assemblies other than churches.

So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? 28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? 29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."

On the surface, this parable speaks about the kingdom of heaven, however, its meaning further applies to those on earth *who represent the kingdom*. Taking that one step further, a deeper meaning reveals that Yeshua depicts representatives of God upon the earth as comprised of both *true and false believers*. These are seen in the comparison of wheat and tares, which become visible once they reach the blade stage.

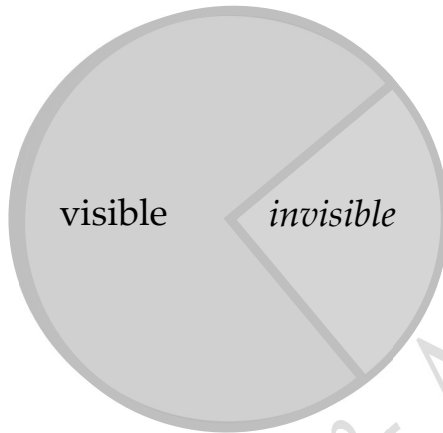
Separating them at that stage risks accidentally uprooting the wheat, too. Therefore, wheat and tares must grow side by side until harvest time. In other words, regarding the kingdom of heaven, God allows both true and false believers to function side by side. One day at harvest time, which may not be until judgment day, God reveals the depth of their heart.

Returning now to the word *church*, reality teaches us that within the boundaries of that word exists both wheat and tares. Knowing that, however, we must leave the separation within those boundaries to God. It is a task that He will do when, in His eyes, harvest time arrives. In the meantime, while we *may examine the fruit*, pray, and leave the final judgment to God. After all, who knows whether the tares, through love, prayer and God's miraculous power may convert into wheat!

Still, when speaking of the church, we cannot assume that everyone is a believer. This becomes a problem when relating to certain scriptures applicable only to believers, especially when it comes to some subjects such the rapture. For example, the entire church, *with both wheat and tares* will not arise in the rapture, but only those truly birthed by God's Spirit.

With these thoughts in mind, there is another way of expressing the wheat and the tares without waiting to harvest time. To easily classify and distinguish both groups without causing a problem, we can do it this way:

- Call the entire worldwide entity *the visible church or ekklesia*.
- Call the group of *true believers* within the visible church as *the invisible church or ekklesia*.



5

AN INVISIBLE EKKLESIA

This defines all believers in Messiah, no matter the age in which they live, who are born of God's Spirit, and united with Him, they walk out His endeavours upon the earth. In other words, these believers in Yeshua fulfill the will of the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit. These, of course, God knows intimately, as He recognizes each one of them, however, humankind *may not necessarily* acknowledge them.

To summarize this, members of this invisible ekklesia are a collection comprised of genuine believers, from the very first to the very last one. Throughout their lifetime each one made a choice to commit to doing the will of the Father. Those now dead, followed through

⁵ Just a random proportional split to show the two entities.

with that commitment until their death, and each one living or yet to live, will do the same. This collection of the **invisible ekklesia**, we *might* simply call the bride.

CALLING THE INVISIBLE CHURCH THE BRIDE

In the book of Revelation, the Apostle, John speaks of the Lamb's wife as the bride.

Revelation 21:9

9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride <3565>, the Lamb's wife.

Revelation 22:17

17 And the Spirit and the bride <3565> say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Here, the Greek word 3565 νύμφη (noom-fay') presents the idea of a veil. Brides wearing veils is no new thing. In fact, many people believe it dates to Genesis. Early in Jacob's life, he took a bride, named Rachel.

According to Jewish tradition, Rachel had a twin sister born minutes before her. That older twin's name was Leah. Leah and Rachael were not identical twins;

however, they were close enough in size for Laban, the twin's father to substitute the older for the younger on the wedding night. While the Bible does not tell us this, Jewish tradition also holds that Laban veiled Leah to hide her identity.

Whether Laban veiled Leah or not, we don't know, however, the principle that a veil obscures something holds true. So, when the apostle, John, the author of the book of Revelation, spoke of his vision of the bride, he used the word which suggested a veil. That being the case, it might indicate that the bride is obscure, not easily known by others⁶.

Before we conclude on calling the invisible church the bride, however, we need to acknowledge one more thing. During the first covenant, scripture calls Israel the bride. This was done to bring an understanding of the intimate connection between God and His people. However, in this use of the term, both faithful and unfaithful believers comprised the bride.

⁶While this sounds good, we must be careful here as there is some doubt, today, regarding the original language of the book of Revelation. Some scholars say John wrote the scrolls in Greek, while others insist, Hebrew. For those who lean to the later, the Greek word $\nu\mu\phi\eta$ may or may not apply in this case.

Unfortunately, we cannot conclude a total biblical reference to the *invisible church* as *consistently* known as the bride throughout first and second covenant writings.

CLARIFICATION OF TERMS FOR THIS BOOK:

Since we do see the invisible church classified as the bride within the second or new covenant scriptures, *for the sake of clarity of terms within this book*⁷, we choose to use the word *bride* to mean the *invisible ekklesia* throughout all the ages⁸. Also, we choose to use the word *ekklesia (or church)* to mean all *professing believers*, worldwide.

EKKLESIA/CHURCH	BRIDE
All professing believers worldwide, which includes <i>both visible and invisible</i> entities.	All true believers who God sees and affirms and who make up the <i>invisible ekklesia</i> .

YESHUA’S USE OF THE WORD EKKLESIA

Before leaving the topic of the church, let’s investigate a little further Yeshua’s use of the word, ekklesia. First, recall that in Yeshua’s use of this word, as He spoke to

⁷ In another book written by this author, *The Warrior Bride*, the same terminology cannot apply due the content of that book.

⁸ This includes first and second covenant saints.

Peter, was not addressing a situation to distinguish between wheat and tares. He said:

Matthew 16:18-19

“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church <1577>; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

Remember, Yeshua taught that when two or more gather in His name, He is there with them⁹. This is the base of the authority for moving with a governmental authority. Then, in this passage, He infers that those gathered in His name comprise more than a simple gathering of individuals, but rather a collection of those who came together for the purpose of making governmental decisions.

Next, notice the words: “keys of the kingdom” and then note Yeshua’s clear instructions of binding and loosing. These instructions we will visit momentarily, but first, let’s attempt a definition of the ekklesia as Yeshua spoke of it:

⁹ *Matthew 18 20 “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”*

An ekklesia is a called-out, governmental council of believers in Yeshua, who assemble in His name to carry out the governmental works of His Kingdom."

GOVERNMENTAL WORKS OF THE KINGDOM

With this definition of ekklesia in mind, let's look at the two main focal points of the governmental works of the kingdom: "binding" and "loosing".

- *binding, forbids.*
- *loosing, permits.*

Believers in Yeshua have a God-ordained privilege *to allow or disallow* certain activities upon the earth as they function in kingdom business. Kingdom business defines as "doing the Father's will".

Matthew 7:21

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

In other words, the visible ekklesia, when fully operating in her governmental role, uses the keys of the kingdom to permit or forbid certain activities. No matter the nature of those activities, whether events, situations, conditions or other things, one common denominator exists and that is that God, the Father, has a will regarding that activity.

As one can see, all activities in which the ekklesia engages as she operates in her governmental role, fall within the mandate of doing the Father's will. Additionally, as Yeshua spoke regarding the governmental role of the ekklesia, He defined the major assignment of the ekklesia and specified an important ingredient that accompanies governing officials: **authority**.

Matthew 28:18-19

"18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power <authority>¹⁰ is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Yes, the ekklesia's governmental role received God ordained authority, authority which spans across time.

Matthew 24:14

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

¹⁰ Greek word 1849 ἐξουσία exousia ex-oo-see'-ah . Legal, judicial, deciding ability or authority.

To put this another way, the ekklesia possesses a governmental role which is specific, authoritative, and moves forward in time, past the lifespan of the early church disciples to the end of this age.

More specific to the ekklesia's assignment, the role can be likened to the role of John, the baptizer:

Isaiah 40:3-5-

"3 ¶ The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of YeHoVaH, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. 4 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: 5 And the glory of YeHoVaH shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of YeHoVaH hath spoken it."

In preparing the way, which includes the message of repent and return to God, the ekklesia exercises Yeshua's authority, using the God-given keys of the kingdom, *binding and loosing*.

We will revisit this theme and discuss further the ekklesia in the next chapter

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