

# Definition of Words Part 1

... the meaning of words

When it comes to having a true and proper interpretation of the Bible which guards us against being deceived by false teachers,

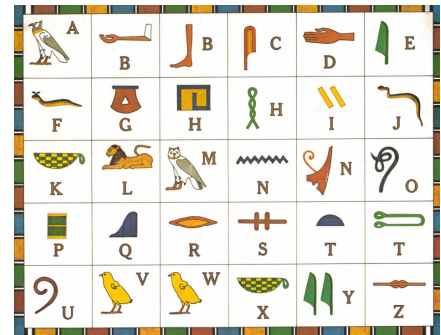
*... the definition of words is by far the most FRUSTRATING and DIFFICULT !!!*

LEST WE HAVE FORGOTTEN - OUR ENGLISH WORDS ARE MADE UP OF SYMBOLS

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Any number of these symbols are linked together in clumps to form words. The clumps are linked together to form sentences. The sentences are linked together to form the context of a thought.

It is the same in all languages; even with ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs, which were drawings of things common to their culture, symbols were linked together to form words which were linked to form sentences and thoughts.



The Alphabet of the Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphs

## What do the words mean?

The most frustrating and difficult thing about words in a sentence is finding their proper definition. The same word can mean something totally different depending on the context.

EXAMPLE – the word “suffer”

<p><a href="#">King James Bible</a> – Luke 18:16 But Jesus called them <i>unto him</i>, and said, “<b>Suffer</b> little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.”</p>	<p><a href="#">King James Bible</a> – Luke 9:22 Saying, “The Son of man must <b>suffer</b> many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.”</p>
<p>Suffer means <i>to permit</i></p>	<p>Suffer means <i>to hurt or feel pain</i></p>

*Therefore, words must always be defined in their context!*

## Interpretation Difficulty # 3: Word Studies

The interpretation of words can become heretical when improper word studies are used to impose definitions that are clearly not meant in the context of the passage.

### A Lazy WORD STUDY

#### Example

#### A Lazy WORD STUDY

Counting the times a word is used in the Bible

The preacher reads his text for the day saying, "Open your ESV Bible to Matthew 16:18, 'And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.'"

He then says, "In my word study, I discovered that the word 'church' is found in the Bible 141 times."

*What does that have to do with the meaning of the word "church" in the passage?*

**I hope you can see that it means NOTHING AT ALL!**

The preacher opened his Strong's Concordance, found the word "church" and counted the number of times it was used in the Bible with no consideration of how the word was used in the context of each sentence or passage and called it a **WORD STUDY**.

### An Incomplete WORD STUDY

#### Example

An Incomplete WORD STUDY without a context

Now the preacher wanted to teach you about the Church so he did more than just count the times it was used in his English Bible. From his *Strong's Concordance* he found the word "church" and then investigated Strong's definition. The following is what he found.

<p><b>Strong's Concordance #1577</b>  ekklēsia: an assembly, a (religious) congregation  <b>Original Word:</b> ἐκκλησία, ας, ἡ  <b>Part of Speech:</b> Noun, Feminine  <b>Transliteration:</b> ekklēsia  <b>Phonetic Spelling:</b> (ek-klay-see'-ah)  <b>Short Definition:</b> an assembly, congregation, church  <b>Definition:</b> an assembly, congregation, church; the Church, the whole body of Christian believers.</p>	<p><b>1577</b> <i>ekklēsia</i> (from <a href="#">1537</a> /ek, "out from and to" and <a href="#">2564</a> /kalēō, "to call") – properly, people called out from the world and to God, the <i>outcome</i> being the Church (the mystical body of Christ) – i.e. the universal (total) body of believers whom God calls out from the world and into His eternal kingdom.</p> <p>[The English word "church" comes from the Greek word <i>kyriakos</i>, "belonging to the Lord" (<i>kyrios</i>).] <a href="#">1577</a> /<i>ekklēsia</i> ("church") is the root of the terms "ecclesiology" and "ecclesiastical."</p>
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In some way, the preacher then tries to explain to you what he **THINKS HE HAS FOUND** in his WORD STUDY, that which you have not seen or had time to discover, and he says, “Because the Church is the Greek word *ekklesia* which is taken from the two root words *ek* meaning ‘out from’ and *kaleo* meaning ‘to call,’ the Church is the called out ones from the world, the universal (total) body of believers whom God calls out from the world and into His eternal kingdom”

*Really! Is that correct?*

## **ONLY PARTIALLY!**

The preacher actually discovered the root word translated into English for the “Church” but failed to research how it was used in the context of the **WHOLE BIBLE**.

The preacher looked at the root word *ekklesia* as it was used only in the **NEW TESTAMENT? Was it used in the OLD TESTAMENT?**

**YES!**

Before we continue, it is important to point out that incomplete WORD STUDIES have brought many false teachings into the Church.

In this case, the incomplete WORD STUDY of the word *ekklesia* has become one of the key foundations of the false teachings of REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY and COVENANT THEOLOGY!

In short, “**Replacement Theology**” teaches that the Church is a distinct organization that has taken the place of Israel in God’s plan; therefore, the nation of Israel is no longer a part of God’s plan in the future; therefore, the prophecy concerning the seven years of tribulation for Israel that will occur just before the battle of Armageddon is incorrect. When you hear teachers of God’s Word say that the Church has taken the place of Israel, the fallacy called REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY causes them to impose symbolic meanings on words intended to be interpreted literally.

In “**Covenant Theology**” the Church is the expansion of the nation of Israel; it has not taken Israel’s place in God’s plan, it is the completion of God’s covenant to man moving through the nation of Israel to the Church. The fallacy called COVENANT THEOLOGY causes them to move literal promises for Israel to her continuation in the Church.

## **Was *ekklesia* used in the OLD TESTAMENT? Yes!**

### **Historical Background**

As mentioned in Lesson 1, page 4 of this study, by the time of the life of Jesus, the Greeks had been in control of the region for 300 years. About 250 years before the birth of Jesus, the entire Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek and called the Septuagint. Jesus used this translation as well as the original Hebrew. In the Greek Septuagint, the Hebrew equivalent for the *assembly of the Israelites* was translated *ekklesia*. Our English translators chose not to use the word “Church” in the Old Testament for clarity and distinction, and rightly so.

*“Ekklesia” in the Septuagint Old Testament context refers to Israelites.  
In the Greek New Testament context it refers to the Church.  
The two are distinctly different!*

**A complete word study would reveal the difference!**

## A ROOT WORD/WORD STUDY

### Example

A Root  
Word/**WORD**  
**STUDY**  
without  
context

Let's suppose the preacher, or any Bible student for that matter, wanted to discover the root of any given word – to get the REAL meaning! In the last example we saw that the word translated Church in our English versions was made up of two roots words, **ek**, a preposition which indicates the origin of something being talked about. It compares to our “of” as in the *power of God*. The “of” tells us that the origin of the power came from God. Therefore, it can mean *of, from* or *to*.

The second root word is the verb **kaléo**, which means “to call or to call out” The resulting new word is **ekklesia**. The definition that results from the combination of those two root words, *to call out from*, worked nicely to construct the concept we use for Church; however, the preacher incorrectly limited it to the New Testament usage when in fact it was used correctly in the Greek translation of the Old Testament to refer to the Israelite congregation.

Therefore, the preacher, teacher or student says, “ekklesia is the Greek word for Church which is taken from the two root words **ek** meaning “out from” and **kaleo** means “to call,” making the Church the *called out ones*.”

*Really! Is that true?*

## True or False Questions

TRUE or FALSE     *Ek + kaleo = ekklesia*

*True: The preposition ek joined to the verb kaleo does create the noun ekklesia.*

TRUE or FALSE     *Ek (of/from) + kaleo (to call out) = ekklesia (to call out)*

*False: The combined definitions of two or more Greek words rarely becomes the definition of the newly created word. Ekklesia does not mean “to call out.”*

TRUE or FALSE     *Ek (of/from) + kaleo (to call out) = ekklesia (assembly/congregation)*

*True: The new word created from the two root words means **assembly or congregation**.*

Think about this, if the two root words meant *called out from*, and that was the needed definition for the context and culture, **why create a new word that has the same meaning?** Won't the original two words do just as well? Why does it not mean *Church*?

*“Ekklesia” does not mean Church, it means  
assembly or congregation!*

**If *Ekklesia* does not mean Church, why is it translated as Church in the English New Testament and not in the English Old Testament?**

Remember, this section of this lesson is dedicated to **ROOT WORD/WORD STUDIES WITHOUT CONTEXT**. As previously mentioned, *ekklesia*, was used in the Greek Septuagint translation of the Old Testament which was completed about 250 years before the birth of Jesus. He used the Greek as well as the Hebrew in His teaching; thus, by using the translation, He gave it His approval.

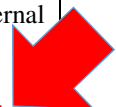
**Therefore, we need to understand, *ekklesia*, was not a strange word or foreign concept to the Jews of Jesus' day!**

*It was in their Greek translation more than 700 times!*

IF *ekklesia* IS NOT THE GREEK WORD FOR CHURCH,

**WHAT IS THE GREEK WORD FOR CHURCH?**

Actually, we have already seen the Greek word for Church in the chart on page 20 of this lesson. The chart came from Biblehub.com, a wonderful online resource for your own Bible study. Here it is again! Notice the added note at the bottom of the right column.

<p><b>Strong's Concordance #1577</b>  <b>ekklēsia:</b> an assembly, a (religious) congregation  <b>Original Word:</b> ἐκκλησία, ας, ἡ  <b>Part of Speech:</b> Noun, Feminine  <b>Transliteration:</b> ekklēsia  <b>Phonetic Spelling:</b> (ek-klay-see'-ah)  <b>Short Definition:</b> an assembly, congregation, church  <b>Definition:</b> an assembly, congregation, church; the Church, the whole body of Christian believers.</p>	<p><b>1577</b> <i>ekklēsia</i> (from <b>1537</b> /ek, "out from and to" and <b>2564</b> /kalēō, "to call") – properly, people called out from the world and to God, the <i>outcome</i> being the <i>Church</i> (the mystical <i>body of Christ</i>) – i.e. the universal (total) body of believers whom God calls <i>out</i> from the world and <i>into</i> His eternal kingdom.</p> <p><b>[The English word "church" comes from the Greek word <b>2960</b>/kyriakos, "belonging to the Lord" (kyrios).] <b>1577</b> /ekklēsia is the root of the terms "ecclesiology" and "ecclesiastical."</b></p> 
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**Where did 2960/kyiakos come from? What does it mean?**

Biblehub.com gives the following information about 2960/kyiakos.

<p><b>Strong's Concordance #2960</b>  <b>kuriakos:</b> of the Lord  <b>Original Word:</b> κυριακός, ἡ, ὄν  <b>Part of Speech:</b> Adjective  <b>Transliteration:</b> kuriakos  <b>Phonetic Spelling:</b> (koo-ree-ak-os')  <b>Short Definition:</b> of the Lord  <b>Definition:</b> of the Lord, special to the Lord.</p>	<p><b>2960</b> <i>kyriakós</i> (an adjective, derived from <b>2962</b> /kýrios, "lord") – properly, <b>pertaining (belonging) to the Lord</b> (<i>kyrios</i>). <b>2960</b> (<i>kyriakós</i>) <b>is used of the Lord's Supper</b> (i.e. "communion," the <i>Lord's table</i>) <b>and "the Lord's day" (Sunday) as the appointed day for rest and worship</b>. See 1 Cor 11:20; Rev 1:10.</p>
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**Kyriakos doesn't mean CHURCH, it means *belonging to the LORD*. What next?**

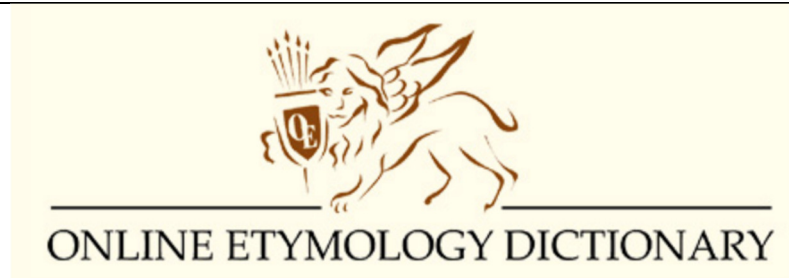
*How did we get the word Church from Kyriakos?*

Another online resource can help at this point; it is called

## [Online Etymology Dictionary](http://www.etymonline.com)

[www.etymonline.com](http://www.etymonline.com)

**Etymology** is the study of the origin of words and the way in which their meanings have changed throughout history.



### [church \(n.\)](#)

Old English cirice, circe "church, public place of worship; Christians collectively," **from Proto-Germanic** \*kirika (source also of Old Saxon kirika, Old Norse kirkja, Old Frisian zerke, Middle Dutch kerke, Dutch kerk, Old High German kirihha, German Kirche), probably [see note in OED] **from Greek kyriake (oikia), kyriakon doma "Lord's (house),"** from kyrios "ruler, lord," from PIE root \*keue- "to swell" ("swollen," hence "strong, powerful"); see [cumulus](#). Phonetic spelling from c. 1200, established by 16c. For vowel evolution, see [bury](#). As an adjective from 1570s.

**Greek kyriakon (adj.) "of the Lord" was used of houses of Christian worship since c.300**, especially in the East, though it was less common in this sense than *ekklesia* or *basilike*. **An example of the direct Greek-to-Germanic progress of many Christian words, via the Goths;** it probably was used by West Germanic people in their pre-Christian period.

*There it is!*

Our word "CHURCH" comes from the Old English word "CIRICE" which comes from Old Saxon word "KIRIKA" which comes from the German word "KIRIKA" which comes from the Greek word "KYRIAKE." Notice also that the adjective form "KYRIAKE" (KYRIAKON) has been documented as a reference to the places (buildings) of Christian worship since the 300's AD.

Is the Greek word for “CHURCH” used in the New Testament? **YES!**

Is the Greek word for “CHURCH” translated into English as “CHURCH?” **NO!**

How is the Greek word for “CHURCH” translated into English?

**... the Lord’s ...!**

**The Greek word “KYRIAKOS” is used only two times in the New Testament – each time as something belonging to the LORD - His Supper and His Day.**

**1 Corinthians 11:20** Therefore when you meet together, it is not to eat *the Lord’s* Supper...

**Revelation 1:10** I was in the Spirit on *the Lord’s* day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like *the sound* of a trumpet ...

*Why then is the English word for Church, which is taken from the Greek word that means something that “belongs to the LORD” used in place of the Greek word that means assembly or congregation in the New Testament?*

**THE ANSWER IS Context**

Every time the Greek word “*ekklesia*” (which means *assembly* or *congregation*) is translated “CHURCH” in the New Testament, it is because the **CONTEXT** of the passage indicates that the Scripture is talking about the ***assembly or congregation that belongs to the LORD***. It is **NOT** speaking of the *assembly* or *congregation* of the Jews or Israel; in those cases, the English New Testament uses the word *assembly* or *congregation* and not Church.

**ROOT WORD/WORD STUDIES WITHOUT CONTEXT**

**leads to false teachings!**

## Let's look at another very important word, incorrectly defined by its root words without context!

EXAMPLE:

### Apostle

"Apostle" is a combination of two root words, *apo* meaning "away from" and *stello* meaning to "send." Therefore, the logical definition might be "send away." We therefore say an apostle is "one who is sent." Is that what it really means? Strangely, the context of the New Testament does not focus on the "one who is sent" in general with the term *Apostle*, but rather a special *messenger* with a special message! D.A. Carson says the following:

Now a messenger is usually sent, but the word *messenger* also calls to mind the message the person carries and suggests he represents the one who sent him. In other words, actual usage in the New Testament suggests that *apostolos* commonly bears the meaning a *special representative* or a *special messenger* rather than "someone sent out."<sup>19</sup>

For that reason, the New Testament mentions only 13 Apostles by name; 12 selected by the LORD during the Sermon on the Mount and one selected by Him on the Damascus Road.

For clarity, the word apostle (*apostolos*) was not a new word to the Israelites. In the Greek Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, apostle is used about 700 times for the Hebrew word *salah*, which means to "stretch out" or "send." In each case the context shows the messenger being authorized or commissioned to carry a specific message to a specific people at a specific time.

However, the 79 times *apostolos* it is used in the New Testament, the context refer directly to at least one of the 13 men selected by the LORD and no others. They were unique and differentiated from all others in two ways; **first, they all witnessed the LORD's resurrection** (including Paul); **second, the LORD empowered them to repeat the miracles He performed while He was on earth to support expanding the Gospel to all nations.** The LORD's Apostles were a unique group with specific powers, a specific message at a specific time to establish the Church in the whole world.

These ENGLISH words alone have been used by false teachers to split the Church, causing splinter denominations and in many cases, cults. Let's add the words *only begotten* and *firstborn* to the mix and see the damage that has been done to truth by ENGLISH translations and the western philosophy mindset imposed on the Word of God!

### On to Definition of Words Part 2

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<sup>19</sup> D.A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, Second Edition, Baker Academic, 1996, p. 30.