

Sinaitic Ingathering Ecclesiology: A 24-Week Bible Study Series

Rediscovering the True Identity of Jesus' Ekklesia

PART I: FOUNDATIONS - THE SINAITIC ORIGIN

(Weeks 1-6)

Week 1: The Assembly in the Wilderness - Stephen's Revolutionary Insight

Main Question: What is the true identity of God's people?

Key Passages:

- Acts 7:37-38 (Stephen's testimony about Moses and the ekklesia)
- Exodus 19:3-8 (Israel at Sinai)
- Deuteronomy 4:10 (Day of the assembly)
- Numbers 16:3 (All the congregation are holy)

Study Focus:

- Stephen uses "ekklesia" for Israel in the wilderness - same word Jesus uses
- The Sinai assembly as the foundational moment of God's people
- Moses as leader of the first ekklesia
- Understanding qahal/ekklesia as assembly, not institution

Discussion Questions:

1. Why does Stephen specifically call Israel "the ekklesia in the wilderness"?
 2. What was significant about the assembly at Sinai that established God's people?
 3. How does this change your understanding of what Jesus meant by "my ekklesia"?
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Week 2: Lost in Translation - The Church/Assembly Problem

Main Question: How did translation choices obscure biblical truth?

Key Passages:

- Exodus 12:6 (All the assembly of Israel)
- 1 Kings 8:14, 22, 55 (Solomon addresses the ekklesia of Israel)
- 1 Chronicles 13:2-4 (David consults with the ekklesia)
- Matthew 16:18 (I will build my ekklesia)
- Matthew 18:17 (Tell it to the ekklesia)

Study Focus:

- Hebrew qahal consistently translated as ekklesia in the Septuagint
- Old Testament: qahal/ekklesia = "assembly/congregation"
- New Testament: ekklesia = "church"
- This translation inconsistency supports replacement theology
- Jesus and the apostles used Israel's own vocabulary

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is consistent translation of qahal/ekklesia important?
 2. How does the translation "church" vs "assembly" change meaning?
 3. What theological implications flow from this translation choice?
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Week 3: Kingdom of Priests - Sinai's Calling Fulfilled

Main Question: How does the New Testament fulfill the Sinai vision?

Key Passages:

- Exodus 19:5-6 (Kingdom of priests and holy nation)
- 1 Peter 2:9-10 (Royal priesthood, holy nation)
- Revelation 1:6; 5:10 (Kingdom and priests)
- Isaiah 61:6 (Called priests of the Lord)

Study Focus:

- Sinai's "kingdom of priests" vision finds fulfillment in Messiah
- Peter directly quotes and applies Exodus 19:6 to Jewish believers in Jesus
- Continuity of calling from Sinai to the apostolic community
- The priesthood of all believers as Sinai covenant fulfillment

Discussion Questions:

1. How does 1 Peter 2:9-10 show continuity with Exodus 19:5-6?
2. What does it mean that believers are the "kingdom of priests" from Sinai?

3. How does this priestly calling unite Jewish and Gentile believers?
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Week 4: The Davidic Covenant - An Eternal Throne

Main Question: What did God promise about David's kingdom?

Key Passages:

- 2 Samuel 7:12-16 (I will establish his throne forever)
- 1 Chronicles 17:11-14 (His throne shall be established forever)
- Psalm 89:3-4, 28-29 (Covenant with David, his seed forever)
- Psalm 132:11-12 (The Lord swore to David)

Study Focus:

- God's unconditional covenant with David for eternal throne
- The promise is "forever" - not temporary or conditional
- David's "house" and "kingdom" will endure perpetually
- This covenant requires fulfillment, not replacement

Discussion Questions:

1. What specific promises did God make to David about his throne?
 2. How do we reconcile "forever" promises with Israel's exile and future restoration?
 3. What would it mean for these promises to be cancelled or transferred?
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Week 5: Messiah as Son of David - The Rightful Heir

Main Question: How does Jesus fulfill the Davidic covenant?

Key Passages:

- Matthew 1:1 (Jesus Christ, son of David)
- Luke 1:32-33 (Throne of his father David, reign over Jacob forever)
- Matthew 21:5, 9 (Your king comes to you, son of David)
- Acts 15:16-17 (Rebuild David's fallen tent)

Study Focus:

- Jesus' genealogical and legal right to David's throne
- Gabriel's announcement confirms Davidic covenant fulfillment
- Jesus publicly acclaimed as son of David during triumphal entry

- James interprets Gentile inclusion as a foreshadow and type of rebuilding David's tent

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is Jesus' Davidic lineage crucial to His messianic claims?
 2. How does Luke 1:32-33 connect to 2 Samuel 7?
 3. What does it mean to "rebuild David's fallen tent" in Acts 15?
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Week 6: The Legitimacy Crisis - Corrupt Leadership

Main Question: Why did Israel's first-century leadership lack enduring/eternal authority?

Key Passages:

- Matthew 23:1-39 (Woe to scribes and Pharisees)
- John 10:1-18 (I am the door, thieves and robbers)
- Ezekiel 34:1-10 (Woe to shepherds of Israel)
- 1 Samuel 8:4-22 (Israel demands a king)

Study Focus:

- High priesthood corrupted by Roman political appointments
- Wealthy families buying priestly positions
- Sanhedrin lacking proper Aaronic or Davidic authority
- Jesus as legitimate Davidic heir versus illegitimate usurpers

Discussion Questions:

1. How had the priesthood and leadership been corrupted by the first century?
 2. What made Jesus' authority more legitimate than the Sanhedrin's?
 3. How does Ezekiel 34 describe the problem Jesus came to solve?
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PART II: REFRAMING THE FAMILIAR

(Weeks 7-12)

Week 7: "I Will Build My Ekklesia" - A New Reading of Matthew 16

Main Question: What did Jesus actually mean in Matthew 16:18?

Key Passages:

- Matthew 16:13-20 (Peter's confession and Jesus' response)
- Matthew 21:42-44 (Stone the builders rejected)
- Psalm 118:22-23 (Stone rejected by builders)
- Isaiah 28:16 (Behold, I lay in Zion a stone)

Study Focus:

- Jesus builds up/establishes His existing ekklesia, not creates new
- "My ekklesia" - possessive, showing rightful ownership
- The keys represent authority transfer, not creation of a new institution
- Peter's confession recognizes Jesus' legitimate authority

Discussion Questions:

1. If Jesus is claiming leadership of an existing ekklesia (not creating a new one), how does this change the intended meaning of Matthew 18?
 2. How do the "keys of the kingdom" relate to Davidic authority?
 3. Why is Peter's confession about Jesus' identity so crucial here?
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Week 8: The Rock and the Keys - Authority Transferred

Main Question: What authority did Jesus transfer to the apostles?

Key Passages:

- Matthew 16:18-19 (Rock, keys, binding and loosing)
- Matthew 18:18 (Whatever you bind on earth)
- John 20:21-23 (As the Father sent me, so I send you)
- Acts 4:8-12 (By what name, cornerstone)

Study Focus:

- The "rock" as Peter's confession of Jesus' messianic and sovereign identity
- Keys symbolize authority transfer from Sanhedrin, restored to a Sinaitic and Davidic ekklesia with the revelation of Jesus as their "rock"
- Binding and loosing as judicial authority in matters of Torah
- Apostolic authority flows from Davidic/Messianic authority of Jesus

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the "rock" on which the ekklesia is built?
2. How do the "keys" represent a restoration of Sinaitic and Davidic authority?
3. What does "binding and loosing" authority include?

Week 9: The Twelve Thrones - Apostolic Restoration

Main Question: What was Jesus' plan for leadership structure?

Key Passages:

- Matthew 19:28 (Twelve thrones judging twelve tribes)
- Luke 22:28-30 (You who have continued with me)
- Revelation 21:12-14 (Twelve gates, twelve foundations)
- Acts 1:15-26 (Replacing Judas to restore the Twelve)

Study Focus:

- Twelve apostles corresponding to twelve tribes of Israel
- "Judging" implies governmental rule, not just evaluation
- Future tense suggests millennial kingdom application, not immediate governance
- Apostolic number must be maintained (Matthias replacing Judas)

Discussion Questions:

1. What does "judging the twelve tribes" tell us about Israel's future?
 2. Why was it important to replace Judas to maintain twelve apostles?
 3. Which aspects of apostolic leadership apply now, and which do not apply until the millennial kingdom?
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Week 10: The Jerusalem Council - Legitimate Authority in Action

Main Question: How did apostolic authority function in practice?

Key Passages:

- Acts 15:1-35 (The Jerusalem Council)
- Amos 9:11-12 (Rebuild the tabernacle of David)
- Acts 21:17-26 (Paul reports to James and elders)
- Galatians 2:1-10 (Paul goes up by revelation)

Study Focus:

- James (not Peter or Paul) leads the Jerusalem Council
- James as Jesus' brother and a leader of Jerusalem ekklesia
- Amos 9:11-12 interpreted as Davidic restoration including Gentiles
- Jerusalem remains the center of apostolic authority

Discussion Questions:

1. Why does James lead the Jerusalem Council rather than Peter?
 2. How does James interpret Amos 9:11-12 in Acts 15:16-17?
 3. What does this tell us about the function of apostolic leadership?
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Week 11: Covenant Progression - Building Blocks, Not Replacements

Main Question: How do God's covenants relate to each other?

Key Passages:

- Genesis 9:8-17 (Noahic covenant)
- Genesis 12:1-3; 17:1-8 (Abrahamic covenant)
- Romans 4:13-16 (Abraham heir of world)
- Romans 3:31 (Do we make void the law? God forbid!)

Study Focus:

- Covenants layer upon each other like building blocks
- Later covenants don't cancel earlier ones (Abraham doesn't replace Noah)
- New Covenant fulfills rather than abolishes previous covenants
- Romans 3:31 - "we establish the law" through faith

Discussion Questions:

1. How do the covenants relate to one another?
 2. What does Romans 3:31 mean - "we establish the law through faith"?
 3. How does covenant progression differ from covenant replacement?
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Week 12: The New Covenant - Better, Not Different

Main Question: What makes the New Covenant "better"?

Key Passages:

- Jeremiah 31:31-34 (New covenant with house of Israel)
- Hebrews 8:6-13 (Mediator of a better covenant)
- Hebrews 10:15-18 (Holy Spirit testifies)
- 2 Corinthians 3:6-18 (Ministers of new covenant)

Study Focus:

- New Covenant is "better" because all previous covenants are fulfilled through the success of the new
- Made with "house of Israel and house of Judah" - not replacement peoples
- "Obsolete" refers to sin-revealing function when righteousness achieved
- Law written on hearts enables covenant righteousness

Discussion Questions:

1. With whom is the New Covenant made according to Jeremiah 31?
2. What makes it "better" than previous covenants?
3. What becomes "obsolete" and what remains permanent?

PART III: THE OLIVE TREE - INGATHERING THEOLOGY (Weeks 13-18)

Week 13: The Olive Tree Foundation - Israel Remains the Root

Main Question: What is the foundation of God's people?

Key Passages:

- Romans 11:11-18 (Some branches broken off, others grafted in)
- Romans 11:28-29 (Gifts and calling irrevocable)
- Ephesians 2:11-12 (Remember you were once Gentiles)
- Romans 9:4-5 (To them belong adoption, covenants, promises)

Study Focus:

- The olive tree represents Israel - roots, trunk, and natural branches
- "Some" branches broken off, not all - remnant always preserved
- Gentiles are "wild" branches grafted into Israel's tree
- Israel's gifts and calling are "irrevocable" - permanent

Discussion Questions:

1. What does the olive tree represent in Romans 11?
2. Why does Paul emphasize that only "some" branches were broken off?
3. What are the implications of gifts and calling being "irrevocable"?

Week 14: Grafting In - The Process of Gentile Inclusion

Main Question: How do Gentiles become part of God's people?

Key Passages:

- Romans 11:19-24 (Wild branches grafted in)
- Ephesians 2:13-22 (Brought near, fellow citizens)
- Ephesians 3:4-6 (Fellow heirs, fellow members)
- Galatians 3:26-29 (Abraham's seed through faith)

Study Focus:

- Gentiles grafted into existing tree, not planted in new soil
- "Fellow heirs" means sharing the same inheritance with Jewish believers
- "Fellow citizens" with Israel, not replacing Israel
- Faith in Messiah determines inclusion for both Jews and Gentiles

Discussion Questions:

1. What's the difference between being "grafted in" versus "planted new"?
 2. What does it mean to be "fellow heirs" with Jewish believers?
 3. How does faith determine covenant participation for all people?
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Week 15: Maintaining the Distinction - Unity, Not Uniformity

Main Question: Do Jews and Gentiles lose their ethnic identities in Messiah?

Key Passages:

- 1 Corinthians 7:17-20 (Let each one walk as God has assigned)
- Galatians 2:7-8 (Gospel to circumcised and uncircumcised)
- Romans 1:16 (To the Jew first, then to the Greek)
- Revelation 7:9 (Every tribe, tongue, people, nation)

Study Focus:

- Paul maintains distinction between Jewish and Gentile believers
- Circumcision/uncircumcision distinction preserved, not erased
- "To the Jew first" implies ongoing distinctive role
- Eschatological vision preserves ethnic diversity

Discussion Questions:

1. Why does Paul maintain circumcision/uncircumcision distinctions even though circumcision does not relate to salvation?

2. What does "to the Jew first" mean practically?
 3. How does Revelation 7:9 support preserved ethnic identities?
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Week 16: The Mystery Revealed - Gentiles as Fellow Heirs

Main Question: What was the mystery hidden for ages?

Key Passages:

- Ephesians 3:1-13 (Mystery made known)
- Colossians 1:25-27 (Mystery hidden, now revealed)
- Romans 16:25-27 (Mystery kept secret for long ages)
- 1 Peter 1:10-12 (Prophets searched concerning salvation)

Study Focus:

- The mystery: Gentiles as fellow heirs WITHOUT becoming Jewish proselytes
- Not replacement of Israel, but inclusion alongside Israel
- This was "hidden" from previous generations but prophesied
- Gentile inclusion through faith alone, not through circumcision

Discussion Questions:

1. What specifically was the "mystery" that Paul reveals?
 2. Can the mystery be fulfilled/completed (Revelation 10:5-11)?
 3. Why was this mystery "hidden" but also prophesied?
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Week 17: All Israel Shall Be Saved - The Ingathering Complete

Main Question: What is God's ultimate plan for Israel?

Key Passages:

- Romans 11:25-32 (All Israel will be saved)
- Isaiah 59:20-21 (Redeemer will come to Zion)
- Romans 11:1-15 (God has not rejected His people)
- Zechariah 12:10-14 (They will look on Him whom they pierced)

Study Focus:

- "All Israel" refers to ethnic, territorial, and covenantal Israel
- National salvation of Israel as prerequisite for full Gentile blessing

- The "Deliverer from Zion" coming to remove ungodliness from Jacob
- Israel's salvation coincides with resurrection from the dead

Discussion Questions:

1. Who does "all Israel" refer to in Romans 11:26?
 2. How does Israel's salvation relate to complete Gentile blessing?
 3. What role does national repentance play in Israel's restoration?
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Week 18: Gentile Dependence on Israel - A Humbling Reality

Main Question: How do Gentile believers depend on Israel?

Key Passages:

- Romans 11:17-18 (You do not support the root)
- Romans 15:27 (Gentiles indebted to Jewish believers)
- John 4:22 (Salvation is from the Jews)
- Isaiah 2:3 (Law goes forth from Zion)

Study Focus:

- Gentiles supported by the root (Israel), not vice versa
- Spiritual debt of Gentiles to Jewish people
- Jesus as Jewish Messiah - salvation originates from Jews
- Ongoing role of Israel/Jerusalem in God's plan

Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean that Gentiles don't "support the root"?
 2. How are Gentile believers "indebted" to Israel?
 3. Why does Jesus say "salvation is from the Jews"?
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PART IV: TERRITORIAL PROMISES - EDENIC RESTORATION

(Weeks 19-24)

Week 19: God's Territorial Plan - Divine Allocation to Nations

Main Question: Did God assign territories to all nations?

Key Passages:

- Genesis 10:1-32 (Table of Nations)
- Deuteronomy 32:8-9 (Elyon divided nations, set boundaries)
- Acts 17:26-27 (Determined boundaries of habitation)
- Psalm 24:1 (The earth is the Lord's)

Study Focus:

- Divine allocation of territories to all nations in Genesis/Deuteronomy
- This was intentional planning, not random demographic drift
- Each nation received territorial inheritance from the Most High
- God as sovereign owner distributing earth to human family-nations

Discussion Questions:

1. What does Deuteronomy 32:8-9 reveal about God's territorial plan?
 2. How does Acts 17:26-27 confirm divine territorial allocation?
 3. What's the relationship between covenant and land throughout Scripture?
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Week 20: Lost Through Sin - Universal Forfeiture

Main Question: How does sin affect territorial inheritance?

Key Passages:

- Leviticus 18:24-28 (Land vomits out inhabitants)
- 2 Chronicles 36:20-21 (Babylonian exile)
- Isaiah 5:13 (Exiled for lack of knowledge)
- Romans 6:23 (Wages of sin is death)
- Genesis 3:17-19, 23-24 (Cursed ground, expelled from Eden)

Study Focus:

- Sin leads to loss of territorial inheritance for individuals and nations
- Biblical pattern: covenant breaking → exile → loss of land
- Israel's exile as pattern for all nations' territorial forfeiture
- Universal need for restoration through Messiah's righteousness

Discussion Questions:

1. How does Adam's expulsion from Eden establish the sin-exile pattern?

2. How does Israel's Babylonian exile illustrate universal territorial loss?
 3. If all nations lost territorial claims through sin, why can't territorial claims be redeemed through righteousness?
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Week 21: The Key to Restoration - Faith Righteousness in Messiah

Main Question: How is territorial inheritance restored?

Key Passages:

- Matthew 5:5 (Blessed are the meek, they shall inherit the earth)
- Psalm 37:9-11 (Righteous will inherit the land)
- Romans 4:13 (Abraham heir of the world)
- Revelation 5:10 (We shall reign on the earth)

Study Focus:

- Righteousness through faith restores what sin forfeited
- "Inherit the earth" as literal territorial promise, not metaphor
- Abraham promised to be "heir of the world" (κληρονόμος κόσμου)
- Believers will literally reign on earth in the coming age

Discussion Questions:

1. Is "inherit the earth" a spiritual metaphor or literal promise?
 2. How does faith in Messiah address the sin problem that caused forfeiture?
 3. What does Abraham being "heir of the world" mean practically?
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Week 22: Fellow Heirs of Territorial Promises - The Logic of Inclusion

Main Question: If Gentiles inherit covenant promises, what else do they inherit?

Key Passages:

- Ephesians 3:6 (Fellow heirs, fellow members, fellow partakers)
- Romans 8:17 (Joint heirs with Messiah)
- Galatians 3:29 (Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise)
- 1 Peter 1:3-4 (Inheritance imperishable, undefiled, unfading)

Study Focus:

- "Fellow heirs" means Gentiles share in Messiah's inheritance with Israel.

- Abraham's promises included both spiritual AND territorial elements
- Cannot legitimately separate spiritual and physical covenant promises
- Faith-based righteousness applies to ALL aspects of covenant promises
- Ethnic distinction remains in the age to come. Jews inherit their lands according to faith in Messiah. Gentiles inherit their lands according to faith in Messiah.

Discussion Questions:

1. What specifically does "fellow heirs" include according to Scripture?
 2. Can you separate spiritual and physical aspects of God's promises?
 3. If Gentiles are "Abraham's seed" by faith, what did Abraham inherit?
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Week 23: Jerusalem's Role - Blessing for all Nations

Main Question: How does Jerusalem enable blessing for all nations?

Key Passages:

- Isaiah 2:2-4 (Nations flow to Jerusalem for instruction)
- Isaiah 19:23-25 (Egypt "my people," Assyria "my handiwork")
- Zechariah 14:16-19 (Nations worship in Jerusalem)
- Revelation 21:24-26 (Nations bring glory to New Jerusalem)

Study Focus:

- Nations flow TO Jerusalem, don't replace it
- God explicitly calls other nations "my people" alongside Israel
- Jerusalem remains central in both millennial and eternal state
- Messiah's victory in Jerusalem becomes righteousness blessing for all nations

Discussion Questions:

1. How can Egypt be called "my people" alongside Israel as "my inheritance"?
 2. What's Jerusalem's specific role in blessing all nations?
 3. How does this support territorial inheritance for all nations through faith?
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Week 24: The Messianic Victory - Enabling Edenic Restoration

Main Question: How does Jesus make territorial edenic restoration possible for all nations?

Key Passages:

- Psalm 110:1-7 (Messiah rules from Zion)
- Colossians 2:13-15 (Disarmed principalities and powers)
- Revelation 11:15 (Kingdoms of world become kingdom of our Lord)
- Isaiah 65:17-25 (New heavens and new earth)
- Revelation 21:1-4 (New Jerusalem descends)

Study Focus:

- Jesus' victory over sin and Satan enables restoration of forfeited inheritance
- Messiah rules from Zion (Jerusalem) over all nations and their territories
- Defeat of principalities promises future restoration of original Deuteronomy 32 territorial order
- "All kingdoms become His kingdom" includes their territorial boundaries
- Ultimate vision: heaven and earth united, nations restored

Discussion Questions:

1. How does Psalm 110 describe Messiah's rule from Zion?
2. What does Jesus' victory accomplish for universal territorial restoration?
3. How do we envision territorial inheritance in the millennial kingdom and eternal state?
4. What does this mean for our present hope and living?

SERIES CONCLUSION: Living the Sinaitic Ingathering Vision

Reflection Questions:

1. How has this 24-week study changed your understanding of God's people?
2. What does it mean to be part of the one ekklesia from Sinai to eternity?
3. How does Sinaitic Ingathering Ecclesiology affect your view of Jewish-Christian relations?
4. What are the implications for current world conflicts and territorial disputes?
5. How should this territorial inheritance hope affect your present discipleship?
6. What practical steps will you take to live differently in light of these promises?
7. How will you share this vision of God's incredible plan for all nations?

Practical Applications:

- Environmental stewardship as caring for future inheritance
- Inter-ethnic relationships as foretaste of universal blessing
- Support for Israel's restoration as prerequisite for complete Gentile blessing
- Mission and evangelism with ethnic & territorial restoration vision
- Prayer for Jerusalem and all nations' restoration
- Living as citizens of the coming kingdom while sojourning in present age