

The King's People Matthew 16

ETS: The King created the Church and He has a future for the church

ESS: The King created the Church and He has a future for the church

OSS: I want the church to be encouraged about the King's plan

PQ: Are you part of the King's church?

UW: Church

WE

In this time of turmoil, there is a lot of concern about the future of our nation—including the **future of the church** in America.

- Based on the actions of **some politicians**, the message ***many have heard*** is that church is considered **“Non-Essential.”**

Is the church in America under attack?

- Some say **“Yes”** and what we are witnessing is the **tip of the iceberg**
 - There is a **growing movement** to remove the **tax exempt status** given to churches

- There is a **growing movement** to remove **the housing allowance** for pastors
 - To lose these will hurt small churches—the majority of churches in the USA are less than 100 people—and will likely close many churches.
- Based on current events there is a **fear** among many in the church that to speak out against issues that the Bible calls **sin** will be construed to be “**hate speech**” and thus prosecutable.
 - Fortunately, we have **first amendment rights**, but there is a growing sentiment—especially among college students—to ban speech that they don’t like.

What is the church?

What is the future of the church?

In this time of turmoil, I felt led to preach this series to encourage you. Also, I want you to understand the BIG PICTURE of the Bible.

- This series is more of SURVEY of all of Scripture regarding the past and the future.

Hopefully, it will help us see God’s work and plan in history and where this is all heading.

GOD

Last week: The King's First Mission

- God to take on **human** flesh
- Be born of a **virgin** (Mary)
- To **reveal** Himself through His **miracles, teachings, death and resurrection** as the **Son of God**

Turn to Matthew 16

- Jesus is nearing the end of His ministry.
 - He is starting on **His final journey** to Jerusalem—where He will be crucified.

Matthew 16:13-18 “When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” 14 They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” 15 “But you,” he asked them, “who do you say that I am?” 16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” 17 Jesus responded, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father in heaven. 18 *And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.*”

Notice Jesus talked about the church as being **FUTURE**: “I will build my church.”

- **Observation**: The Church DID NOT exist when Jesus said this

WHEN was Jesus going to “Build His church”? He didn’t say!

Observation: Jesus said the church was HIS church: “I will build my church.”

Observation: Jesus said His church could not be brought down: “the gates of Hades will not overpower it.”

The CHURCH is:

- **Built** by Jesus
- **Owned** by Jesus
- **Empowered** by Jesus
- **Unable** to be **Overpowered**

THE KING ESTABLISHED A PEOPLE: THE CHURCH

WHAT is “the church?”

- The word “**church**” is **neither Hebrew nor Greek**.
 - The **Greek** word used is “**Ekklesia**” which basically means “**Called Out ones**”.

- **Lit: “I will build my called out ones”**
 - “Called out” from WHAT?

Fast forward a **few months** to the **hours** before the **Jesus, the King, completed His first mission.**

- Right before His arrest, Jesus prayed for His disciples-in front of His disciples.

Jesus’ disciples...

- Had been **“called them out”** to **“Be with Him”**
 - Jesus has **“called them out”** to **carry out ministry** with Him.

Jesus’ prayer for His disciples whom He had **“Called out”** to **be with Him....**

John 17:14-16 **“I have given them (His disciples) your word. The world hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15 I am not praying that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.”**

- These men were **“called out”** of the world—they were no longer **“of the world”**
 - They had **been with Jesus** and had been **empowered** by Jesus!

Then Jesus said: **John 17:20-21** “I pray not only for these, but also for those who believe in me through their word. 21 May they all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us, so that the world may believe you sent me.”

- **WHO** are those **who will believe** through the word of the Apostles? **US!**
 - **WHAT** would those “who believe” through the **apostles be?** The Church!

However, the “**Word of the Apostles**” did not go forth that night or for the next **50 days!**

- **WHY?** Jesus had **not** yet been **crucified** and **resurrected!**
- **WHY?** Jesus had **not** yet **ascended** to **heaven** after His resurrection
- **WHY?** Jesus had **not** yet **sent** the **Holy Spirit** to **empower** the **apostles** to go forth with their word!

Some **50 days later**, on the **Day of Pentecost**, Peter preached “**Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**” (**Acts 2:38**)

- **Acts 2:41:** “So those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand people were added to them.”
 - That was the **BIRTH** of the **church!**

On that day, **3000 people believed** in Christ, **identified** with Christ through **baptism** and they became a **part** of a **new community: The Called Out Ones**—the church!

In **Matthew 16** when Jesus said “**I will build my church**”, He was talking about a **future event** that would have happen on the **Day of Pentecost** after His death and resurrection.

- Jesus’ death and resurrection had to occur first before He could build his church!
 - Why? Because Jesus’ death and resurrection is the foundation of the church!
 - *Without Jesus’ death and resurrection, there’d be no reason for the church!*

WHAT are we—the church-- “Called out” of?

- Speaking to the church, Peter wrote: **1 Peter 2:9** “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession, (Here’s why...) so that you may proclaim the praises of the

one who *called you out of darkness* into his marvelous light.

WHAT is the “Darkness” we were called out of?

- **“1 Peter 2:10** “Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

Darkness” refers to the **time before** a person became a follower of Christ.

- When you are in **“Darkness”** you are **“Not a people”** —not a part of the church!
 - When you respond to God’s conviction and repent of sin and turn to Christ, you are now **“Called out of darkness”** and are now **“God’s people”**
- When you are in **“Darkness”** you are **ignorant** of God’s **provision** for salvation
 - When you are in **“Darkness”** **“you have not received mercy”** —you are under God’s condemnation!
 - When you are in **“Darkness”** have **not received “Mercy”** from God because you **haven’t admitted** your need for God’s mercy.

WHY are we “called out”?

- Because we have **repented of sin and placed our faith and trust in Christ!**—remember Jesus said **“I will build MY church”**
 - Jesus is **foundational** to the church
 - Jesus **death, burial and resurrection** are **foundational** to the church!
- **John 1:12** But to all who did receive him, **he gave them the right** to be children of God, to those who believe in his name.
 - YOU do not get that **“Right”** unless you **receive Christ!**

The **church started** on the **Day of Pentecost** when Peter preached his first sermon!

Jesus mentioned the church on other time in **Matthew 18.**

- **Matthew 18:15-17:** **“If your brother sins against you, go tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won your brother. 16 But if he won’t listen, take one or two others with you, so that by the testimony of two or three witnesses every fact may be established. 17 If he doesn’t pay attention to them, tell the church. If he doesn’t pay attention even to the church, let him be like a Gentile and a tax collector to you”**

Terry Johnson in his article “Jesus and the Church” notes that Jesus implies several things by His second statement on the church.

- The church that Jesus envisions has **standards** of belief and **conduct, membership** from which one may be **excluded**, a **process of discipline**, a **form of government, meetings** at which a **matter** may be **told**, and **officers** who **facilitate** the whole.
- The church that Jesus envisions has **concrete existence**. It is an **organization**. It is an **institution**. Its **members** are **committed** to each other, to the triune God, and to the church itself as something greater than the sum of its parts.

Jesus would “**CRUSH**” **Satan’s head** by building **His Church**-which would stand in **opposition** to Satan throughout history!

THE KING’S PEOPLE WILL BE ATTACKED BUT NOT DEFEATED

Matthew 16:18 “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, *and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.*”

There is a lot to unpack here!

- “Hades” = The abode of the dead
 - Primarily referred to as **Satan’s domain**
- “Gates” are meant to keep **people out**—they are DEFENSIVE, not OFFENSIVE!
 - How are “Gates” a frightening thing to the church!
- “Overpower” sounds like an **army** on the **offense**-on the attack

How can you have a **defense “Gates”** on the **offensive** “Overpowering”?

Remember, the Bible was written in a **Jewish context** 2,000 years ago!

- **Cultures** have different ways of saying things!
 - *A biscuit in America is not the same as a biscuit in England*
 - *Football in America is not the same as Football in Spain*
 - *A Barbie in America is not the same as a Barbie in Australia!*

In the **Jewish context**, “Gates of Hades” was used to refer to the **Powers of Death**

- Jesus was saying that the **hostility** against Him-which was increasing- would not **prevent** the **Him** from establishing a NEW People: The Church!

Proof is a couple verses later:

- **Matthew 16:21** “From then on Jesus began to point out to his disciples *that it was necessary* for him to go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and scribes, be killed, and be raised the third day.”
 - It was “**Necessary**” for Jesus to die to **establish** the **church**
 - Jesus would use the **Power of Death** against Satan!
 - Jesus would “**CRUSH**” **Satan’s head** by **dying** for the sins of humanity and **resurrecting** from the dead **defeating death!**
 - Jesus would “**CRUSH**” **Satan’s head** by building **His Church**-which would stand in **opposition** to Satan throughout history!

Also, when Jesus, **the King**, established a People: The Church on the **Day of Pentecost**, the “**powers of Death**” could **NOT STOP** the church from marching on!

The first organized **Roman persecution** of Christians was ordered by **Emperor Nero in 64 A.D.**

- **Nero** blamed Christians for **the Great Fire of Rome**, *although it is speculated by some historians that Nero was responsible for setting the fire in the first place.*
- The **Great Persecution** started in **303 A.D.**, when Roman Christians were **systematically stripped of legal rights** and commanded to worship Roman gods.
- The **rise of Islamic rule** in the **seventh century** in the Middle East resulted in the **conquests** of large **communities of Christians**.
 - The **plunder of churches**, the **rape of Christian women**, the **torture of priests and monks**, the **pilfering of villages and towns**, and the occupation of the territories sent shudders of horror throughout the West—eventually prompting the efforts of the Crusaders.
- With the **Reformation** and the **Counter-Reformation** (1500 & 1600's) came a new wave of persecution.
 - The **German Peasants' War** (1524–25),
 - The **Battle of Kappel** (1531),
 - The **Schmalkaldic War** (1546–47),
 - The **Huguenot repression** (1562–98),

- The **Eighty Years' War** (1568–1648),
- The **Thirty Years' War** (1618–48), and
- The **Wars of the Three Kingdoms** (1639–51).
- In the 1790s there was a **mass persecution of Christians in France**.
 - A mass '**dechristianization**' of France took place during the ensuing **Reign of Terror**.
 - Churches were **closed** and **ravaged**.
 - Christian **signs of worship, symbols** and **monuments** were **destroyed**.
 - Religious **education** was **forbidden**.

You may be surprised to note that the last century, the **20th century**, was the **bloodiest century** of persecution of Christians!

- According to ministries such as *Open Doors* and *Voice of the Martyrs*, *more Christians have been killed for their faith in the last century than in all other ages combined.*
- The lethal assault against the church by the minions of **Vladimir Lenin, Joseph Stalin, Adolf Hitler, Mao Zedong, Idi Amin, Mengistu Haile Mariam, Robert Mugabe, Fidel Castro, Kim Il-sung**, and Pol Pot unleashed untold horrors.
 - In prison cells, **gulags, concentration camps, detention centers, torture chambers, reeducation centers**, and **labor camps**, *millions*

were (and still are) sacrificed on the bloodied secular altars of the proletarian utopia.

In spite of the **attacks** on Christianity in the **21st century**, it has grown from an **estimated 600 million** Christians worldwide in **1910** to **2.8 billion Christians today!**

Earlier, in **Matthew 13:31-33** Jesus told the **parables of the mustard seed and yeast**

- **These parables illustrated** the King's coming **people: The Church**
 - Despite **inauspicious beginnings**, the church would have surprisingly large results and a widespread impact.

In spite of **centuries of persecution**, the **church continues** to move forward today!

- It is estimated that there are **2.8 billion** people who claim to be Christians today!

THE KING'S PEOPLE WILL BE RESCUED

The church began on the **Day of Pentecost**—AFTER Jesus had ascended to Heaven!

- The first four books of the NT are called the **Gospels**

- The **Gospels** tell us about Jesus' **ministry, death, and resurrection**.
- Jesus did not say much about the CHURCH except here in Matthew 16 and later in **Matthew 18**—because the **church was yet future**.
 - He **alluded** to the church in places like **John 17**, but did not go into depth about the church—*except this it was HIS church made of up people “Called out” by Him and that it would prevail!*
- **After Jesus ascended**, His **apostles** went and **proclaimed** the **Good News** of Salvation through **Christ**.
 - Some of the **Apostles** wrote letters—which make up the rest of the New Testament.
- It was the Apostle's **Peter, John, Paul** who talked **extensively** about the **church** and expounded on what Jesus said.
 - They called **believers** **“Saints”** or **Holy Ones** = **Set Apart** (i.e., **Called out ones**)
 - They taught what the **“Called Out Ones”** or **“Saints”** are:
 - **“In Christ”**
 - **Holy**
 - **Blameless**

- Faultless
- Reconciled to God
- Redeemed from Sin's power
- Sealed by the Holy Spirit
- Indwelt by the Holy Spirit
- Members of God's household
- Citizens of Heaven
- More than Conquerors

What will the Church, the King's People, be RESCUED From?

From human history it is clear that church is **NOT guaranteed** to be **rescued** from **suffering** inflicted by **humanity** and **nature**!

- History is full of believers being martyred and suffering for their faith!

WHAT are we rescued from?

Because we are **"in Christ"**, Paul taught that believers would not face **God's wrath**!

- **1 Thessalonians 5:9-10** "for God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath."

- God's "**wrath**" is His **judgement** upon sin!
 - Christ paid the price for our sin, so we who are "**in Christ**" will not have to pay that price
 - We who are "**in Christ**" will not face **God's wrath**.

The "**Coming Wrath**" of God can be applied **two ways**:

- Everyone who **rejects** God's **offer of salvation** will **ultimately** face the **Wrath of God**
 - If you reject God's offer of salvation, you will be required to pay for your sins in a place called **Hell!**
 - **Hell** was created by a **loving God** for **people who don't want to love God or want God**, so He created a place where they could **pay for their sins** and **live apart from God's love, mercy, peace, and grace**.
 - As a result, **Hell** is a place of **weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth!**
 - Hell is a place of **seething anger** and **angst** against God
- Everyone who **RECEIVES** God's **offer of salvation** will **ultimately** enjoy the unrestricted love, mercy, peace and grace of God!

- We will get to enjoy God forever and live in peace because we DO NOT have to pay for our sins and we DO NOT have to face God's wrath!
 - **1 Thessalonians 5:9** "for God did not appoint us to wrath"

The "Coming Wrath" of God can be applied to the time when God pours out His judgment on the earth.

- **1 Thessalonians 5:10** and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath."

They wrote letters encouraging the "Called out Ones" to **persevere** in the midst of **suffering** and **persecution**!

- When they talked about the **suffering** and **persecution** many believers were enduring, they continued to **remind believers** that the **KING** was **Coming Back** for His **Church**!

The KING'S Second Coming is exciting, but it will be **preceded** by a **horrible time** on the earth—at time when God's **WRATH** will be poured out on the Earth!

At this point, all that was **available** was the **Old Testament** Scriptures.

- In the Old Testament book of **Zephaniah 1:2-3**, we read: “I will completely sweep away everything from the face of the earth—this is the Lord’s declaration. 3 I will sweep away people and animals; I will sweep away the birds of the sky and the fish of the sea, and the ruins along with the wicked. I will cut off mankind from the face of the earth. This is the Lord’s declaration.”

Clearly this had **not happened in Paul’s day** and it **hasn’t yet happened**.

- The **Day of Wrath** is still **future!**

Zephaniah continues to describe the future wrath

- **Zephaniah 1:15** “That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of destruction and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and total darkness,
- **Zephaniah 1:18** “Their silver and their gold will be unable to rescue them on the day of the Lord’s wrath. The whole earth will be consumed by the fire of his jealousy, for he will make a complete, yes, a horrifying end of all the inhabitants of the earth.”

Clearly this “**Coming Wrath**” is NOT human caused—it is brought about by GOD!

- Clearly **people and animals** will die

- Clearly **unbelievers** will die
- Notice God’s wrath is on **“The whole world”**

Outside of the Old Testament, they also had the words of **Jesus** as relayed by the **Apostles**.

- Jesus said this about the **coming wrath of God** in **Luke 21:23** **“Woe to pregnant women and nursing mothers in those days, for there will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people.”**

The **believers Paul** was writing too in **Thessalonica** and **other locations** were facing **HUMAN WRATH!**

- As horrible as it is to suffer human wrath—it is **nothing** compared to facing **the wrath of God!**
 - Facing the **“Wrath of God”** in Hell for eternity – which ALL who won’t believe will face
 - Facing the **“Wrath of God”** which He will pour out on the earth in the future

The **GOOD NEWS** is that the **CHURCH**—the **“Called Out Ones”** who are **alive** when God begins to **“pour out His wrath”** on the world, will **NOT endure** God’s Wrath!

Paul gave a **NEW revelation** to the church at Thessalonica!

- The **Old Testament** (and **Jesus**) talked about God's **coming wrath**, but **NO ONE** had shared this **new information!**

In the **same letter** where Paul stated **earlier: *Jesus, ... rescues us from the coming wrath.***" (1 Thess 1:10), he wrote: **1 Thessalonians 4:15-17** "**For we say this to you by a word from the Lord** (e.g., this is not something Paul the Apostle was devising—this was from God): **We who are still alive at the Lord's coming will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the archangel's voice, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are still alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.**"

Christ-followers who are **alive** at the coming of Jesus will be "**Caught Up bodily**" *at the same time* the deceased Christ-followers are being reunited with their bodies and they too are being "**Caught up**"

- WHERE are we being "**Caught Up**"? "**In the air**"

WHAT is this describing?

- This describes JESUS saving the believers who are **alive** from the “**wrath to come!**”
 - This described Jesus taking the **church out of the world** before **God pours** out His **wrath** upon **humanity**.

THE KING’S PEOPLE WILL BE RESCUED

Paul concludes this section with the words: **1**
Thessalonians 4:18 “**Therefore encourage one another with these words.**”

Let me sum it up: The King’s People will **not** face God’s wrath-**now** or **in eternity!**

Again, this does NOT mean that the Church doesn’t face persecution and suffering at the hands of people!

- History is FULL of the persecution and suffering of the church!
- WE may face persecution and suffering!
 - Some of us may be killed for our faith!
 - Some of us may go to prison for preaching, teaching and standing for the truth!

WE may face **persecution** and **suffering** at the **hands** of **humanity**, BUT we WILL NOT face the “**Wrath of God!**”

- We **WILL NOT** have to **PAY** for our **sins** because **Jesus** paid it all!
- WE WILL NOT face an **eternity** in **Hell!**
- We WILL NOT face the **wrath of God**

YOU

PQ: Are you a part of the King's People?

- Are you going to be rescued?
- ARE YOU going to have to PAY for your sins?
- [Salvation.....](#)