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The Coming of Christ, and the Triumph of the Church



By Steven J. Hogan

~ A Saturday Morning Post #46 ~

Never forget what Jesus Christ declared, *"I will build My church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it"* (Matthew 16:18). The truth is that Christ is now building His church, and this glorious work will be fully completed when He returns at the end of this age. But there are times when you look out at the spiritual landscape of the world, and it seems like a mess. You may even think to yourself, *"Why isn't the church growing more?"* Let me answer this question: 1st, it's because Christians still have a sinful flesh. 2nd, the devil with all his demons, is doing all he can to harm the church, to spread lies, error and deceit. 3rd, God is sovereign, and everything is going according to His perfect and eternal plans. *"The plans of the Lord stand firm forever."* Psalm 33:11

But I need to explain two phrases, used in theological circles, to help you understand what Christ is doing with regards to the church. It is the

concept of the visible church and the invisible church. The visible church refers to all people attending church services, those who profess to be Christians, those on church membership rolls, those you can visibly see. Some of these people are true Christians, but others are not. The invisible church refers to all people who are true Christians, the elect of God, those who are truly saved and born again, and God knows those who are His. But what believers see on earth is a mixed body, comprised of the saved and unsaved, or as Jesus said, those who are wheat and tares. But we shouldn't be surprised, for this is what Christ told us would happen. *"So shall it be at the end of the age."* Matthew 13:36-43

When Christ said, *"I will build My church,"* He was referring to the invisible church. There's no doubt those the Father chose to be saved will be saved, adopted as His sons, redeemed by Christ's blood, forgiven of their sins, and sealed by the Spirit for the day of redemption. We can confidently say, *"the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord… a dwelling of God in the Spirit."* Ephesians 2:21

Do you not know and do you not believe that Jesus Christ is the head of the church, that He is in charge, that He is leading the way, and that He is directing Christians on earth to do His work? Do you not see that Christ will be victorious all the way to the end of this age, that He will finish what He started, and then return to rapture the church and take her to Himself, and then take her home to heaven? Amen!!! Ephesians 1:9-12, 4:11-16

Yes, it is true that Christians aren't perfect and don't always do what they ought to do, and sometimes are living for self instead of living for God. It's true that this hateful and evil devil is continually tempting us, attacking us and fighting against us – indeed, we are in a fierce spiritual battle. It's also true that some pastors preach a simplistic gospel, and are not teaching all of God's word, but instead are trying to be worldly and entertaining, with hopes that people will then join their church. 2

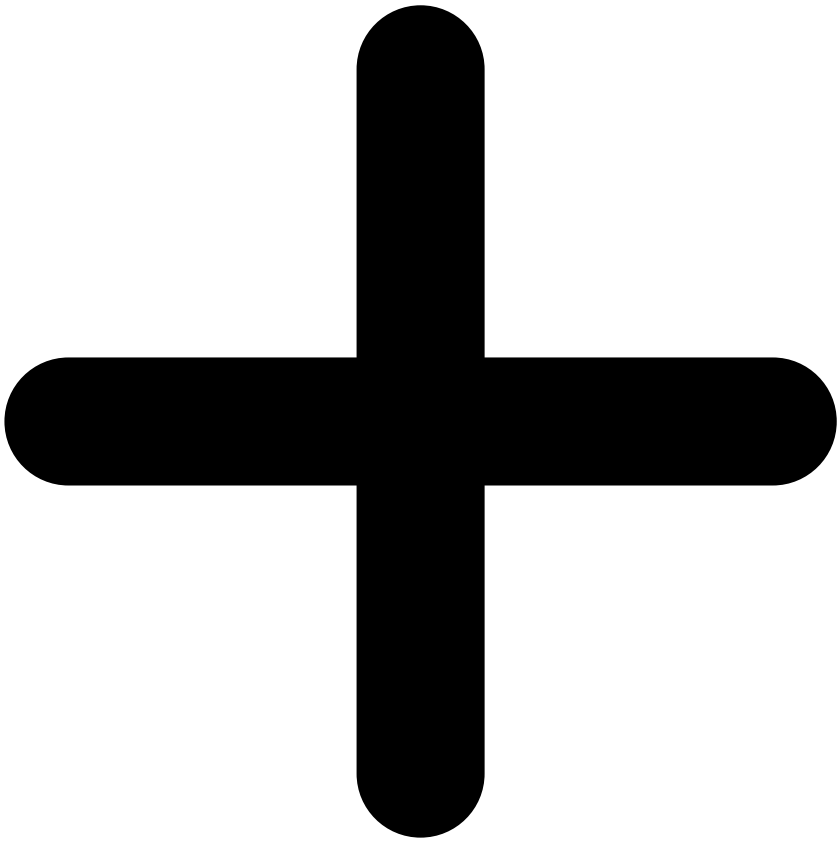
Timothy 4:1-5

But remember, God is sovereignly and powerfully working all things together for good, and will faithfully fulfill His promises, *"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth,"* and *"everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved,"* and *"that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things."* Acts 1:8, Acts 2:21, Acts 3:20-21

God has ordained it so that Christians will pray, *"Your kingdom come,"* and *"will seek first His kingdom",* so that *"this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world… and then the end will come",* so that Christians will *"make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them… teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you,"* so that Jesus will be with us *"even to the end of the age."* Matthew 6:10, 6:33, 24:14, 28:19-20

I am very encouraged that God is in control and that everything, to the last detail, to the last word preached, to the last martyr, to the last person saved, to Christ's coming in the clouds, to His return in glory and His rapture of the church, is going exactly according to His eternally wise and wonderful plans, and will most assuredly soon be fulfilled. *"He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, who has called you into fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful."* 1 Corinthians 1:8-9

P.S. During this Christmas season when we can be so easily be distracted by all kinds of things, let's remember to be Thinking of Jesus Christ.



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