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April 13, 2021

The Ekklesia

When Jesus showed up on the fallen world scene, He left no doubt as to His ownership of it:

- He demonstrated authority over the laws of nature, walking on water (Matthew 14:25).
- He controlled the forces of nature, altering weather patterns (Mark 4:39).
- He trumped the laws of physics, multiplying food, turning water into wine, translating His physical body from one place to another, and destroying trees simply by speaking to them (Matthew 15:36;

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- He demonstrated authority over the animal world, using a fish to collect the money needed for a tax (Matthew 17:27).
- He had dominion over disease, healing multitudes (Acts 10:38).
- He even displayed power over death, bringing dead people back to life (John 11:43-44).

In a plan so daring, bold, and staggering in its ramifications that no one could guess what it was, including satan's kingdom and even the angels, God had become an *adam* (a Hebrew word meaning "man") and thereby qualified Himself to redeem humankind and win back their lost authority. Ownership of the earth wasn't the issue nor was Christ's personal authority – He had never lost His. The issue was authority for the human race – whether or not they would regain their governmental rights to earth.

When the God-man, Jesus, paid our penalty and restored us to God, in the process He also won back Adam's lost authority. It is now safe in the hands of a human who will never lose it again. God's original plan was restored: *There is now a race of humans on the earth filled with God's life and nature, capable of relating to Him as Father and managing this incredible home He made for them.*

If they had only realized it!

When we are born again, we are no longer simply humans —*adamites*—we are a new race of supernatural beings called Christians ("little Christs"). In his first letter to Corinth, Paul chastised the believers for acting like "mere men" (3:3). We are not "merely

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God, filled with His Spirit and anointed to represent Him. God has His family back and can now continue His plan, which included them managing and governing the earth.

On a wall near the main entrance to The Alamo in San Antonio, Texas, is a portrait with the following inscription:

James Butler Bonham – no picture of him exists. This portrait is of his nephew, Major James Bonham, deceased, who greatly resembled his uncle. It is placed here by the family that people may know the appearance of the man who died for freedom.¹

No literal picture of Jesus exists, either. But like Bonham, He can be seen in the lives of His family, the church. The big question now centers around whether or not we will take on our role of revealing and partnering with Him on the earth. Will we partner with God according to His original plan, or do we believe we were born again just to one day get into heaven?

The church is mentioned for the first time in Matthew 16:18-19:

I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

When Jesus used the word “church” (Greek: *Ekklesia*), the disciples weren’t hindered by our contemporary ideas as to what it meant. Their paradigm of an *Ekklesia* differed greatly from what it has become. To

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1. A worship service
2. A building used by Christians
3. A local congregation of Christians
4. For those who tend toward its literal meaning, it would be a “called out” group of people.

The last concept is the most accurate, according to a strict translation, “called out,” but it still falls far short of communicating what an *Ekklesia* was when Christ made His stunning announcement.

To the Greeks in Christ’s day an *Ekklesia* was an assembly of people “called out” of the populace to govern the affairs of a city or nation – in essence, it was a city council, parliament or congress. To the Romans, it was a group of people sent into a conquered region to rule it, but also to alter the culture until it became like Rome, realizing this was the ideal way to control their empire. They changed government, social structure, language, schools, etc., until the people talked, thought, acted like, and considered themselves Romans.

When Jesus said He would build His church, He was without question speaking of a body of people that would “legislate” spiritually for Him, extending His kingdom rule over the earth. His statement that “the gates of Hades will not overpower it” makes much more sense when we understand this. These “gates” are not physical gates, but rather the governmental plans or decisions of hell. Biblical gates were often where judges sat to rule or governing councils met to make decisions,

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Samuel 19:8; Proverbs 22:22-23). In Ruth 4:10-11, the Hebrew word for gate is actually translated as a “court.”

In this first decree announcing the church, Jesus was saying He would raise up a kingdom government on earth, which hell’s government wouldn’t prevail over. He followed this declaration by saying He would give His *Ekklesia* “keys” (Matthew 16:19), which symbolize authority. Keys lock and unlock, in order to close or open. Christ was declaring His church would have keys (authority) to lock the gates (government) of hell and open the gates (government) of heaven.

This is accomplished primarily through declarations and decrees made FOR God, not petitions made TO God. When needing from Him, we request and petition. When dealing with the powers of darkness and their plans, we command and decree. Jesus told us to command His Kingdom (rule) to come and will to be done (Matthew 6:10). The verbs “come” and “be” are in the imperative Greek tense, meaning a command. Christ was saying, “Command My kingdom rule and will to come forth!”

If I were satan and wanted to stop evangelism, the spread of biblical morality, or the rule of God into the earth, I can’t think of a better way than deceiving Christians regarding *Ekklesia*. My first priority would be to keep them from understanding what it means to be the church. *The end result would be to leave God without a government on earth.*

Then, even though I had lost my authority there, I could still rule.

Obviously, we are not to expand the Christian faith or God’s rule on

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“invade” our culture, workplace, city, nation, etc., with the spiritual might of God’s kingdom, spreading His life, love, and rule *everywhere*. Jesus told us to “make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19) and to preach (declare) the good news of Him “to all creation” (Mark 16:15). The Acts church turned their world “upside-down” (17:6 AMP). They upset status quo everywhere they went – and we should also.

Pray with me:

Father, Christ has recaptured Adam’s lost dominion. Now, we are to be enforcers of His will through the spiritual weapons You have given us, and through the authority of His name. We have the keys of His kingdom, we have authority to bind and loose, to forbid and allow.

We have allowed this truth to be stolen from us, but you are restoring it to the body of Christ. We ask You to increase this revelation until Christ the King has a strong Ekklesia on the earth, an expression of His kingdom authority that the gates or government of hell cannot prevail against. A church that knows how to bind and loose, open and close doors, and manifest Your glory even to the powers of darkness in the invisible realm – “heavenly places” (Ephesians 3:10).

With this authority, we bind the powers of darkness ruling in the government of our nation. We break the hold of the antichrist spirit seeking to transform our nation through ungodly laws, beliefs, and activities. We bind this also in our schools and homes. We decree that Jesus is Owner and Lord over all the earth, including America. And in His name, we release the spirit of revival, of holiness, of worship, and

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coming, and coming quickly.

AND NOTHING WILL STOP IT!!!

Our decree:

We decree that a glorious church – capable of representing Christ in all of His authority – is coming forth. And we decree that the plans of hell will not overcome this body of believers.

Portions of today's teaching were taken from my book Authority in Prayer.

1 Craig Brian Larson, ed., *Illustrations for Preaching and Teaching*:
From Leadership Journal, 261.

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