

# The Ekklesia: A Kingdom Under a King

Isaiah 9:6 | Matthew 16:18 | Matthew 28:18–20 | Philippians 3:20

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Source Scripture -

Matthew 16:18

***<sup>18</sup> And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.***

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Jesus didn't say, 'I will build a building.' He said, 'I will build My ekklesia.'"

That creates a clean pivot into your definition section.

Most people believe they know what church means.

When we hear it, we picture a building, a service, a denomination, or a weekly routine.

But when Jesus spoke the words:

**"I will build My ekklesia,"**

He was not introducing a new religious concept, He was using a word already filled with meaning—a word that carried **identity, allegiance, and authority**.

Today, I want us to step back—not to redefine church creatively—but to **recover what Jesus actually meant**.

If we miss identity, we will miss assignment—every time.

Now, to recover what Jesus meant, we're going to do three things: recover the word, recover the King, and recover our identity as citizens.

## I. What Ekklesia Meant Before It Meant “Church”

- In the Greek-speaking world of the first century, *ekklesia* did not mean a worship service. It meant:
  - A **summoned assembly**
  - Made up of **citizens**
  - Called together under authority
  - To represent the interests of a governing power
  - Not everyone could be part of an *ekklesia*. Only citizens qualified.
- This immediately tells us something important:
  - *The Ekklesia* was not about attendance. It was about **belonging**.
  - You didn't attend an *ekklesia*. You **were** an *ekklesia*.

Say - “Identity always comes before assignment.”

## II. The Hebrew and Aramaic World Behind the Word

- Now, Jesus did not speak Greek as His first language. He lived and taught in a Hebrew and Aramaic world. In that world, there were clear words for:
  - **Assembly** (*edta, Kenishta*)
  - **Community as a people**
  - **Governing bodies** (*Sanhedrin, Beit Din*)
- The key insight here is this:
  - In the Semitic world, authority was not embedded in a single word.
  - It was expressed through **context and function**.
- So, when the Greek writers understood Jesus' multi-word phrase or concept, they chose the term *ekklesia*.
- This wasn't abandoning Jewish thought—Instead, it was **expressing it in a language the world could understand**.

- The idea of *God's assembled people* framed it in a term that carried **public, civic, and representative weight**.
- Once we understand what an ekklesia is, the next question is: who is the governing authority we represent?

### III. Isaiah 9:6 — The Government Is Already Accounted For

- Isaiah tells us something critical about the Messiah:

Isaiah 9:6

***<sup>6</sup>For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given;  
And the government will be upon His shoulder. And  
His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty  
God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.***

- Catch that phrase: the government will be upon His shoulder. That statement settles the issue of authority.
- The government is not:
  - On the shoulders of the apostles
  - On the shoulders of pastors
  - On the shoulders of the people
- It rests **entirely on Christ**.
- This means:
  - Jesus does not ask permission to rule
  - The church does not create His authority
  - His reign is not up for negotiation
- The church exists **because** the King already reigns.
- And once the King's authority is settled, our identity becomes unavoidable—because citizens don't vote a king in; they submit to one.

**Say - “Identity always comes before assignment.”**

#### **IV. Identity Before Mission**

- This brings us to the heart of the matter. If the government is on His shoulders, then what are we?

- Scripture answers plainly:

Philippians 3:20

***<sup>20</sup> For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,***

**“Our citizenship is in heaven.”** (Philippians 3:20)

- The ekklesia is:
  - A gathered people for governance
  - With a defined citizenship
  - Living under a sovereign King

This corrects a common misunderstanding.

We are not:

- A religious audience
- A volunteer organization
- A spiritual support group

We are **citizens of a Kingdom.**

Citizenship implies:

- Allegiance: When culture pressures you, the King’s word is final.
- Responsibility: Citizens don’t just consume—citizens serve.
- Representation: People should be able to ‘see the King’ in how we speak, forgive, and live.
- Identity always comes before assignment.

## V. The Ekklesia as an Embassy

Because our citizenship is heavenly, our presence on earth is foreign and **missional** at best.

The best depiction of this is an **embassy**.

An embassy:

- Exists in foreign territory
- Represents another nation
- Operates under the authority of its homeland
- Does not rewrite its nation's laws to fit local or host nation culture

In the same way:

The church is not called to rule the world.

The church is called to **represent** the homeland (**heaven**) **in it**.

We're not talking about taking over by force—we're talking about representing heaven through faithfulness and deed.

- Now, somebody might bring up this verse right here. Jesus said in

Matthew 11:12,

***'From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.'***

- The words translated 'violence' and 'violent' can carry the sense of forceful pressure and forceful grasping, not necessarily 'hurting people' the way we use the word violent today.
- And if we read that with modern ears, we can think Jesus is endorsing hurting people or taking over by intimidation, but that's not what the text requires.
- In Greek, the language is built around the idea of force, pressure, and seizing—and it can be understood in more than one faithful way.
- One way is that the Kingdom has been met with real hostility—John is imprisoned, opposition rises, and the Kingdom is being resisted.
  - In that sense, the Kingdom is 'suffering violence'—it is being attacked.

- Another way many believers have understood it is that people are pressing in—they are laying hold of the Kingdom with urgency.
  - Not harming others, but refusing to stay passive—seizing what God is offering.
- Either way, hear me: Jesus is not giving the church permission to become violent. The King we represent is the Prince of Peace.
- So we don't advance the Kingdom by force—we advance it by faithful representation. We don't conquer by harming people; we overcome by obeying the King."

We do not advance the Kingdom by force.  
We advance it by **faithful representation**.

## VI. Authority Flows From Alignment

Matthew 28:18-20

***<sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> Go [a]therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.***

Jesus said:

**"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me—therefore..."**

Authority does not begin with us.

It flows **from Him**.

- This means:
  - We do not speak to gain authority
  - We speak **because** we are aligned with it
- The moment the church forgets who it represents, it begins to imitate the world's methods of power.
- But when the church remembers its identity, it speaks with calm confidence—Not because it is loud, but because the throne is occupied.

Ask yourself:

- Am I aligned with His Word or my preferences?
- Am I representing the King or defending my image?
- Am I speaking from Scripture or from frustration?

## **VII. A Needed Correction**

- Let me Shepherd, for a moment, because all of us have been shaped by a consumer world, and we have to be re-shaped by a giving Kingdom.
  
- Many believers have been trained to ask:
  - *What does the church offer me?*
  - *How does this fit my life?*

But the ekklesia asks a different question:

***What does my King require of His citizens?***

This is not about control. It is about **clarity**.

Freedom in the Kingdom comes from knowing **who you belong to**.

**Say - "Identity always comes before assignment."**

## **VIII. Final Declaration**

Let me say this plainly as we close:

The ekklesia is not a building, It is not a brand, It is not a weekly event.

It is the assembly of citizens of a sovereign nation. A Kingdom gathered under a King  
Whose own government rests on His shoulders.

We are not here to rule the world. We are here to represent heaven.

## **Call to Response: A Question of Allegiance**

So the question before us is not:

- *Do you attend church?*

The question is:

- *Where is your citizenship?*
  - Have our values been formed more by culture than by the Kingdom?
  - Have we mistaken participation for identity?

Today, we don't need a louder church.

We need a **clearer one**.

Let us realign our hearts, our allegiance, and our lives under the King whose government will never end.

If you're ready to surrender to the King today—whether for the first time, or you need to come back—this altar call is for you.

Because you can't live as a citizen of the Kingdom until you've surrendered to the King.

**Amen.**