



I. WHO MADE THE CHURCH SO IMPORTANT?

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Matthew 16:18 (ESV)

1. Jesus makes two very important statements here:

- “I am going to build MY church”
- “MY church will be filled with MY power”

Nothing can altogether overthrow and destroy [the church]. Its members may be persecuted, oppressed, imprisoned, beaten, beheaded, burned; but the true church is never altogether extinguished; it rises again from its afflictions; it lives on through fire and water. When crushed in one land it springs up in another. The Pharaohs, the Herods, the Neros, have labored in vain to put down this church; they slay their thousands, and then pass away and go to their own place. The true Church outlives them all, and sees them buried each in his turn. [The church] is an anvil that has broken many a hammer in this world, and will break many a hammer still; [the church] is a bush which is often burning, and yet is not consumed.

J.C. Ryle

2. The church is Christ's:

- **Possession**

Be careful for yourselves and for all the people the Holy Spirit has given to you to care for. You must be like shepherds to the church of God, which he bought with the death of his own son.

Acts 20:28 (NCV)

- **Presence**

God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.

Ephesians 1:22-23 (NLT)

- **People**

That is why you are no longer foreigners and outsiders but citizens together with God's people and members of God's family. You are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Christ Jesus himself is the cornerstone.

Ephesians 2:19-20 (GWT)

- **Plan**

God's purpose in all this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was his eternal plan, which he carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ephesians 3:10-11 (NLT)

II. WHY IS THE CHURCH ETERNALLY INVINCIBLE?—REVELATION 11:1-14

1. God's protection (v.1-2)

Don't you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in you?

1 Corinthians 3:16 (NLT)

2. God's Word (v.3-6)

3. God's power (v.7-12)

4. God's vindication (v.13-14)

III. HOW SHOULD I RESPOND TO PERSECUTION?

1. Expect opposition from the enemy

2. Accept that there will be times when we will look defeated

3. Know that ultimately and eternally we will be victorious.