

Was The Church The Expected Outcome Of Jesus' Teaching?

Matthew 3:1-2 [NIV] *“In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying, **“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.”**”*

John the Baptist preached the Kingdom of God as a prelude to Jesus Christ's ministry.

Mark 1:14-15 [NIV] *“After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. **“The time has come,”** he said. **“The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”**”*

Jesus proclaimed the Good News about the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 10:7 [NIV] *“As you go, preach this message: **‘The kingdom of heaven is near.’**”*

The disciples were instructed to preach about the Kingdom of God.

One thing is certain, Jesus had **no** time for purely individual religion.

Real repentance and faith in Jesus Christ brought you into a growing family called the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 16:13-18 [NIV] *“When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, **“Who do people say the Son of Man is?”** They replied, **“Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”** **“But what about you?”** he asked. **“Who do you say I am?”** Simon Peter answered, **“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”** Jesus replied, **“Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”**”*

Jesus told His disciples that He was going to build a community of believers, His Church, that acknowledge Him as the Christ, the Son of God.

This Church would promote the revealed knowledge as to who He was, the Son of God, and Saviour of all humanity from the penalty of their sins.

Jesus did **not** Himself choose the title Messiah [Christ].

When Peter used the title, Jesus took it a stage further and included the community over which the Messiah would preside. He called it *“my church”*, and He would guard it against dying out, or fading away.

This community would be entered by a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

It was a community that would continue His work after His death and resurrection.

Matthew 18:15-19 [NIV] *“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that **‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’** **If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church;** and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. **“I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. “Again, I***

tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.”

Jesus is teaching His disciples how to settle disputes in the future.

This shows clearly that Jesus did foresee the Church which would emerge after His death.

Jesus saw the Church as the Christian community to which they would all belong, and anticipated that it would have a disciplinary role in the life of its members.

There is no doubt that Jesus anticipated the Church, and that the Church would be part of the mission that He had been given by His Father.

Matthew 28:16-20 [NIV] *“Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and **make disciples** of all nations, **baptising them** in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and **teaching them** to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

Jesus is here giving His Church instructions of what they were to do as a living community.

1 Make Disciples in all nations, not just the Jews in Palestine. They were to follow the example they had personally experienced as they became disciples of Jesus Christ.

2 Baptism is but the outward sign of what had happened in each convert, an attitude of repentance and commitment to their leader Jesus Christ. Totally depending on Jesus’ sacrificial blood for cleansing of their sins.

3 Teaching these new disciples all that Jesus had taught and commanded them, pertaining to the new life that baptism had brought them into.

Romans 6:1-4 [NIV] *“What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning, so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, **just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.**”*

All of this new life and the fulfilling of the commission that Jesus had given them would be done by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit working in them.

John 14:15-18 [NIV] *“If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and **he will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever, the Spirit of truth.** The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; **I will come to you.**”*

Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in each disciple of Jesus Christ, the work that Jesus did on earth will be continued by His disciples.

Matthew 6:31-34 [NIV] *“So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But **seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.** Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”*

Seeking to be part of the Kingdom of God, the created family of God must be first and foremost in our mind, actions and commitment.

Luke 14:26-27 [NIV] *“If anyone comes to me and does not hate [love less by comparison] his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.”*

Jesus Christ demands first place in the lives of all His disciples.

In many ways the Church is intended to be a foretaste of what the Kingdom of God is like.

Sadly the Church throughout its history has mainly failed in this commission; but Jesus, as promised, has not given up on it.

Jesus in a prayer to the Father and the end of His early ministry, outlined His hope for the Church.

This is a blueprint we should be seeking to emulate.

John 17:6-8 [NIV] *“I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. **For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me.**”*

The Church would consist of people who knew that Jesus was the Son of God and that He had come from the Father.

The Church would consist of people who would accept the words of Jesus as the words of God the Father, and obey them.

John 17:9-11 [NIV] *“I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And **glory has come to me through them.** I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one.”*

The Church would consist of people who would bring glory to Jesus Christ.

John 12:23-26 [NIV] *“Jesus replied, **“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me.”**”*

We glorify Jesus Christ by allowing our self-centred desires to die.

Jesus Christ had to die and be resurrected to prove He, and we also by following His example, could receive eternal life through the work of the Holy Spirit in us.

John 15:1-8 [NIV] *“**I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”**”*

We are to follow Jesus' example so closely it is as if we are personally joined to Him. In the example of God's physical creation the fruit is produced on the branches of the vine, but only as it receives the sustenance it needs from the vine. We only produce fruit in our lives as we apply the words of Jesus Christ to our lives and act them out, empowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit. This is how the Church brings glory to Jesus Christ and God the Father.

John 14:15-20 [NIV] *"If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever, **the Spirit of truth**. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me any more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. **On that day you will realise that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.**"*

The Church will become one through all its members looking to Jesus Christ and Him alone as their Saviour, High Priest and Lord.

This is the way that unity will be protected in the Church Jesus Christ builds.

The Church would consist of people who live ordinary lives in the world, but who are sustained by the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit living in them.

Acts 2:1-4 [NIV] *"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. **All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.**"*

The Holy Spirit coming into the lives of the disciples dramatically changed their lives. The same thing has happened to others throughout the history of the Church and is still happening today.

Acts 2:17-18 [NIV] *"**In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.**"*

The "last days" began at the resurrection of Jesus Christ and will continue until His second coming, this time to rule over and judge all human beings.

John 17:13-15 [NIV] *"I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, **so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them**. I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one."*

The Church will continue to consist of people who will share the same inner joy and peace of mind that Jesus expressed as a human being.

John 14:27 [NIV] *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. **Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.**"*

This is an inner joy and peace that is **not** dependent on circumstances, but is based on the understanding of the great love that God has for each one of us.

John 3:16-17 [NIV] *"**For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.**"*

If God loves each of us enough to do this then we really do have something to be joyful about.

If we are so precious to our Creator God, we can also have great peace of mind, because of His protection of what is precious in His eyes.

The Church will consist of a group of people who will accept that they will face persecution because of their belief in Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 3:12 [NIV] *“In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,”*

Paul was an example of this persecution.

John 3:19-21 [NIV] *“This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. **Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.** But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.”*

Because true Christ-like Church members reflect the very life of Jesus Christ, they become bright lights that expose the evil in the lives of others.

This will make non-Christians feel guilty and this guilt will cause them to lash out in anger against this exposing light source.

Matthew 5:14-16 [NIV] *“**You are the light of the world.** A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, **let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.**”*

In spite of bringing persecution on us Christians must still reflect Jesus Christ, because in the end this will cause many to praise God.

The Church will be a group of people who know that in the end the love of Jesus Christ will overcome all the evil in the world.

Hebrews 2:14 [NIV] *“Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death, that is, the devil,”*

Satan has at this time the power to cause people to die violently.

John 16:33 [NIV] *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! **I have overcome the world.**”*

Jesus overcame Satan’s power over us, the power of death.

The Church will continue to use Christ’s overcoming this evil power that Satan has and defeat Him and the evil he is doing.

Revelation 12:9-11 [NIV] *“The great dragon was hurled down, that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. **They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.**”*

A total faith in the promised resurrection gives true Christians courage even when faced with death, as a result of being a light to this evil world.

Ephesians 3:16-21 [NIV] *“I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled to the measure of all the fulness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.”*

The power that comes from the active presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

John 17:16 [NIV] *“They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.”*

The Church consists of people who are **not** influenced by the society and culture in which they live. They are in a sense aliens and exiles here, even as Jesus Christ was.

Hebrews 11:8-10 [NIV] *“By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.”*

Church members are looking forward to a future world that will be created by the returning Jesus Christ.

Revelation 21:1-8 [NIV] *“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practise magic arts, the idolaters and all liars, their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death.”*

The new world for those who do overcome Satan’s influence in the present society.

Revelation 22:1-6 [NIV] *“Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever. The angel said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place.”*

This vision that Jesus gave to the apostle John sustains His Church in whatever this society will bring on it.

John 17:17 [NIV] *“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.”*

The Church consists of people who will deliberately set themselves apart from everything they know to be wrong in order to be a light to those who do not yet know Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

The Church consists of people who do **not** just sit comfortably in church pews each week, but who are active every day in reaching all who are in need of Jesus to bring them spiritual healing and eternal hope.

James 2:14-19 [NIV] *“What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, “Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that, and shudder.”*

We cannot claim to be Christians because we have faith in what Jesus has done for us to cleanse our sins, unless this faith leads to actions in our lives.

Ephesians 2:8-10 [NIV] *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no-one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”*

True Christians know they are **not** saved by good works but saved **for** good works.

John 7:38-39 [NIV] *“Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.”*

The Holy Spirit in us will **not** remain stagnant, He must flow out of us in the form of loving works.

Jesus has given this extensive check list for each of us individually and as a local church to evaluate our Christianity.

James 1:22-27 [NIV] *“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, **not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it**, he will be blessed in what he does. If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. **Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.”***

Heed the warning that James gives us as to examining the level that true Christianity is reflected in the way we live.