

# The Underground Church in America

by E.A. Johnston

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*The American church is on the brink of destruction, and a growing underground church movement is emerging as a response to the institutional church's great apostasy and the predicted persecution of Christians.*

**Duration:** 14:13

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, 1 Peter 4:12-17

**Topics:** "Underground Church"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the current state of the church in America and predicts that it is on the brink of destruction. He believes that the church will soon go underground due to several reasons. Firstly, he mentions the great apostasy of the institutional church, where many have turned away from true Christianity. Secondly, he predicts a legal battle between the gay rights movement and the American church. Thirdly, he highlights the formation of house churches as a response to the decline of the institutional church. Lastly, he warns of the advancing persecution of Christians in America. The speaker emphasizes the need for a heaven-sent revival to turn the tide and calls for repentance and turning back to God.

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## Transcript

I was having breakfast the other morning with a man whom I disciple, and as we talked, I picked up a paper napkin and held it up to him and made the following comment. Do you see this napkin? I asked. This is the American church.

Now watch what is getting ready to happen to it. And then I tore up the napkin into a bunch of little pieces, and then I gave him several reasons why I believe the institutional church in America is on the brink of destruction. I will list those reasons for us today, friends, and I will begin my message with the following shocking statement.

The church in America is going underground, and it's already starting. I see a trend developing in this country, and it will only increase over the coming years, and that trend is a formation of the underground church in America. I will outline today several reasons for this new movement, which is already occurring in our country, and it's spreading like a prairie fire because it is lit.

My message today is entitled, The Underground Church in America, and my text is 1 Peter chapter 4 verses 12 through 19. You can turn in your Bibles there now. I will give us several reasons why I believe

vital Christianity will be underground in this country in the very near future.

The first reason is, number one, the great apostasy of the institutional church. The second reason is the coming legal battle with the gay rights movement and the American church. The third reason is the formation of house churches.

The fourth reason is the advancing, coming persecution of Christians in America. I will elaborate on each of these headings as we proceed, friends. There is a time of suffering coming to the American church.

Allow me to read you our passage of scripture as found in 1 Peter chapter 4 beginning in verse 12. Let me read it to you now. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing happened unto you, but rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you. On their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

Yet, if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God, and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear? Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing as unto a faithful creator. Well, let us look at the first reason why I believe the American church will go underground.

Number one, there is a great apostasy in the institutional church. The mega church is a mistake, and there is a spiritual falling away taking place. Evil is called good and good evil.

The gay agenda has infiltrated many once powerful denominations who now ordain fornicators and call them ministers. The blind are leading the blind. And in the other of our once mighty denominations, vital Christianity is non-existent and has been replaced with either the entertainment brand of church, which is the feel-good church.

I call it the cappuccino church, where there's no real gospel message at all, but a watered-down perversion of the gospel, which is centered around the happiness of man. It's all loud music and flesh on display, just a house of entertainment. Or there is the other extreme of a ritualistic dead formality of a church, where you feel like you are in a morgue in a funeral home.

Everything's as cold as ice, and the people there are nothing more than living corpses. And because of this great apostasy in the church, it's driving many Christians away. They're leaving the institutional church in droves, and they cannot find a suitable alternative in another institutional format.

So they're staying home on Sundays, wondering what to do next, praying about their future. Sooner or later, these hungry Christians are deciding to begin a house church in their home or the home of a friend. And it isn't long that other house churches grow from this, much like the book of Acts, where the early Christians went from house to house to preach and pray, worship and fellowship with each other.

I receive emails on a regular basis, friends, from each end of this country, written by serious Christians who cannot stomach the worldly institutional church or the dead formal church, and they've quit attending

their local church and are beginning to have church at home each week. A few friends here, a few more there, and this movement is growing all across this land where serious Christians are separating themselves from the church of entertainment or the church of dead formality. These are serious believers who hunger for revival, pray for it on a regular basis.

They are upset that the gospel of our day has been compromised, and they are disenchanted with the way the church has let the world into the sanctuary. I'm shocked at the nonsense going on. I visit churches on a regular basis, and I have to be honest with you, friends, I just can't sit there very long and take what passes for church in America today.

I usually get up and leave well before the service is over. Here is an example of which I speak. My daughter received an invitation from a local Baptist church to come to their youth group the other night to hear a Christian rapper.

That's right, a Christian rapper. I pity the ignorant pastor who has to hire a rapper to come entertain his youth group when he knows no other way to reach them. One teenager tweeted a Christian rapper in my community on a social page and asked the rapper if it was all right if the kids could twerk on one another during the concert, and this so-called Christian rapper said it was okay, but he preferred they didn't twerk on one another.

He was going to leave it up to their choice. That's how bad things have gotten in the institutional church in America today, friends. The apostasy of the American church is staggering, and it's driving multitudes away who hunger for vital Christianity.

Secondly, I believe there will be a growing underground church in America because of the coming legal battle between the gay agenda and the American church. Gay activists will begin to sue the churches in America who refuse to hire a lesbian or homosexual as a staff minister or even a secretary. It'll be considered a hate crime.

You better believe this is coming, friends, and the laws have already been enacted and passed to allow this to happen. This will be here before you know it. This very thing will shut down the institutional church in America.

They will either have to compromise and be politically correct or close their doors because they will be forced to lose their tax-exempt status because of discrimination. This is a coming perfect storm to rip the American church to shreds. Thirdly, there'll be a growing underground church in America because there is a formation of house churches already increasing at a rapid rate all across this land.

I receive emails from individuals who are forming these groups all over the country, and they are serious Christians who are sick of the status quo of the institutional church and its great falling away. They are repulsed by the deadness, sickened by the compromise and worldliness and sensualness of it all. They are meeting in homes for Bible study, Bible teaching, worship, and prayer.

They are even meeting in large numbers at conferences to learn how to effectively begin a house church in their own community, and this house church movement is spreading like a prairie fire. People are just sick and tired of what passes for church today. They want reality.

They want real Christian vitality. They want truth being preached to them, not entertainment. They want to hear real truth taught and not personality.

They hunger for holiness and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit for service, and they are separating themselves from the polluted church and forming their own pure house church of pure Christianity. The fourth reason there is a growing underground church in America is the very fact that this country is getting ready to face fierce persecution against Christians. You will not be able to preach an intolerant message that offends someone, or you will be locked up for your crime against the state.

Your sermon itself will be labeled hate speech. The Bible you quote will be banned and outlawed. Some Christians may be beaten, others arrested.

Some may even be martyred for their faith in Christ in this country in the coming days. It's coming, friends. A perfect storm is coming to the church in America, and if you're not ready, you will be crushed beneath the weight of the fall of the church and of America.

You'll be torn apart like that napkin in my hand, torn into little pieces, and the true believers who are left will be forced to worship underground just like they do in China today. The American government will set up a government church much similar to the three-house church movement in China, which is run by the communist state. Communists sit in on the sermons in China in the three-house church.

They monitor the sermons, make sure there's nothing spiritual preached. They won't let you hand out tracts or witness. The church of China that's vital is underground.

They meet in barns. They meet in homes. Vital Christianity in this country will be tried to be snuffed out soon, and the real church, like it's underground in China, will be underground in America, friends.

It's coming soon enough. Men's suffering is coming to the American church through the form of political persecution. Listen, brother pastor, your church will lose its tax-exempt status.

You will be sued for being intolerant to hiring certain individuals. You will be locked up for preaching your Bible because it will be labeled a hate crime. These days are fast upon us, friends.

We have had in this country a great window of opportunity in the past decade, and we've dropped the ball. God gave us warnings through his remedial judgments to try to bring us back to him, but we ignored them. God was long suffering toward us to see if we would turn from our wicked ways and repent and turn back to him, but we have not because of our great spiritual pride and arrogance.

Only a heaven-sent revival can turn the tide of what is coming to our country today, what is coming to the church like a great tsunami. Heaven help us all.

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