

# Jesus Revealed as the Christ

Matthew 16:13-20

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## **Introduction**

Today we come to a new section in our study of the gospel of Matthew.

- Up until this time, Jesus has not spoken directly to His disciples about His identity or about the nature of His mission (to suffer on the cross).
  - He has performed many miracles and has preached about the Kingdom of God,
    - and He has said that He has authority on earth to forgive sin and that He Lord of the Sabbath...
    - But He has not come out and said "I am the Messiah, or I am the Son of God."
- But beginning with Matthew 16:13, this all begins to change,
  - From this point, Jesus begins to tell His disciples plainly who He is and that He is going to be crucified.
    - He does not tell the multitude these things (as verse 20 shows),
      - probably for the same reason He waited to tell His disciples these things until now:
      - Their ideas about the Messiah and His mission were so alien to the truth that to use the title "Messiah" would have done more to promote ignorance and confusion than light and truth.
        - If they had been told that He was the Messiah, they would have expected Him to lead them into battle against the Romans!
        - They would never have expected Him to go to the cross.
    - This is why, when John the Baptist asked if He was the coming one or should they look for another,
      - instead of simply saying "yes" or "no,"
      - Jesus pointed to His miracles and told the inquirers to tell John about them.
    - By being secretive about His identity,
      - Jesus was not hiding the truth, but guarding it.
      - This is surely the main reason Jesus tells His disciples not to tell anyone that He is the Christ.
- But now in chapter 16, the time has come for Him to tell them!

- Through Matthew, we are given the opportunity to see what Jesus said to His disciples in private!
- We are able to see what He revealed to them about His identity and His mission...
  - This self-revelation of Jesus to His disciples will be our theme for the next several weeks.
    - We will have the privilege of seeing what He shows them about Himself.

This week, we see Jesus revealing Himself to His disciples as the Christ, and explaining what that means to them!

### **I. He begins by asking them the greatest of all questions...**

- **“Who is the Son of Man?”**

A. He has taken them away to a quiet place—

1. to Caesarea Philippi,

- a city in the northern most extremity of the territory originally given to Israel.
- It was a region where there were a lot of Gentiles and lot of paganism,
  - but it was away from the bustle of the pressing multitudes and the accusing Pharisees.
  - It was at the foot of Mount Hermon, the beautiful usually snow-capped mountain celebrated in the Psalms.

2. It is important to get away from the bustle of life at times to think about the great questions of life.

- Service is good, but it is not everything.
  - Service without “time apart to consider the great questions” is service that is almost always wrongly directed and wrongly motivated.
- In our stressful days, we desperately need the Lord’s Day to come apart for a while and consider the great questions...
  - And we need time apart each day as individuals and families devoted to prayer and the word...

3. I wonder if you have taken the time to consider the great question that Jesus asked here in our text...

- “Who is Jesus? (He calls Himself the Son of Man)”
- Unless you come to the right conclusion about this question, you cannot have the eternal life that He gives to His disciples.

B. Jesus begins by asking the disciples what others think of Him...

- “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?”

1. You ought to know something about what others think of Jesus.

a. I am troubled when I speak to disciples of Christ about their friends or their families and I ask them,

- “What do they think of Christ?”

- and they say, “I don’t know.”

- It’s something you ought to know—

- something you ought to find out about:

- How can you pray intelligently for them or tell them of Christ if you have never bothered to find out what they think of Him?

b. And not only that, but if you are not interested in what others think about Jesus, it betrays a general lack of interest about Him in your own soul.

- Those who love Him want to know what others think of Him.

- Chances are,

- If you don’t know what others think, you probably don’t know much about what **you** think either.

TRANS> But you see that the disciples of Jesus are able to answer this question...

2. They show that there is great deal of confusion about Jesus among the people...

a. They mention several various opinions:

- “Some say John the Baptist”—

- Remember that Herod thought John had risen from the dead!

- “Some say Elijah”—

- To this day, the Jews put out an empty chair at the Passover for Elijah. They expect him to come before the Messiah.

- Others thought He was Jeremiah or one of the other prophets.

TRANS> All these opinions, and the disciples didn’t even mention the more absurd views!

- Such as those who supposed Jesus was from the Devil.

- b. But the thing that stands out is that all the views mentioned by the disciple, although they show respect for Jesus, come far short of His real identity!
- 1) They are just like the views of so many today!
    - They want to say that Jesus is a good man...
    - They will say that He was a prophet or a great religious leader, or even supreme example...
    - But they will not say that He is the Son of God!
  - Such persons are just as far from the kingdom of God as those who outright deny Him.
    - If Jesus claimed to be the Son of God and He wasn't, then the last thing that can be said about Him is that He was a good man!
    - If His claim is not true, He is either a wretched liar or desperate lunatic!
  - 2) You can say nice things about Jesus and yet be entirely wrong about who He really is.
    - If He is truly what Peter says He is in this passage,
      - to think He is something less to miss what is essential to accept about Him if you would have eternal life.
  - 3) I am quite sure that the main reason for their confusion about Jesus was not much different than the reason for confusion about Him today...
    - They all had their own ideas about what the Messiah ought to do when He came...
      - If they were still under the oppression of Rome, there was no way Jesus could be the Messiah.
      - The last thing they needed, they supposed, was a Messiah that would die on a Roman cross!
    - And so it is if you talk to people in our society about Jesus.
      - When you really boil it all down, most of them are willing to say that He was a prophet or a great teacher...
      - But they cannot think He is truly God.
      - If He were God, He would have done more to solve our problems.
        - People are too caught up with what they think Jesus ought to do to stop and understand what He did do.
        - Such is the way of multitude.

C. But now Jesus puts the great question to His disciples themselves.

- “Who do **you** say that I am.”
1. The word **you** is very emphatic in this verse...
    - The question could be translated like this...
      - “And you, who do you say that I am?”
    - Jesus is making a deliberate contrast...
      - “I hear what others say about Me, but now I want to know what **you**, my very own disciples think of me?”
      - He expects His followers to be different from the multitudes.
  2. Each of you needs to hear Jesus asking **you** this same question...
    - “And **you**, who do **you** say that I am?”
    - If you would be blessed—that is, truly happy with the happiness that only God can impart...
      - you need to be able to answer this question the way Peter did:
      - “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”
        - Nothing less than that will do!
    - As soon as Peter gives this answer, Jesus says,
      - “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my Father in heaven!”
      - Jesus is saying with no uncertainty...
        - “That’s right Peter, you have given the right answer!”
        - “You are blessed forever because you know who I am.”
          - “You have made the confession that secures eternal happiness for all who believe.”

## II. What is this confession?

- this confession of which Christ so highly approves...
  - this confession that is the only right confession...
  - Peter confesses, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”
- A. Consider what this means in a general way.
    1. When Peter says, “You are the Christ”, He is saying that Jesus is the promised Messiah of Israel.
      - a. The word **Christ** means “the anointed one,” as we saw last week in Psalm 45.

- **Messiah** and **Christ** mean exactly the same thing.
  - The only reason that we have two words in English for “the anointed one” is because
    - one of these words is derived from the Hebrew Old Testament word מָשִׁיחַ *maw-shee'-akh*...
    - the other is taken from the Greek word, *crístov*
- b. A person was said to be anointed when he was set apart a particular office by God...
- The anointing was done by pouring oil upon the person's head.
  - In the Old Testament,
    - we see that prophets, like Elisha, were anointed to show that they were set apart to serve as prophets...
    - priests like Aaron were anointed to show that they were set apart by God to serve as priests...
    - and kings like David were anointed to show that they were set apart by God to serve as kings.
  - The pouring of oil symbolised the giving of the Holy Spirit to equip for the service to which he was called...
- c. But when Israel spoke of **the** Messiah or **the** Christ,
- They spoke of the One who would be anointed above His companions!
  - A pre-eminent One who would be **the** anointed one par excellence!
    - **The** anointed prophet, priest and King whom God had promised from ancient times who would bring salvation to Israel.
    - Peter is saying that Jesus is this anointed one...the Christ!

TRANS> But that is not all Peter says about Him:

2. He also calls Him “**the Son of the living God.**”
  - a. He does not simply say that Jesus is “**a Son of God**”,
    - but in a very unique sense, He calls Him “**the Son of the living God.**”
    - It is doubtful that Peter fully understood all that he spoke here, but he certainly spoke a lot!
    - By calling Jesus the Son of God, He is making Him equal with God.

- b. What this means is that Jesus is not just the Messiah, but the Messiah who is God!
  - It means that God Himself has come in human flesh to save His people from their sins!
  - The anointed one, the Christ, is none other than God's Son whose divine power is unleashed for the salvation of His people!
  - We have every reason to place all our hope in this One,
    - For He alone is able to give us what we really need!

TRANS> My brothers and sisters, you are to believe with Peter that Jesus who came as the Messiah to save us is God the Son!

B. Consider what a marvellous thing it is to have a Messiah who is God!

1. It means you have a prophet who is God!

- a. As God, He is able to dispel our ignorance.
  - 1) The whole human race fell into a dreadful blindness when Adam sinned against God.
    - Left to ourselves, we are blind and unable to see the glory of God or to know the truth of God.
    - No wonder the multitudes of this world don't understand what they need from God—
      - They are blind.
  - 2) But Jesus is God's Son from Heaven.
    - His is able to bring the truth to us from heaven!
    - As God, He is able not to open blind eyes and illumine hearts that are blinded by sin and lost in the darkness!
    - The Bible says this is true of everyone until Jesus opens their eyes.
  - 3) When Moses gave the promise that this great prophet would come fifteen hundred years before it happened,
    - He said,
      - Acts 3:22-23: 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. And it shall be *that* every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'
      - Hearing this prophet is a matter of eternal life or eternal death!

b. Now the question you must ask is this:

- Do I truly know Jesus as the prophet who is God?
- If you really do, you will be willing to completely renew your mind to embrace all that He has said!
  - You will not stubbornly hold to your own opinions and beliefs, for in Him you will know that God Himself has spoken...
  - You will believe all that He says, even if it doesn't always sit right with you at first!
    - If He says unbelievers will perish in Hell fire forever, you will believe it...
    - If He says to lust after a woman in your heart is adultery, you will not dispute with Him about it...

TRANS> Having Jesus as the Messiah who is God means that you regard Him as a prophet who is God...

- That is the first thing...
2. And secondly, having Jesus as the Messiah who is God means that you have Him as a priest who is God.
- a. This is a truly remarkable thing!
    - For a priest is the one who is chosen among men to offer sacrifices to God to take away the sins of the people!
    - But God is so pure and holy that no ordinary human priest was able to offer a sacrifice that could take away our sin!
  - b. But this priest who is God did the unthinkable!
    - He offered Himself in our true human flesh.
    - It is unthinkable that God Himself should make satisfaction for the sins of His people at so great a cost!
    - God the Son actually became a curse for His own creatures in order that He might save them!
  - c. In Psalm 110, God promised that Christ would come as a priest forever:
    - Ps 110:4: The Lord has sworn And will not relent, "You *are* a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."
    - And in Isaiah 53, He declared that He would be satisfied with the offering Jesus made.
    - The scripture says that He is able to save those that come to Him to the uttermost, and that for two reasons...



- First, because He has the only sacrifice that can take away human sin...
  - Second, because He lives forever to make intercession for us.
- d. If you truly believe that Jesus is the anointed priest who is God, you will rely on Him and nothing else for your righteousness!
- It is terribly sad that there are many who speak highly of Jesus, yet do not know Him as our divine priest!
  - They continue to rely on their works or their good intentions or on some notion of God's general mercy instead of on Christ crucified for their sins.
  - May it not be so with any of you!

TRANS> If you would be blessed, you must receive Jesus as the prophet who is God and the priest who is God...

3. And thirdly, having Jesus as the Messiah who is God means that you have Him as the anointed King who is God
- And what a king He is!
- a. Human kings can make laws and enforce them to a certain extent with threats, but it is impossible for them secure the heart felt allegiance of their subjects!
- But our King who is God is able to change the hearts of His subjects.
    - He is able to secure their glad submission to Himself and to God!
    - He is able to indelibly write His law on their hearts in such a way that they delight in His ways!
  - We are so twisted and tangled up in the ugly ways of our sin,
    - so full of uncleanness and bitterness and hatred and envy and covetousness;
      - so devoid of love for our neighbour and love for God...
    - But Jesus is able to utterly transform us and make us into new creations that are renewed in His glorious image.

TRANS> That is the first thing that makes Him entirely different than a mere human king...

- Secondly...
- b. Human kings can muster an army and courageously lead their people into battle against their enemies,
- but there are many enemies that they cannot destroy...

- Not only do they run of against nations that are to much for them, but neither can they deal with things like sickness and death.
- But the Scriptures promise that our King who is God will reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet...
  - And we are told with no uncertainty that the last enemy that will be destroyed is death itself!
- c. If you believe that Jesus is the anointed king who is also God,
  - You will gladly give yourself up to Him to be completely ruled by Him.
  - You will purge your heart from all your other lovers...
    - this present world, your own life, your family...
    - You ill present yourself to Him as a chaste virgin, wholly devoted to Him.

TRANS> So you see that Peter's confession is no trivial confession!

- It is the confession that God's anointed one has come and that He is God's Son!
  - If you believe this, you too are blessed—happy forever with a happiness that nothing can destroy!
  - It means everything to have a Divine Messiah!
- So now that we have seen what it means to have Jesus, the Messiah who is God...

### **III. I want you to consider what Jesus promises here to Peter...**

- **to Peter as the one who made this confession.**
- We will look at three things

A. First, Jesus tells Peter:

- "You are Peter and upon this rock, I will build my church."

1. What does this mean?

- a. I want to begin by saying that there has been a great diversity of opinion about this passage.
  - There are two things I want to say about that.
- 1) First, that I will begin by looking at what is obvious and clear,
  - then move to what is more complicated and uncertain...

- 2) Secondly, that in declaring to you that about which there has been so much diversity,
  - I will be giving you my opinion about what I believe the passage is saying...
  - You may differ with me about my particular interpretation,
    - but I would remind you that even if I am wrong about exactly what this particular passage is referring to,
    - the truths I bring to you are still the word of God as long as they are in agreement with what the Bible teaches elsewhere.
  - In other words,
    - I will make every effort to say what is true to scripture generally even if I am wrong about the details of this passage...
    - And if it is true to scripture generally, you are obliged to receive it as the word of God.
  
- b. Okay then, so what is obvious and clear in this passage?
  - Two things—
    - 1) First, that Christ will build His church!
      - He says here, “I will build my church!”
        - That ought to be a great encouragement to you!
      - We are incapable of building a church—we can’t save one person.
        - Nobody but Jesus can do that,
          - We have seen that He is not just Messiah, but the Messiah who is God.
          - If He says that He will build His church in this lost, dark, sinful, dying world, then He will build His church!
      - That is the first thing that is certain here...
    - 2) Secondly, He says that it is **His** church that He will build.
      - The church is His very own possession.
      - It belongs to Him because He loved us and purchased us with His very own blood.
        - What an encouragement to know that if you are a part of this church, you belong to Jesus forever!
        - You are precious to Him!

- He will guard you, deliver you, beautify you, protect you, and bless you in every way as only divine power and wisdom know how!

TRANS> These are the certain things that are taught in this phrase:

- “You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church.”

2. Now we will consider the more difficult part...

a. What is **the rock** on which Jesus is said to build?

1) First, I should let you know that Peter’s name was originally Simon.

- When Jesus first met him, He gave him a new name—he called him Peter.
- You need to understand that there was no such name in use at that time.
  - “Peter” is such a common name now,
    - but before Jesus gave it to Simon, it was unheard of.
    - In Greek, it is Petras, and in Aramaic, Cephas.
  - In both languages, it means “rock.”
- And because this was not a name in use at the time,
  - it would be very much the same as if we called somebody “Rock” today.
    - If you heard somebody say, “Come here Rock...”
      - you would think about a rock rather than a name—the meaning would stand out to you.

2) And so there is a very definite play on words in what Jesus says to Peter here...

- He is saying, “You are a rock and on this rock I will build my church.”

a) I believe that Jesus is saying to Peter,

- “You are a rock (or you are rock) Peter, because you have just made this true confession about me that I am the Christ, the Son of God.”
- “That confession makes you a solid rock.”

b) And then He is saying,

- And it is on this **kind** of rock—rock such as you are—that I will build my church.

- You are representative of the kind of rock that may church will be established upon.

b. What kind of rock is that?

- It has two characteristics:

1) First, it is rock that confesses that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

a) This was something that not very many believed yet as we have seen because Jesus did not fit their expectations of the Messiah...

- If He were the Messiah, He would have mustered an army by now to overthrow the Romans.
- He had done miracles and things, and was perhaps a prophet,
  - but He certainly was not acting like the Messiah—not in their minds!
- And belief in Him as the Messiah and the Son of God was not going to get any easier,
  - In the days to come He was going to die on a Roman cross!

b) But the kind of rock on which Jesus builds His church will be the kind of rock that Peter is—

- He is an island of rock in a sea of unbelief!

TRANS> That is the first characteristic of the kind of rock on which Jesus will build His church...

2) Second, it is rock that knows that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God because this has been divinely revealed to it by God the Father.

a) This is something that distinguishes the apostles from others who would later believe...

- To them it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God by divine revelation.
- It is true that anyone who confesses that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, can only know that by divine illumination...
  - But the apostles were unique in that they knew it by divine revelation.
  - They had, as it were, a direct line with God.
    - When others believe, it is because God opens their hearts to believe what the apostles have said.

- b) It was for this reason that Peter is a species of the kind of rock on which Jesus would build His church.
- You see, he (and the other apostles) were uniquely called and appointed by God to be the infallible and sufficient interpreters of Christ—
  - They were appointed to set down in scripture for all the coming ages divine revelation about who Jesus was, why He came, what He taught.
    - In 2:19-20, Paul explains to the Ephesians that they know Jesus through the word of the apostles:
      - Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*...
- c) The apostles and prophets who were given prophetic wisdom and insight about Christ are called the foundation on which the church is built.
- They are not the foundation in the same way that Jesus is—
    - Jesus is the foundation on whom we depend for our salvation.
    - The apostles point to Him as the Divine Christ who gives us wisdom from heaven, takes away our sins, and rules in our hearts...
    - As Saviour, He is the One and only foundation.
  - But the apostles are the foundation in another way...
    - They are the foundational testimony about Jesus, our source of truth by which we learn of Him.
    - As John says in the opening of his first epistle—
      - That which we have seen and heard [about Jesus] we declare to you that you also may have fellowship with us... and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ!
    - In other words, if you want to know Jesus,
      - You must come to the prophets and apostles to learn about Him...
      - You must come to Bible where God has given us their divinely inspired teaching that enables us to know Jesus.
      - Peter is the kind of rock on which the church is built—
        - he is representative of the other apostles and prophets who tell us about Jesus.

- If you ignore the scripture and try to come up with your own Jesus in your own head,
  - you are not built on the foundation that Jesus builds His church on and you will perish.
  - You must learn about Jesus from the apostles whose words are preserved for us in scripture.

TRANS> Jesus next says something very wonderful about the church that He builds on this foundation!

B. He says that “the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it”!

- You can see that in the second part of verse 18!
  1. There is good reason that this is so!
    - a. The apostles point us to rely on this Jesus that Peter confesses—
      - the One who is “the Christ, the Son of the living God,” and no other!
    - b. If you are relying on this Prophet, Priest and King who is God the Son,
      - If you have believed the apostle’s testimony about Him...
        - You are absolutely invincible!
        - The whole church, built on this foundation, can never be destroyed!
    - c. That doesn’t mean you can be careless!
      - The promise only applies to those whom Christ has built on this foundation.
      - There are many who come into the church without true faith that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God...
        - If you are not looking to Him as your true prophet who shapes all you believe, and true priest who alone takes away your sin, and you true king who changes your heart and destroys your enemies,
          - then you are not truly a part of this glorious church that Christ is building.
          - You will be cut off from His people at the last day unless you repent.
  2. But just what does Jesus mean by “the gates of Hades”?
    - a. There is once again a great variety of interpretation,
      - and once again, I have given you what is certain first...

- namely, that the church Jesus builds on the true foundation is invincible.
- b. But now I will tell you what I believe the gates of Hades to be...
- Hades is the same thing as Sheol in the Old Testament...
    - It is the abode of the dead.
    - Often, it is used to refer to the place of suffering, but it is also used to refer simply to the grave—
      - For example, in Psalm 16, we are told that God did not leave the soul of Jesus in Hades, neither did He allow His holy one to see corruption.
      - Peter quotes this in Acts 2 concerning Jesus, and speaks of Him as the one:
        - “whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.” (Ac 2:24)
- c. I believe that this is what Jesus is talking about when He speaks of the gates of Hades!
- He is speaking of the gates or prison doors of death!
    - Just as they could not keep Jesus locked up inside, so they will not be able to keep the church He builds locked up inside!
    - Though we all died in Adam, it is Christ who makes us live!
  - We were hopelessly shut up in the prison house of death and we could not get out.
    - God, in full justice, had passed the sentence of death upon us because of our sin.
      - We had no way to escape.
      - The gates were closed up tight!
  - But when Jesus took our sins, He went to Hades...
    - And He broke through the gates of Hades and opened the way for all of us to follow Him.
    - We can rejoice with the Apostle Paul who said:
      - 1 Cor 15:55-57: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” “O Death, where *is* your sting? O Hades, where *is* your victory?” The sting of death *is* sin, and the strength of sin *is* the law. But thanks *be* to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”



- Jesus speaks of the gates of Hades in particular because they are such a formidable foe!
    - Surely, if His church believing in Him as the Christ the Son of God is able to escape death,
      - there is no enemy that will be able to prevail against us!
      - Once again, we have a tremendous encouragement here!
- C. Finally, Jesus tells Peter that He will give to him the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and that
- “whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth, will have been loosed in heaven.”
1. Jesus is explaining to Peter that as an apostle who confesses Him as Messiah and God,
    - He will be given the keys of the kingdom of heaven.
    - With these keys, Peter will be able to open the kingdom to men and shut it up to others.
  2. In other words, as one who is entrusted with the divinely revealed testimony about Jesus,
    - Peter has the words of truth that set men free when they receive those words and that shut them up to condemnation when they reject them.
    - a. For example,
      - 1) at Pentecost when Peter said to the Jews (who of all things had crucified the Messiah)...
        - “Repent and be baptised and you will receive the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit,”
        - He was proclaiming release to those who were in bondage to sin and death!
        - They were shut up and Peter used the key of God’s word that had been entrusted to Him and set the prisoners free!
      - Now of course, Peter Himself did not set them free, but he pointed them to Jesus who set them free!
    - 2) And after He had declared this to them, he baptised those that believed, thereby admitting to the church...
      - And Jesus is showing that Peter does not do this merely on his own (Peter’s own) authority...
      - What he does is what heaven has authorised...

- Literally, the words of verse 19 should be translated,
    - “Whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.”
    - By admitting professing believers and their children to the church, Peter is acting in concert with God’s will in heaven.
- b. And, in a similar way, when Peter declared to the Jewish leaders in Acts chapter 3 that:
- Acts 3:23: “every soul who will not hear Christ will be utterly destroyed from among the people”
  - He again used his keys,
    - but this time to bind rather than to release those who were enemies of the gospel unless they repent.
3. Now you might say, “how is this unique to Peter?”
- Do ministers of the word not do the same thing today when they preach the gospel and exercise church discipline?
    - a. Yes, they do.
      - Whenever the elders and ministers of the word act in concert with the scriptures in proclaiming who is accepted by God and who is rejected,
        - they are carrying out on earth what has been mandated in heaven.
    - b. But what is unique with Peter is that as an apostle, it was given to him and the other apostles to declare to the church for all ages the rules by which persons are to be admitted and excluded from the church.
      - Once again, you see, they are the foundation and we are to take what they have given us to govern the church today.
      - We must act according to the word of God which they have given us in Scripture.
        - It is not for us to decide the sex outside of biblically defined marriage is acceptable or that it is okay to reject the virgin birth as a myth.
      - Peter himself was also given an extra special privilege in that he was the first to use these keys to open the kingdom to the Jews, at Pentecost; and then to the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius.
    - c. Let us be glad that our Lord has so wisely and graciously given us these keys so that we do not have to guess about who is to be received and who is to be excluded.

- What a dreadful thing it would be to be unsure of who is accepted in His church and who is to be rejected!
- Clearly, when we boil it all down in simplicity...
  - You are all accepted who believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God...
  - You who trust in Him as your prophet to teach you, your priest to take away your sins, and your king to rule you and defend you are surely saved.
- Let us rejoice that we who believe have a Messiah who is God and so able to save us to the uttermost!
  - If you believe this, I declare to you that you are released from sin and death!
  - If you do not believe, I declare to you that you are in bondage to sin and death and will miserably perish if you do not repent.