

**Matthew 16:13-20:** Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"<sup>14</sup> And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."<sup>15</sup> He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"<sup>16</sup> Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."<sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven."<sup>18</sup> 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.<sup>19</sup> I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."<sup>20</sup> Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

**Intro:** Last week in verses 13-17, we heard the Apostle Peter make his great confession about who Jesus is: Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God! **Scott Swain:** He's God's beloved Son; He's the highest of the kings of the earth; He's the heir of all the nations; He's the head of the body of Christ; He's the husband of His bride, the church; He's the most handsome of the sons of men; He's the loveliest, most desirable, most satisfying object of all loves, desires, or satisfactions!

**Charles Spurgeon:** If Christ be anything he must be everything. O rest not till love and faith in Jesus be the master passions of your soul!

And Jesus Christ has a bride! He has a wife! She's called the church! Today we hear Jesus, for the first time, take her name upon His lips, and He tells us how He's going to build His church!

**Jonathan Edwards:** The end [goal] of the creation of God was to provide a spouse for His Son Jesus Christ that might enjoy Him and on whom He might pour forth His love. And the end of all things in providence are to make way for the exceeding expressions of Christ's love to His spouse and for her exceeding close and intimate union with, and high and glorious enjoyment of Him and to bring this to pass. And therefore the last thing and the issue of all things is the marriage of the Lamb. And the wedding day is the last day, the day of judgment, or rather that will be the beginning of it. The wedding feast is eternal; and the love and joys, the songs, entertainments and glories of the wedding never will be ended. It will be an everlasting wedding day.

### **1. Jesus Declares That He Will Build His Unstoppable Church On The Rock**

**Matthew 16:18:** 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.

- a. Peter was not the first pope:**
- 1) This text certainly teaches that Peter was and would be a leader in the church, but it in no way teaches what the Roman Catholic Church has made into the office of Pope.
  - 2) Call no man pope: Matt. 23:9: And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven.
  - 3) Five verses later in Matthew 16, Jesus calls Peter Satan – at the very least this shows that Peter was not a special representative of Christ on earth
  - 4) Peter was rebuked by Paul because his conduct was not in step with the Gospel: Galatians 2:11-14
  - 5) God never gave Peter the position of pope: 1 Corinthians 12:28: And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers . . .
  - 6) Peter was married: 1 Corinthians 9:5: Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?
  - 7) Peter viewed himself as an elder like other elders: 1 Peter 5:1-2: So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you
  - 8) Nothing here or anywhere else in the Bible speaks of a pope over all the church who has supreme authority over the church or is the representative of Christ on earth or has a succession plan where this office will be passed down so that there is always a pope on earth!

**D. A. Carson:** The text says nothing about Peter’s successors, infallibility, or exclusive authority. These late interpretations entail insuperable [impossible to overcome] exegetical and historical problems – after Peter’s death, his “successor” would have authority over a surviving apostle, John. What the NT does show is that Peter is the first to make this formal confession and that his prominence continues in the earliest years of the church (Acts 1-12). But he, along with John, can be sent by other apostles (Acts 8:14), and he is held accountable for his actions by the Jerusalem church (Acts 11:1-18) and rebuked by Paul (Gal 2:11-14). He is, in short, (first among equals), and on the foundation of such men (Eph 2:20), Jesus built his church.

**b. What is the “rock” in v. 18, Peter or his confession?** Both: It’s Peter & his faithful confession of who Jesus is.

**John Broadus:** Though the pope is not in this text, Peter is!

**Craig Blomberg:** Jesus’ declaration, “You are Peter,” parallels Peter’s confession, “You are the Christ,” as if to say, “Since you can tell me who I am, I will tell you who you are.” The expression “this rock” almost certainly refers to Peter, following immediately after his name, just as the words following “the Christ” in v. 16 applied to Jesus. The play on words in the Greek between Peter’s name (Petros) and the word “rock” (petra) makes sense only if Peter is the rock and if Jesus is about to explain the significance of this identification.

**Jonathan Leeman:** How will he build it? He will build it "on this rock." What rock? Theologians have long debated whether the rock is Peter or Peter's confession. In fact, I think you have to say both. Theologian Edmund Clowney writes, "The confession cannot be separated from Peter, neither can Peter be separated from his confession." Jesus will build his church not on words, and not on people, but on people who believe the right gospel words. Jesus will build the church on confessors. Jesus then gave Peter and the apostles the keys of the kingdom, which gave Peter the authority to do what Jesus had just done with him: to act as God’s official representative on earth for affirming true gospel confessions and confessors. The apostles had heaven’s authority for declaring who on earth is a kingdom citizen and therefore represents heaven.

**Notice Leeman writes:** Jesus then gave Peter and the apostles the keys of the kingdom: **Matthew 18:1:** At that time the disciples came to Jesus . . . **Matthew 18:18:** Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

**Now, the Church is the final authority under Christ to bind and loose on earth: Matthew 18:17:** If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church.

**Ed Clowney writes that Peter cannot be isolated from the eleven:** Jesus grants to them all the power of the keys of the kingdom that he gave to Peter. The church is not built on Peter as an isolated stone, but upon the foundation of the apostles & prophets, those who like Peter have received the revelation of Christ: **Eph. 2:19-20:** the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles & prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone - **1 Peter 2:4-5:** As you come to Him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

**c. Peter & his confession is the rock:** Peter is a major foundation stone on which Christ built His church! He’s the first to confess that Jesus is the Christ! He’s a leader of the Apostles! He’s very important in Jesus’ plan to build His church! And his confession is rock solid! He told the truth about who Jesus is! This is crucial & indispensable!

**d. I thought Jesus is the Rock?!** He is! **D. A. Carson:** . . . metaphors are commonly used variously, until they become stereotyped, and sometimes even then. Here Jesus builds his church; in 1 Corinthians 3:10, Paul is “an expert builder.” In 1 Corinthians 3:11, Jesus is the church’s foundation; in Ephesians 2:19-20, the apostles and prophets are the foundation (cf. Rev 21:14), and Jesus is the “cornerstone.” Here Peter has the keys; in Revelation 1:18; 3:7, Jesus has the keys. In John 9:5, Jesus is “the light of the world”; in Matthew 5:14, his disciples are.

None of these pairs threatens Jesus' uniqueness. They simply show how metaphors must be interpreted primarily with reference to their immediate context.

**e. Jesus will build His church: Verse 18:** I will build my church

- Just as flesh and blood did not reveal to Peter who Jesus was, Jesus, not man, will build the church!

- **John 6:44:** No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.

Jesus would go on to die for the church! Jesus would go on to rise from the dead for the church!

Jesus commissions the church: **Matthew 28:18-20:** And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all 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 that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

- **1 Corinthians 3:6-7:** I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.

- **Hebrews 3:1-6:** Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, <sup>2</sup> who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house. <sup>3</sup> For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses - as much more glory as **the builder of a house** has more honor than the house itself. <sup>4</sup> (For every house is built by someone, but **the builder of all things is God.**) <sup>5</sup> Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, <sup>6</sup> but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And **we are his house** if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.

**John Piper:** Verse 4 makes explicit just how great [Jesus] is: "For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God." Verse 3 says that Jesus made the house of God. Verse 4 says that the maker of all things is God. Conclusion? The same as chapter 1: Jesus, the Son of God, is God. That's how great he is. The word of our Apostle is a sure word because it is a word carried by God himself. The atoning work of our High Priest on the cross is a finished and all-sufficient work, because it has infinite value as the work of God himself. Consider this about Jesus: he made Moses. And he made you . . . Do you see how verse 6 ends: "Christ was faithful as a Son over His house whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end." The church of Jesus Christ is the house of God today. Which means that Jesus this morning—not just back in Moses' day or in his own days on earth—but this morning is our Maker, our Owner, our Ruler, and our Provider. He's the Son; we are the servants. We are the household of God. Moses is one with us in this household, and he is our fellow servant through his prophetic ministry. But Jesus is our Maker, our Owner, our Ruler, and our Provider.

**f. What is a church?:** (The assembly of those called by God) A gathering of born again, saved sinners who are trusting Jesus Christ & obeying all that He has commanded them by the power of the Holy Spirit for the glory of God where the Bible & the Gospel is faithfully preached & practiced, where they are led by Biblically qualified elders, where Baptism & the Lord's Supper are rightly practiced, & where church discipline is rightly practiced.

**g. Verse 18: And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it:** The gates are like city hall, a court house, or the government headquarters of a city – this is where policy is made, laws are made, strategy & plans are formed.

- **Proverbs 31:23:** Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land.

- Gates also represent strength and protection. Hell or Hades is the place of death and judgment.

All the strength, power, & plans of Satan, death, and hell will not stop the Church of Jesus Christ! Jesus went to war in enemy territory. He came to destroy the works of the devil. He's going to conquer! And He's going to conquer through His Church! Individual local churches may close their doors, but more will be planted and more will grow, and His Bride the Church shall never die but accomplish all of God's purposes in the world!

**Revelation 19:7-9:** Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; <sup>8</sup> it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure" - for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. <sup>9</sup> And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."

**J. C. Ryle:** 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; it is a bush which is often burning, and yet is not consumed.

**C. T. Studd:** Some want to live within the sound of church or chapel bell; I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell.

## **2. Jesus Gives The Keys Of The Kingdom To Peter**

**Matthew 16:19:** I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." <sup>20</sup> Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ. (The church is the embassy of the kingdom of heaven on earth.)

**a. Jesus gives Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven & unique authority as the first to open the gates of heaven through the preaching of the Gospel: Luke 11:52:** Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering.

Peter will be the first to preach the Gospel on that great day of Pentecost and use the keys of the preaching of the Gospel to open the gates of heaven (loose) to all sinners who would repent and believe! **Read Acts 2**

**Mark Dever:** Peter is in this unique position, which is not magical, but it is historical, it's chronological. Among the disciples, he's the one that God chose to be the first confessor of Jesus as the Messiah. And Peter would use this unique authority that God gave him, these keys – this preaching of the Gospel – and so open the kingdom of heaven for so many to come in. It would be through Peter that the Jews first in large numbers came in as he preached at Pentecost. Even the Gentiles as he shared the Gospel at Cornelius' home in Acts chapter 10 – it would be through Gospel preaching like Peter's that people would be reached out to and brought into the Kingdom of God. That's the keys He's talking about here. On the other hand, if we want to keep people out of the Kingdom of God, then all we need to do is keep our mouths closed – not proclaim the Gospel about Jesus Christ. **GOSPEL!**

**b. This binding and loosing function is finally given the church: Matthew 18:15-18:** If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. <sup>16</sup> But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>17</sup> If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. <sup>18</sup> Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

**Jonathan Leeman:** I used to live and work in Brussels, Belgium. The U. S. Embassy there formally recognized me as a U. S. citizen and gave me a new passport when my old one expired. Even though I am a U. S. citizen, the embassy possesses an authority I don't possess—the authority to speak for and make provisional decisions on behalf of the government of the United States. By giving the keys of the kingdom first to Peter and the apostles and then to gathered churches, Jesus gave churches a similar authority to the U. S. Embassy in Brussels: the authority to make provisional judgments concerning what is a right confession of the Gospel (Matt. 16:13–19) and who is a citizen of the kingdom of heaven (18:15–20). This is what Jesus meant when he said churches possesses the

authority to bind and loose on earth what's bound and loosed in heaven (16:18; 18:17-18). He didn't mean they could make people Christians or make the Gospel what it is, no more than the embassy could make me an American or make American laws. Rather, Jesus meant they could make official pronouncements or judgments concerning the what and the who of the Gospel. What is a right confession? Who is a true confessor?

**c. Peter's life radically displays for us the lavish love, mercy, & grace of God:** Jesus picked a man who swore & cursed that he did not know Him to be the rock on which He would build His church! Peter often spoke before he thought! Peter will be called Satan by Jesus in just five more verses! Peter cut off at man's ear! Even after Jesus' death & resurrection, & even after Pentecost, Paul found Peter's conduct not to be in step with the truth of the gospel: **Galatians 2:11:** when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

But Peter committed one sin that seems unforgivable: **Matthew 10:32-33:** So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven. (Peter did this three times! But Jesus forgave him!)

**Jesus is an amazingly patient, all merciful Savior Who forgives terribly egregious (really bad!) sinners!**

- **John 21:7:** That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea.

- **John 21:15-17:** When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."

### **3. Jesus Warns His Disciples To Keep His Identity A Secret For Now**

**Matthew 16:20:** Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

**Jesus commanded silence:** Jesus didn't want to be misunderstood. He didn't want people coming to Him merely for physical healing (as a wonder worker) or as the military leader who would crush the Romans, but He wanted the people to hear His Words! He and His Words give eternal life! Jesus wanted people to rightly understand Who He was and what He came to do. And Jesus had a timetable for His mission. It wasn't time yet for Him to fully disclose the whole truth about Himself – He could be arrested and killed prematurely:

**John 2:4:** My hour has not yet come; **John 7:30:** So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come; **John 8:20:** no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come;

**John 12:23:** The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified

We do not have a warning from Jesus not to tell others that He is the Christ now! Now, we tell everyone!

Christ Jesus Came His Church To Build  
Upon This Rock His Spirit Filled  
Peter Would Lead And Guide What's Sealed  
With God's Spirit Christ Fulfilled  
The Gates Of Hell Christ Crushed And Killed  
All Wrath Is Quenched, The Fires Are Chilled  
He Died And Rose Salvation Willed  
Now Keys Are Given To The Skilled  
To Bind And Loose What God Would Build  
A People Who With Christ Are Thrilled!