

Fishing for Souls Part 2

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Jesus said, "And do not call anyone on Earth "father", for you have one Father, and he is in Heaven. Nor are you to be called "teacher", for you have one Teacher, the Christ." -Matthew 23:9,10

Between A.D. 538 and 1798 the clergy of the Catholic Church lorded "divine authority" over the nations of Europe with three false doctrines. First, the pope claimed to be the appointed successor of Peter and as such, he had the highest position on Earth. The church claimed that God spoke through the pope (this is how the doctrine of the infallibility of the pope came about).

Second, the clergy claimed that Christ had given Peter and his successors "keys of the kingdom." This meant that in matters of salvation, the eternal destiny of each person was determined by the pope or a duly appointed priest. Third, the Church taught that if a person did not receive the sacraments, there was no hope of salvation. The Church aggressively defended these doctrines with distortions of Scripture, especially these words of Jesus.

Carefully consider this text: **"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. 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. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of Heaven; whatever you bind on Earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on Earth will be loosed in Heaven.' "** (Matthew 16:13-19)

Jesus queried the disciples about His identity in order to teach the disciples two lessons. When Peter said, "You are the Christ [Messiah], the Son of the living God," Jesus blessed the young man by saying, "Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah."

Jesus used Peter's formal name because He was about to use Simon's surname to make a profound point. While Peter's words were still reverberating in their ears, *Jesus contrasted Peter's humanity with His divinity*. Jesus said, "I tell you that you are *petros*." (The Greek word *petros* is transliterated "Peter," but it means rock or pebble.) Then, I believe, as Jesus paused until every disciple was looking at Him, He pointed to Himself and said, "and on this *Petra* [Greek: *petra*, a huge rock] I will build my church." The disciples understood the contrast.

Jesus was the vine and they were the branches. (John 15:5) The Son of the living God who stood in their presence was the "*Petra*" of the Old Testament. (Genesis 49:24; Deuteronomy 32:4,15; 1 Samuel 2:2; Psalm 18:31; 1 Corinthians 10:4) The disciples were inspired with this truth.

The church of Christ would succeed because it would be founded on Jesus and sustained by His eternal power. The distinction between the pebble, *petros*, and The Rock of Ages, *petra*, was unmistakably clear. (Contrary to Catholic doctrine, there is no evidence in the New Testament indicating the disciples considered the church to be built upon Peter or his successors.)

Jesus continued by teaching His disciples a second lesson. Jesus would give His disciples the keys of the kingdom. Jesus said, whatever you "loose" or "bind" on Earth will be loosed or bound in Heaven. What did Jesus mean? The "keys of the kingdom" is a phrase that means "responsibility."

If you give the keys of your car to someone, they receive the benefit of using your car, but they also receive a serious responsibility. The message is simple. Jesus promised the disciples they would have the privilege of making the day-to-day decisions that would be necessary to advance the gospel throughout the Earth.

He also assured them that He would honor their decisions in Heaven. Of course, there is an implied responsibility. Jesus would go along with their decisions as long as they followed the leading of the Holy Spirit and built upon "The Rock." The terms, "to bind" or "to loose" means "to approve or disapprove." (Isaiah 22:20-23, Revelation 3:7) Jesus did not give the disciples authority to determine the eternal destiny of anyone. That responsibility is not transferable. It belongs to the Lamb who redeemed us. (John 5:22,23; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 5:9)

If you have a difficult text that you like me to comment on, send it to me! Also, you can find part 1 [here](#) if you haven't read it already.