

Upon This Rock

Intro: Mat. 16:13-19 ¹³ When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? ¹⁴ And they said, Some *say that thou art* John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. ¹⁵ He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? ¹⁶ And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. ¹⁷ And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. ¹⁸ And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹ And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” They come to the city of Caesarea Philippi. It was a city built upon a rock, and it is here that Christ said, “upon this rock I will build my church.” To fully understand the statement made by our Lord, let us analyze the context.

I. HERE CHRIST CONSIDERS A VERY IMPORTANT QUESTION.

- A. Mat. 16:13** ¹³ When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?”
1. He did not ask this question for his own benefit or information, for on other occasions he proved that he knew all things.
 - a. John 2:24-25 ²⁴ But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all *men*, ²⁵ And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.”
 - b. John 4: (the Samaritan woman).
 2. It was for the benefit of the apostles (to stimulate thought) and for our benefit.
- B. The answer is given to His question; Mat. 16:14** ¹⁴ And they said, Some *say that thou art* John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.”
1. There are two views as to why this view is given.
 - a. Many of the Pharisees believed in the theory of “transmigration of the soul” (that when one died his soul went into the body of another).
 - b. They did not want to admit that he was the Son of God although they could not deny that he was a great prophet; John 3:1-2 ¹ There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: ² The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.”
 2. After hearing public opinion as to His identity Jesus asked His disciples who they personally thought He was, verse 15.
 - a. verse 16, Peter answers for the apostles.
 - b. Significance of His answer; Mat. 10:32-33 ³² Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. ³³ But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.”

II. CHRIST REPLY TO PETER’S ANSWER.

- A. Mat. 16:17-18** ¹⁷ And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. ¹⁸ And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”
1. Some claim that Jesus never claimed to be the Son of God. cf. the Modernist.
 2. But, on this occasion as well as on others He did.
 - a. Christ before the High Priest; Mat. 26.
 - b. Christ before Pilate; Mat. 27.

B. Let us look at the significance of this statement.

1. There is no other foundation for the church.
 - a. Eph. 2:20 ^{“20} And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*;
 - b. 1 Cor. 3:11 ^{“11} For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”
 - c. The early church was established on the fact that Jesus was the Christ the Son of the Living God; cf. Acts 2:36 ^{“36} Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”
2. Since the church and salvation are inseparable there is no other foundation for salvation.
 - a. Acts 2:47 ^{“47} Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”
 - b. Eph. 5:23 ^{“23} For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.”
 - c. Acts 4:12 ^{“12} Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

III. “I”**A. Adam, Abraham, Moses, Elijah, or John the Baptist did not build the church, nor John Calvin, Martin Luther, or Alexander Campbell.**

1. They were not crucified for our sins, instead it was Christ.
2. 1 Cor. 1:12-13 ^{“12} Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. ¹³ Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?”

B. Christ is the builder and only He has the divine right to decide in matters in reference to His church.

1. Jesus decided the *name*; yet man discards it.
2. Jesus decided the individual name (Christian); yet man discards it.
3. Jesus set the terms of entrance; yet man changes it.
4. Jesus established the worship; man has changed it.

C. How we need to return to this principle.**IV. “WILL BUILD”****A. Notice the usage of the future tense.****B. Its establishment was yet in the future. It did not come into effect until after His death and resurrection.****V. “MY CHURCH”****A. Significance of the term “church”**

1. From the Greek ἐκκλησία (*ekklesia*).
 - a. This word is from ἐκ (*ek*) which means out of, or out from within.
 - b. The root word is κλήσις (*klesis*) which means a calling.
 - c. Thus the word means to call out (from within).
2. Called out from what?
 - a. 1 Pet. 2:9 ^{“9} But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;”
 - b. Out of darkness into God’s marvelous light.

3. Called out by what?
 - a. 2 The. 2:14 ^{“14} Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - b. Called by the gospel; not some small voice in the night, or vision, or some better felt than told experience.

B. Notice the possessive case: “My”

1. Acts 20:28 ^{“28} Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”
 - a. Whatever a man purchases belongs to him.
 - b. This body of mine belongs to me: the church is Christ spiritual body and belongs to Him.
 - c. It is not man’s prerogative to change or alter it in any way. If we would but learn this lesson all religious differences could be solved.
 - d. Illustration: You are awakened one morning by a man tearing off the front porch to your home because he personally didn’t like it.
2. What, then, should the church be called?
 - a. Acts 20:28 ^{“28} Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”
 - b. Rom. 16:16 ^{“16} Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.”
 - c. Any term that signifies that the church belongs to Christ.

VI. “THE GATES OF HELL”

A. It should be translated hades or hadean world.

B. Death brings separation of the body from the spirit.

- a. The body goes to the grave.
- b. The spirit goes into either paradise or tartarus.

C. Here it has reference to the grave

1. Acts 2:27, 31 ^{“27} Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.... ³¹ He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.”
2. Christ spirit would go into paradise, his body to the grave.
3. The body would be raised and joined with His spirit after three days in the grave.
4. Upon this foundation, He would then build His church.

VII. “SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT.”

A. A misconception of some that it refers to the church ever being victorious.

1. This is included in its meaning.
2. The church is everlasting, eternal and immovable.
 - a. Dan. 2:44 ^{“44} And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.”
 - b. Eph. 3:21 ^{“21} Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”
 - c. Heb. 12:28 ^{“28} Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.”

- B. The phrase has specific reference to Christ being victorious over the grave and thus establishing His church.**
1. It was Christ resurrection from the grave that proved Him to be the Son of God; Rom. 1:4 “*4* And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”
 2. It is upon that foundation that the church has been built.
 3. Something can win a temporary victory and yet not prevail. The grave was victorious for three days but yet it did not prevail.