

Upon This Rock - cont.

Jesus says are important. Churches of men are build upon what a man says and confesses. But, the Lord's church, the church of (bellowing to) Christ is built upon a divine revelation from the Father and Jesus.

That Jesus, not Peter, is the foundation of the church is also affirmed by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:11 and Ephesians 2:20. This truth was also affirmed by Peter in 1 Pet. 2:6-8.

2. The Architect

The second great truth that Jesus taught about his church is that he is the builder. This was prophesied in Zechariah 6:12-13 and fulfilled in Acts 15:16. The Lord's church was not built and designed by men, but by Jesus Christ. The blueprint we use today to continue that building is the New Testament (2 Timothy 1:13) and only the Lord's house will stand (Psalm 127:1).

Note also the words "I will...". The Lord's church was not present at this time when he was in Caesarea Philippi, but it would be in the future. Starting on the day of Pentecost, the Lord would add to his church such as should be saved (Acts 2:47). Will you be a part of the saved? - *Chris Reeves*

Word of the Week

- Alms -

"Alms" or "almsdeeds" in the NT refers to charitable giving or acts of kindness. It is not to be done to be seen (Mt. 6:1-4) and it is to come from the heart (Lk. 11:41). It should be done to non-Christians (Acts 10:2) and Christians (Acts 24:17) alike. Let's all be a giving Christian this week!

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

Now when Jesus came into the parts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Who do men say that the Son of man is? And they said, Some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 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.
- Matthew 16:13-19 -

One of the greatest New Testament passages concerning the Lord's church is found in Matthew 16:13-19. This passage contains the very first reference to the "church" (Gr. *ekklesia*) in the New Testament! And for that reason we want to examine six very important lessons about the church.

When Jesus came to Caesarea Philippi, he did three important things in

his conversation with his disciples. First, Jesus asked a key question (v. 13). He asked, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" It was critical for them, and us today, to understand the true nature of Jesus. He indeed is the Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed) and he is the divine Son of the living God.

Second, Jesus distinguished between the answers (opinions) given by men and the revelation given by the heavenly Father (God) to Peter (vv. 14-17). There is a big difference between man-made opinion, which often doesn't amount to much, and divinely revealed truth. We want to hear and tell others the Fathers truth today!

Third, Jesus made an important declarations about the New Testament Church (v. 18). Here, Jesus taught about the foundation, the architect, the building, the owner, the strength, and the authority of his church. Let us now examine these six great truths.

I. The Foundation

The first great truth that Jesus taught concerned the foundation of his church. Who or what was the foundation upon which the Lord's church was built?

Well, it depends upon who you ask. If

you ask a Catholic, he or she will say that the foundation of the church was Peter. They claim that he was also the first Pope of the church. But was Peter the "rock" and the foundation of the church?

While it is true that "Peter" means rock, it is not true that he was the foundation of the church. Peter comes from the Greek *petros* (masculine), meaning "a pebble; a detached stone; boulder; or, piece of rock." But, the word Jesus used for the foundation - "upon this rock" - is a slightly different word. This word comes from the Greek *petra* (feminine) meaning "a rock ledge or cliff" (see also Matthew 7:24-25; 27:51, 60; Mark 15:46; Luke 6:48; 8:6, 13; Revelation 6:15-16).

The truth is, Peter's revelation, "Thou are the Christ...", not Peter himself, is in fact the "rock" or the foundation upon which the church is built (see also v. 20). It is also important to note that the Greek word *petra* used here for Jesus is also used of him (not Peter) in Romans 9:33, 1 Corinthians 10:4, and, 1 Peter 2:8.

The words of Jesus are critical here. Jesus said, "My Father ... And I". Both what the Father says and what