

Upon This Rock - cont.

all the Apostles, not just Peter, are the binding and loosing authority in the church (see also Matthew 18:18).

The binding and loosing authority of the Apostles was already given to them from heaven and it was this same authority that would direct the church (note the future indicative, perfect verb translated in the HCSB as “is already bound in heaven” and “is already loosed in heaven”).

The apostles' words were Jesus' words (John 16:13-15; 1 Corinthians 2:13; Galatians 1:11-12). So, Jesus' authority was demonstrated in the apostles' authority. The spoken and written words of the apostles in the New Testament are the authority for the church today, not the words of men in their creeds and councils.

The Church of Christ

Friend, will you gladly receive the word of God and be added to the Lord's church today (Acts 2:41,47)? Or, will you be joined to a man-made church that will be rooted up (Matthew 15:13)? Choose the Lord's church, the church of Christ!

- Chris Reeves -

Word of the Week

- Assurance -

“Assurance” (or “full assurance”) is what a Christian can have if he or she will accept the teaching of Jesus Christ. The Christian does not have to live with skepticism or cynicism. We can have a fully assured understanding (Col. 2:2), hope (Heb. 6:11), and faith (Heb. 10:22) in Christ.

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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 -

In this series of articles, I am discussing the great topic of the Lord's church in the New Testament. In the last two bulletins, I examined various important truths that Jesus taught about his church in Matthew 16:18: the foundation, the architect, the building, and the owner of the church. Here, I want to conclude by looking at two final truths from this great passage of scripture.

V. The Strength and Duration

The fifth great truth that Jesus taught about his church in Matthew 16:18 concerns the strength and duration of the church. Once the Lord's church was established on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, it would remain until the end of time. No person or thing can ever overcome it.

When Jesus built his church, he said that "the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it". Hades is the place where the spirits of mankind go after death. The spirits of righteous individuals go to the Paradise portion of Hades and the spirits of wicked individuals go to the Torment portion of Hades (Luke 16:19-31). Jesus, of course, went to Paradise when he died (Luke 23:43).

What Jesus was saying is that his descent into Hades (not "Hell", KJV) would not keep him from building his church (Acts 2:22-36). His death, burial and resurrection showed that he had "the keys of death and Hades" (Rev. 1:13ff). His death did not stop the building of his church; it was the very thing upon which the church was built!

Additionally, once Jesus' church was built, it would be a kingdom that would last forever. Daniel prophesied that Jesus'

church or kingdom would last forever:

"And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Daniel 2:44).

The author of the book of Hebrews made the same point:

"Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe: for our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:28-29).

VI. The Authority

The last great truth that Jesus taught about his church in Matthew 16:18 concerns the authority of the church. Jesus would give his authority to his apostles and their authority would govern the church, then and now.

Jesus said that he would give Peter "the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (verse 19). A "key" is a symbol for authority (Luke 11:52; Revelation 1:18; 3:7; Isa. 22:22). The inspired words of