

# CHURCH: HELL CAN'T STOP IT | MATTHEW 16:13-20

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## Matthew 16:13-20 ESV

<sup>13</sup> 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.

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## 1: THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH IS FAITH IN JESUS

### V13-14: JESUS ASKS THE QUESTION TO HIS DISCIPLES: WHO DO PEOPLE SAY I AM?

- V14: Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets
- Note: Honorable opinions don't equal a true saving faith in Christ
  - The ideas presented were rooted in cultural and biblical expectations
    - Biblical: that Elijah would come again to prepare the way for the messiah.
      - Jesus said that this was John the Baptist
      - But importantly, this idea misses the mark with Jesus... he's not the forerunner - he is the One!
    - Cultural: there were some extra biblical texts that presented the idea that some of these other prophets would come again.
      - Herod feared he was John the Baptist come again after he had beheaded him
      - These ideas might show respect and a kind, favorable disposition towards Jesus... but they aren't the truth!
      - "It is possible for men to have good thoughts of Christ, and yet not right ones, a high opinion of him, and yet not high enough" – Matthew Henry
  - Ultimately, they fall short of the truth and a true confession of faith

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## V15: JESUS THEN ASKS THEM, 'BUT WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?'

- Peter responds (V16) with a true and accurate confession of faith: "The messiah – the son of the Living God"
- It's worth noting that they probably still only understood this in part, but they understood enough to know that Jesus was in fact the Messiah and the Son of God.
- They've also come to a gradual understanding of this over their time with him.

## V17: JESUS STATES THAT THIS TRUE CONFESSION OF FAITH WAS REVEALED TO THEM

- V17: Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.
- Note that Christ's church is built on faith – faith that is the result of the work of the Spirit (& Father)
  - It's not by arguing and convincing people into belief
  - It's not by socially pressuring people into an acceptable belief
  - It's not by providing concrete apologetic proofs from nature, philosophy, etc.
  - True, saving faith is a work of Spirit enabled revelation!

### **John 6:44 ESV**

<sup>44</sup> No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

### **Ephesians 2:8 ESV**

<sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,

## V18: YOU ARE PETER (PETROS) AND ON THIS ROCK (PETRA) I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH (ekklēsia)

- Definitions:
  - Petros = Peter (proper name), small rock, piece of rock
  - Petra = large rock, foundational rock
- What is the rock that Jesus will build his church upon?
  - 3 Views:
    1. Peter is the rock - apostolic leadership
      - (this doesn't equate or justify Catholic doctrines of the pope)
    2. Confession of faith in Jesus as Lord
      - (as revealed by the Spirit)
    3. Christ himself is the rock

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- (the sure and ultimate foundation)
- In part, I believe we can put it all together: (not choosing one idea, but recognizing the truth in each idea and how they work together)
  - Jesus' words point in three interwoven directions: Peter himself is appointed as a foundational leader among the apostles; however the true strength of the church rests not in a man but in the Spirit-given revelation and confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God; and ultimately, Jesus Himself is the cornerstone upon which both Peter and every confession of faith must stand."

### **I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH (ekklēsia)**

- Church:
  - Eerdmans Bible Dictionary I. Terminology**

The English word "church," like cot "kirk" (cf. Dutch "kerk"; Ger. "Kirche"), is derived from Gk. kyriakós "belonging to the Lord," or more specifically, kyriaké oikía "belonging to the house of the Lord."
  - Here in Matthew 16 ekklēsia is used for church
    - it means an assembly
    - the word is rooted in the greek word καλέω (kaleo), meaning called or summoned
    - Therefore the church is an assembly that is called, originally used for civic or legal gatherings.
  - The NT primarily uses it for the assembly gathered in Jesus' name.
- So the ROCK that he builds His called out people upon HAS to be this SPIRIT REVEALED CONFESSION OF FAITH.
  - We're not simply a human organization built on Peter's preaching skills (or any others')
  - We're not a social club that we simply network ourselves into.
  - We're the called out assembly - the congregation of God who have heard his call and responded to his voice in faith!
- Also note: The church belongs to Jesus (not Peter or anyone else)
- Jesus is the builder, and promises to build the church, therefore He will succeed
- Further, the Church is the people and not a building.
  - We are 'living stones' in the temple of God

### **1 Peter 2:4-5 ESV**

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<sup>4</sup> As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, <sup>5</sup> 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.

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## **2: THE CHURCH IS MEANT FOR SPIRITUAL WARFARE !**

### **V18: THE GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT**

#### **Matthew 16:18 ESV**

<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.

- WERE THESE GATES TO BE SEEN AS OFFENSIVE OR DEFENSIVE AGAINST THE CHURCH?
  - Yes!
- What is meant here when Jesus refers to the 'GATES OF HADES'
  - Literal location
  - Gates in ancient times were the place of city governance - therefore the kingdom of hell and death
- LOCATION OF THE STORY & JESUS' PROCLAMATION: CAESAREA PHILIPPI
  - Was formerly known as Paneas
  - Was located at the foot of Mount Hermon - Gen 6 & 1 Enoch
  - Region associated with the Baal-Gad cult
  - Pan cultic cave (gates of hades - thought to be the literal gateway)
  - Roman Imperial Cult was significant and therefore the name change
- All in all the significance of the message tied to the location amounts to:
  - Jesus is waging war against the powers of hell.
  - He was in borderland country – Jew & Gentile, but the area was deeply pagan–Not anymore!
- NOTE: Jesus promises that His church will prevail against all the powers of hell in this cosmic war for souls.
  - No matter how crafty, wicked, or dark the enemies tactics... Christ's church is victorious
  - No matter what the devil throws at the church... the church will stand.
  - Further, no matter how oppressed a people or place are... when the gospel is preached, the kingdom will advance in the end.

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- Sometimes this takes time... generations even.
  - But His promise remains.
  - Look, the church that Jesus builds will be victorious because He redeems it, He builds it, He sustains it, and He empowers it!
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### **3: THE CHURCH OF JESUS PREVAILS IN THE BATTLES BECAUSE HE EMPOWERS IT**

#### **Matthew 16:19-20 ESV**

<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.

#### **V19: KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN**

- Keys to the Kingdom were given - entrusted
  - They were given to be used
  - They were given to unlock – to loose and to bind (in coordination with heaven)
  - I think of how the church in Acts operated in spiritual gifts, saw miracles, and exorcised demons from people and regions (in that idolatry and pagan worship lost their influence and grip on the people).
- Door of faith was opened through preaching the word - sharing the gospel

#### **Acts 14:27 ESV**

<sup>27</sup> And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.

- Note:
  - I think the church falters when we get sidetracked, divided, and selfish.
  - The church struggles when we get off-mission
  - The church seems powerless to save the lost when we neglect prayer, the gifts of the Spirit, and the authority of the Word.
  - Ahh... but a church that is fixed on Jesus, submitted to His word and faithful to proclaim it...
    - A church that is full of the Spirit and knows how to pray.

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- That is a church with the power to prevail!
- In v20 (pre-crucifixion) Jesus told his disciples not to prematurely share the revelation of his messianic nature
  - However, later (post-resurrection) Jesus would command them to tell everyone everywhere!

### **Matthew 28:18-20 ESV**

<sup>18</sup> 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."

- Go make disciples!
- Go advance the gospel!

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## **RESPONSE:**

**1: THE CHURCH OF JESUS IS FOUNDED UPON A SPIRIT BORN WORK OF UNDERSTANDING AND CONFESSING JESUS AS LORD.**

**2: THE CHURCH IS INTENDED TO BE THE MEANS OF ADVANCING THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

**3: THE CHURCH WILL REMAIN STEADFAST THROUGH EVERY DARK BATTLE, BECAUSE CHRIST FOUNDED IT AND BUILT IT, AND PROMISED IT WOULD PREVAIL.**

**4: THE CHURCH WILL NOT ONLY REMAIN STEADFAST, BUT WILL ADVANCE THE KINGDOM OF GOD, BECAUSE JESUS HAS EMPOWERED IT.**