

UNLOCKING HEAVEN ON EARTH

“.... 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 16:18-19

When it comes to warfare, gates were defensive in nature. Walls were built around many of the cities in Jesus' day and the gates were the most vulnerable part. If they could be broken through, victory would almost certainly be gained. Here, Jesus paints a picture of His church on the offensive, attacking the gates of hell, which He says will not prevail against it. It's a wonderful picture, but it seems totally unrealistic as we only have to look at the news to know the state of the world is getting worse. Has the church become ineffective and its influence is such that the gates of hell are far from being under pressure?

From what Jesus says, we can deduce two things in advance. First, He is talking about the keys of heaven. Unless we lose our keys, we don't give them much thought, but keys are what give us access to our homes, schools, workplaces, and cars. Keys are essential and Christ gives us the key that will unlock heaven on earth.

The second thing we can conclude is that the initiative seems to be taking place on earth. “Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” In other words, the effect is that what you bind on earth will be that which is already bound in heaven, but waiting for opportunity to be bound on earth, and that which is already loosed in heaven is waiting for opportunity to be loosed on earth. It is not that on earth we determine

what God does from heaven but rather, what He will do on earth as the Church of Jesus Christ acts in obedience and dependence on Him.

All that God wants to do from heaven, He does through His church. He doesn't drop any strategies out of the sky, but gives His people the key that will unlock the kingdom of heaven. As you bind and loose on earth, both positive and negative aspects of what has to be done, our activity is in such harmony with God that His will is carried out on earth. As we act in dependence on God and obedience to what we know to be His purpose, we find that the things of heaven are either released or bound on earth, and God's work flows through in blessing, power and purpose.

PRAYER: Dear Father, Grant me many opportunities to use the keys to unlock the kingdom of heaven to help accomplish your agenda on earth. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: Have I experienced a touch of heaven on earth by God's working in me and through me?