

# I will build my Church

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] to Matthew 16 and reading there from the 13th verse. Matthew 16, 13 to 20.

Now, when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, Who do men say that the Son of Man is?

And they said, Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. And he said to them, Whom do you say that I am?

Simon Peter replied, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. 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.

And I tell you, you are Peter. and on this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ coming into this chapter of Matthew 16 I want to start by doing a small word study and the word study I'm concentrating on is the word for church which in Greek is ecclesia it happens a lot of times in the New Testament but only twice in the gospels and those twice are in the gospel of Matthew the second incident where it's used is in excuse me

[ 2 : 2 6 ] Matthew 18 and what that is about is teaching on what action you are to take if your brother sins against you and Jesus says this if he refuses to listen to them tell it to the church and if he refuses to listen even to the church let him be to you as a gentile and a tax collector that's in Matthew 18 17 so here Jesus is saying that the church has the power to discriminate when a brother refuses to repent but coming to Matthew 16 the church here is to be a body of believers who will be built by the work of God the Holy Spirit into a collective force for good on this earth the thing about words

English words Greek words Hebrew words they all have a verb from which they are the meaning is derived and the meaning the verb that's been used to give us the word ecclesia church is one which means to choose or select so the implication is that the church is composed of those individuals who are called out of the world through the ministry of the gospel to serve Christ there's another word that occurs in the Greek New Testament and that's the word synagogue it actually occurs 29 times in the gospels but there's no theological derivation behind it as there is with church meaning ecclesia now when we come to Matthew 16 we are no doubt coming to the high point of the ministry of Jesus to his disciples and that high point is reached when later in the chapter he asks the disciples as to who they thought he was but one thing you have to realize in this chapter what is on the high mind of Jesus for the future is not what they're about to say what is in the top of his mind is what's going to happen in Jerusalem in Matthew 16 21 we read the first of three so-called passion predictions from that time

Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and on the third day be raised these words are repeated towards the end of chapter 17 and in the middle of chapter 20 now because of this right at the beginning of the chapter we find that the Pharisees and the Sadducees came and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven Jesus applied very abruptly an evil and faithless generation seeks for a sign but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of Jonah and he went away and so he's now into the very north of Galilee in the district of Caesarea Philippi and here he is asking the question who do men say that the son of man is if we were to ask that question today people would say well his ethic was excellent he was a good teacher he was a great example and that's really what's happening in the gospels some say

John the Baptist others say Elijah or Jeremiah or one of the prophets now from each of these characters John the Baptist Elijah Jeremiah or one of the prophets the people of that day saw something in the person of Jesus like the forthrightness of Jeremiah who spoke almost fearlessly to the people of his generation but Jesus is more than Jeremiah Elijah or John the Baptist so now comes the question who do you say that I am and it is Peter who gives the words of this poignant confession you are the Christ the son of the living God and Jesus responds blessed are you

Simon Bar-Jonah Bar-Jonah is Aramaic meaning son of John for flesh and blood does not reveal this to you but my father who is in the heaven so here what's happening here in this verse is the curtain is now being rolled back and we are permitted to see what has been happening in the life of Simon Peter as he listened to the teaching of Jesus because as he listened to the teaching of Jesus the spirit of God was active through what Jesus said and enlightened him as to who Jesus is and in today's society the position is no different it is we who require to be enlightened by the ministry of God the Holy Spirit as to who Jesus really is and what he wants from us now the apostle Paul in a later letter was praying for the

[ 9 : 08 ] Ephesians like this that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of glory may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him and that's what exactly what was happening through the ministry of Jesus to the disciples to Peter who could see you are the Christ the one promised from long ago the one who has come with a distinctive anointed ministry you are the son of the living God Peter then gets the glimpse of Jesus as to the person he really is that is his poignant confession Jesus

Peter replied you are the son of the living God flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my father who is in heaven and I tell you you are Peter and on this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it so here our Lord is now adding on to what Peter has said you are the Christ the son of the living God and he makes this response he says you are blessed and if we are sitting here in this house of God today and we really know who Jesus is let me tell you from God's word you are really blessed blessed are you Simon son of John flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my father is in heaven and then

I tell you you are Peter and on this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it so what is he saying here Jesus to Peter he's first of all drawing attention that the proper name of Peter is derived from the Greek word Petra which means a rock and it can mean a rock solid rock or rocky ground it's used that way in the gospels so what is this rock at first glance it would appear that Jesus is saying that on the person of Peter the Lord would build his church but let me assure you that is not what he's saying what's happening here is that

Jesus is drawing attention to this rock-like confession of faith which he's just made thus the rock is not a person but it is the confession of faith which he has just made and if we today make that confession you are the Christ the son of the living God we've made a rock-like confession as to who Jesus is that confession was based upon this revelation which had been made to him by God the Father via the Holy Spirit and although this revelation had been made to Simon Peter through the Holy Spirit what he did now was to act in faith by stating what he now believed to be the case so his confession is the rock upon which our Lord intends to build his church this is the perceptive promise you are

Peter and on this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it how is it that Jesus builds his church let me turn you to another promise in Matthew 18 verses 19 and 20 Jesus says again I say to you if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask it will be done for them by my father who is in heaven where two or three are gathered in my name there am I am I in the midst of them so the promise about building the church is based on the recognition that where two or three are gathered and there's more than two or three here today

[ 14 : 34 ] Jesus Christ stands in the midst and this idea of being in fellowship that's what he's talking about is the basis of how Jesus Christ today builds his church so we place as foremost importance the words that Jesus spoke to the disciples and what he still says today so here we are in 2023 as I said last week facing a new situation but the promise that Jesus makes I will build my church no conditions no get out clauses I will build my church and as we gather together as believers in his name and give him the place of promise in such a gathering by allowing him to speak to us through the written word of

God the perceptive promise is I will build my church thirdly there's a resultant power I will build my church gates of Hades shall not prevail against it now the gates of Hades have already been identified in the teaching of Jesus as the place called hell this is a place of punishment where all who reject the gospel will be punished eternally the Greek word for this place hell is Gehenna and what that is it's a transcription of a name of a valley to the southwest of Jerusalem where there was a perpetual incinerator where the rubbish was burnt continually so hell is a place of punishment but

Jesus changes the action here no longer is it a place of punishment but it is a force a sinister force that comes from Satan himself who opposes the building of the church now in the gospel of Matthew that force comes to recognition in the fourth chapter and that is an account of the temptation of Jesus there the devil is there to tempt Jesus to stop the work of redemption going ahead however in his teaching our Lord goes on to show that such a force will also come against the church of God now if that's the case what weapons has our

Lord given us to overcome this sinister work look at verse 19 of Matthew 16 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven so what are these keys of the kingdom that he refers to they're the giving of a power to resist this sinister force at the end of Mark's gospel we're told this these signs will accompany those who believe in my name they will cast out demons they will speak in new tongues they will pick up serpents and if they drink any deadly thing it will not hurt them they will lay hands on the sick and they will recover now an illustration and that illustration is found in Luke chapter 10 where we find that

Jesus had appointed an additional 70 disciples to preach the gospel and he gave them power to cast out evil spirits so when they returned they say to Jesus Lord even the demons were subject to us in your name he makes a response now listen to the response it's in Luke 10 this is what happens when the pages get stuck together verses 18 and 19 he says this I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven behold I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy and nothing shall by any means hurt you and that power is the key to the kingdom the power to bind on earth the power to go against

[ 20 : 33 ] Satan and all his desires the power to say Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father and see his work flourish there is a sinister attempt in today's world to destroy the church of God and when we consider the future of ourselves and our place in this church we must remember that we are in the act of building that self-same church and it will stand and shine to the glory of God when Jesus said to these 70 disciples I saw Satan fall from heaven he's not thinking of an incident in the past he's not thinking of an incident at the end of time he's thinking of the present because what he's saying is when you went around casting out these demons

I saw Satan fall right to the ground because of the victory you had in my name and in my presence thus we have the promise I will build my church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it may it be that God will write that word on our hearts and may we see it come to fruition to his glory in this place amen we sing our communion hymn the first three verses of behold the last how your top hips again amen they move him will lift above

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