

“THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN”

INTRODUCTION

The idea of “keys” of the kingdom of heaven is set forth by Jesus, at the occasion of His promise to build the church. Read Matt. 16:18-19. Jesus had just asked for the opinions of men as to who they thought He was. Peter then correctly stated that Jesus was the Son of the living God. Upon this rock-bed truth, Jesus made the promise to build the church (the house of God), or the kingdom. In the Old Testament, God announced through the prophets that one of David’s seed **would** establish the kingdom, and build the house of God. Now, Christ is about to fulfill the prophecies of the Old Testament. In connection with the promise, He adds that He will also do something else—He will give to the apostles “the keys of the kingdom of heaven.”

Now let’s make a study of “the keys of the kingdom of heaven.”

DISCUSSION

I. 1st, let’s talk about the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

A. Negatively, we need to see what the kingdom is **NOT.**

1. It is NOT the old kingdom of Israel brought back with it’s earthly king and glory, because it was to **replace** that old kingdom of Israel. Matt. 4:17; 6:10; 21:43
2. Neither was the kingdom of heaven to be that old kingdom “restored” in any sense of the word.
 - a. Premillennialists say it was to **be** restored with Christ on an earthly throne, but the Jews rejected Christ, and God had to postpone it’s establishment until a later date.
 - b. “Jehovah’s Witnesses” say it is yet future, and is to be a special earthly kingdom with the Lord ruling on earth **for** “Jehovah’s Witnesses.”

B. Positively, we want to know what that kingdom **IS.**

1. It is to be a “spiritual” kingdom.
 - a. It does NOT have it’s origin from some earthly power, but from heaven. John 18:36; Dan. 2:44
 - b. It has it’s king reigning in heaven. Dan. 7:13-14; Luke 18:13-15; 1 Cor. 15:23-24
2. The kingdom is the “**church**” or house of Jesus Christ.
 - a. He built it, and gave the keys FOR it. Matt. 16:18-19
 - b. It was established by “**power**” sent from God on the day of Pentecost.
 - 1) It was to **come** with “power.” Mark 9:1; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-8
 - 2) When the power came, the “church” became a reality—AS the kingdom of heaven. Acts 2:41-47; cf Rev. 1:4,7

II. 2nd, what are the KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN?

A. Isaiah prophesied of One of the lineage of David, who would have government on His shoulder, who would have power to “open” and “shut.” Isa. 22:22

B. Jesus made application of this passage to **himself** in Rev. 3:7 (Read or quote)

1. These passages refer to a single “key” that Jesus would have to open the door to the world, which would be the “**GOSPEL.**” Rom. 1:16
2. Then, Jesus promised to give the apostles the “keys” (plural) that could be used to actually open the doors of the kingdom of heaven to any who wants to use them. Matt. 16:19

C. The word “keys” can be used both literally and figuratively.

1. Literally, one who has a key to a building has the power or authority to open its doors to enter in.
2. Since the kingdom is spiritual in nature, it has to have spiritual **keys** to open its door into that kingdom, or church.

III. 3Rd, who are the USERS OF THE KEYS?

- A. The keys are NOT used by Peter at the “golden gate” to let people into heaven, as is traditionally stated and believed; NOR to the apostle Peter as the “Pope”, along with his so-called papal successors in Rome.
- B. BUT, the keys were to be announced by **all the apostles**.
1. Jesus began His address in this text by talking to ALL the apostles, and gave THEM the keys. Matt. 16:13, 19
 2. Peter first received the promise of the keys, but the other apostles were ALSO to use them. John 17:6-8, 20; 20:21-23
 3. Then, they were ALL involved when the keys were announced. Acts 2;36, 37, 42

IV. 4th, WHAT ARE THOSE KEYS?

- A. NOTE three things about it’s promise of the keys.
1. 1st, they are given **by** the LORD, and not some man or group of men
 2. 2nd, they are **“the”** keys, something specific (not keys in general amidst other keys that might also be used).
 3. 3rd, they are **“keys”** (plural), signifying more than one single specific action.
 - a. He gave the keys to them just before He ascended into heaven, and they were to be permanent, lasting till the end of the world. Matt. 28:18-20
 - 1) These keys would never wear out and need to be replaced.
 - 2) They would never to be changed with the passing of years.
 - b. “The” gospel key Jesus had involved many separate keys to be used by those who hear the gospel.
- B. NOTE that the keys **we** must use are “keys”, in the plural.
1. This does not mean that Christ has several plans of salvation, or ways to be saved, and we can choose the way that suits us.
 2. But, they are **consecutive** keys, that lead from one state to another, to finally get into the kingdom of heaven.
 - a. First, when the GOSPEL key is presented, it gives the 1st key of responsibility —**hearing**. Acts 18:8
 - b. Then, the 2nd key, **faith**, is reached upon using the 1st key. Rom. 10:17; John 1:12
 - c. Then, the 3rd key, **repentance**, is reached, enabling him to use the next key. Luke 24:47; 13:3
 - d. Then, the 4th key, **confession**, is reached, enabling him to go to the next key. Acts 8:36-37
 - e. Finally, the 5th key, **baptism**, is reached as the open the final door into the kingdom of heaven. Acts 2:38; John 3:3-5

CONCLUSION

I. There a number of blessings that are enjoyed ONCE one enters the kingdom.

A. 1st, one is born again. John 3:3-7

B. 2nd, one is a child of God. John 1:12; Gal.3:26-27

C. 3rd, one is forgiven, saved, or has remission of sins. Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21

D. 4th, one becomes a member or the body or church of Christ. 1 Cor. 12:13; Acts 2:40, 41, 47 (Tie together)

E. 5th, one becomes an heir of everlasting life, to be enjoyed after death. Col.1:12-14

II. The opportunity for YOU to become an heir of everlasting life is yours today if you are willing to use the keys the gospel provides.

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