

# Alêtheia Christian Fellowship

February 23, 2020

## “Peter’s Primacy?”

8:30 ~ Fellowship & Adult Sunday school

9:15 ~ First Service

10:45 ~ Service with the King’s Kid’s - Communion is for all Christians

### NEWS

\*You must let Stacey know if it is okay to send you a directory invitation

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**MATTHEW 16:13-20** ~ <sup>13</sup>NASB Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”  
<sup>14</sup>And they said, “Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still 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 answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” <sup>17</sup>And Jesus said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. <sup>18</sup>“I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. <sup>19</sup>“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.” <sup>20</sup>Then He warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ.

Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ to pose a general question about what the Disciples had heard... It’s \_\_\_\_\_ . Jesus was an absolute master teacher.

The Peripatetic school was founded by Aristotle centuries before Jesus’ time. The \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ served to lead the students to discover the answers for themselves.

Peter may have just blurted out the answer, but what's clear is that Jesus asked the \_\_\_\_\_, and further that Peter often functioned as their \_\_\_\_\_.

This is a group, not an \_\_\_\_\_.

Biblical Christianity is lived in the context of \_\_\_\_\_.

I) 17 And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona,

A) because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you,

B) but My Father who is in heaven.

II) 18 "I also say to you that you are Peter,

A) and upon this rock I will build My church;

B) and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

III) 19 "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven;

A) and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven,

B) and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven."

I) The verse 17 statement means two things. First it is a beatitude \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Peter.

Grace is not grace, if any bit of it is \_\_\_\_\_.

The blessing is the \_\_\_\_\_ into Who Jesus is, given to Him by God.

It was simply a deeper declaration that \_\_\_\_\_ of them have made before (Matthew 14:33, John 1:41).

Second, Jesus called Peter, “Simon Barjona.” In the previous verse, he was called, “Simon Peter.” The text takes pains to call attention to the \_\_\_\_\_ person Peter.

II) The verse 18 statement really functions like Jesus saying... You told Me Who I Am, and now, I'll tell you who you are.

The next two supplemental phrases will tell us why.

“Peter,” is the name that Jesus gave Simon, and up till now everyone probably thought it was just a \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus always has a \_\_\_\_\_ for everything He does – then and now.

In Greek it is Πέτρος (pě-třös), meaning rock, or stone. It is derived from the feminine noun πέτρα (pě-třä).

*Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.*

*God Bless You!*

Paul called Peter, Κηφᾶς (kā-fās), sounding like his Aramaic nickname ܟܦܝܐ (kā-fä).  
“You are ܟܦܝܐ (kā-fä), and upon ܟܦܝܐ (kā-fä), I will build...”

This is the primary passage Catholics use to defend the idea that Peter was the first \_\_\_\_\_ in a line of succession to today. Peter was unique in his position. But no credible Bible scholar could say that Peter’s position was permanent, either for him, or for any successor.

III) In the verse 19 statement Jesus says that He will give Peter the “Keys to the Kingdom of Heaven” with the two supporting clauses about “Binding and Loosing.”

“Keys” are \_\_\_\_\_ about power, authority and status than about role.

“Keys” both lock and unlock and so they “Bind and Loose,” It always has to do with the \_\_\_\_\_ of what is permitted and what is forbidden. (Matthew 18:1, 18, 20). It’s called the Bible.

Jesus often told people to remain silent about Who He is... There’s enough \_\_\_\_\_ with a small group – it would be a \_\_\_\_\_ if everyone knew.  
**seemed, not true, locations, questions, group, spokesman, individual, relationships, bestowed upon, earned, insight, all, individual, nickname, purpose, Pope, less, parameters, difficulty, disaster**

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Check all that apply – detach and place in the offering or the prayer box

\_\_\_\_\_ I want to talk with the pastor about \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I want prayer for \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I want to volunteer to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I want more information about \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

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Alêtheia ~ Matthew 16c ~ 022320

*Welcome Friends*

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO  
**MATTHEW**

A CLASH OF KINGDOMS

*Alêtheia Christian Fellowship*





Matthew 16:13-20 ~ 13NASB Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” 14 And they said, “Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.” 15 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” 17 And Jesus said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 “I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. 19 “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on



rift between the land of the living and the place of the dead. Literally, to them, “The Gates of Hades.”



Jesus seemed to pose a general question about what the Disciples had heard that outsiders were saying about Him. It's not true... The underlying Greek construction makes it completely obvious that Jesus simply used that question, to lead His Disciples to discover their own thoughts on the matter. As one scholar put it, Jesus wasn't asking to obtain information from the Disciples, but to build a platform to call forth a confession.

It is oftentimes subtle, sometimes only recognized in the original language, but I just want you to fully know that Jesus was an absolute master teacher.

It is an ancient style of teaching called peripatetic formalized by Aristotle 350 years before Jesus' time. The teacher seems to wander aimlessly and ask unrelated questions, but there is nothing aimless, or disorganized about it. The locations and the questions all serve to lead the students to discover the answers for themselves.

Jesus intentionally led the guys to “The Gates of Hades” and He intentionally asked probing questions to get them to learn in a far deeper way than they ever could by just sitting in a classroom. It's not even close to easy, yet Jesus made it look that way. He made it look so effortless, that most people studying the Bible never even see it.

Peter answered Jesus' follow-up question with, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Peter may have just blurted out the answer, but what's clear is that Jesus asked the group, and Peter functioned as their spokesman. Make no mistake about it, Peter was the leader of the Disciples by force of personality,

probably by age as well, and by Jesus' declarations. Here and in other places, not the least of which we will see after the Resurrection... "Shepherd My sheep" (John 21:16).

It is likely that they discussed the answer among themselves – perhaps Peter leading the discussion, before He boldly announced the consensus. Even if, he preempted the discussion phase and blurted out the answer before anyone else could, the other guys were no doubt nodding their agreement, or even voicing their concurrence.

This is a group, not an individual. In modern-western thinking we are spring-loaded to highlight what is individual.

The mindset of Jesus and the Early Church was on the group. We can't help but think of Christianity in terms of "I." What I must believe, what I must accept, what I must avoid, what I must do.



Biblical Christianity is a team sport. It is lived in the context of relationships. The entire point of Jesus dying on a Cross was to facilitate the possibility of eternal relationship between a group of people and their Creator. Even when we get that, we think in terms of God relating to each one of us as individuals – Heaven is family! It's relationship with everyone in the family.

We love to get busy getting busy, while largely ignoring that everything pales in comparison to the two greatest commands. Talk about majoring in the minors! A loving relationship with God through Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and because of that a loving relationship

with all of His other children – why is that so difficult to understand?

The truth is, it's not. It's hard to do, so we pay it lip service, we downplay it, we ignore it... and what's another way to say that – just in simple to understand terms? How about, willful disobedience to Almighty God?

In talking about the next few controversial topics I'd like to show you the structure within the structure. I want you to realize how remarkable the Bible truly is, and as a bonus, it may help us to better understand what's going on here.

~~14:1&2 (14:3-12)~~

~~14:13-21 (14:22-33)~~

~~14:34-36~~

~~15:1-20~~

~~15:21-28~~

~~15:29-39 (16:1-12)~~

~~16:13-20~~

We saw that from Matthew 14:1 through the end of our passage today there is a chiasmic structure.

- I) 17 And Jesus said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona,  
A) because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you,  
B) but My Father who is in heaven.
- II) 18 “I also say to you that you are Peter,  
A) and upon this rock I will build My church;  
B) and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.
- III) 19 “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven;  
A) and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven,  
B) and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.”

In addition, the next 3 verses, 17, 18 and 19, form a frame. Each verse starts with statement by Jesus and is followed by 2 subpoints enhancing each of those statements.

The verse 17 statement, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, means 2 things. 1) First it is a beatitude bestowed upon Peter – beatitudes bestowed are never due to the recipient earning them. God’s blessing is not a blessing, if it is a debt that God owes a person (Romans 4:4). This is precisely why “Salvation belongs to the Lord” – He grants it through His Grace. Grace is not grace, if any bit of it is earned. It is impossible to

give someone unmerited kindness, if they merit it, even in the smallest possible way.

This then goes hand-in-hand with the two phrases clarifying it... The blessing is the insight into Who Jesus is, that was given to Him by God. Peter is not going to get some continuous, or some future blessing for being such a smart boy, or for having such great faith, or for being the leader of the band... The blessing is the insight that came to Him directly from the mind of the Living God. That's how the verse works.

Peter gets that revelation and he is the one with enough courage to shout it right out... It is a profound revelation publicly articulated, but what he said – what they all probably agreed with – was simply a deeper and more specific declaration that all of them have already made before.



Remember the “Walking on the Water” incident – as soon as Jesus put himself and Peter in the boat, all of them began worshipping Jesus saying, “You are certainly God’s Son!” (Matthew 14:33). In addition, the Bible makes it clear that the reason the Apostles first started following Jesus was because they thought He was “The Christ” (John 1:41).

There’s a proper balance to this passage that most people miss... It is not all about the individual Peter, but it is definitely about Peter, more than the rest.

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A) and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven,  
B) and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.”

2) Now back to the opening statement... The second thing... Jesus called Peter, “Simon Barjona.” Basically Simon, son of John (transliterated into Greek, but definitely from Aramaic – more on that in a minute). In the previous verse, he was called, “Simon Peter.” The text takes pains to call attention to the individual person Peter. The Bible could have easily introduced Peter’s declaration as “One of the Disciples answered,” or even identified him with less formality as just, Peter. Jesus could have addressed him as “You.” Instead, what we have in a very short span is “Simon Peter” and “Simon Barjona,” followed by “You are Peter.” Yes, this is a group thing, but Peter is definitely singled out as he renders the consensus opinion.

The verse 18 statement really functions like Jesus saying... You told Me Who I Am, and now, I'll tell you who you are. Again, the text, at this point, is focused on Peter.

The next two supplemental phrases will tell us why. 1) First, "And upon this rock I will build My church." Jesus proclaimed that Peter's name was "Peter." It is the name that Jesus Himself gave to "Simon," and up till now everyone probably thought it was just a nickname, or had something to do with Simon's personality. Jesus renamed him Peter for the very reason we start to see in this passage. Jesus always has a purpose for everything He does – then and now. Take great comfort in that. We may not know why now, but there is always purpose.



The name was unusual – very few, if any, people in that time and place were called Peter. In Greek it is Πέτρος (pě-třös), and it is a word/name in the masculine form derived from the feminine noun πέτρα (pě-třä), meaning rock, or stone. People like to say that Πέτρος is a smaller rock, like a skipping stone and πέτρα is more massive, like a rocky outcropping, or a cliff face – it is generally a very extensive rock formation of some kind. Petra in modern-day Jordan is called that for obvious reasons.

In Greek it is necessary to change the feminine noun to the masculine name for a guy. Since the name derives from the noun, it came to be thought of as smaller, but

it was really just a customizing to a male person of the original meaning. In Aramaic, the language in which the nickname originated, the change of gender is not at all necessary. I'm confident the first rendition that came from Jesus' lips was Aramaic, because He just used the Aramaic Barjona. We see the truth of it with the Apostle Paul who called Peter, Κηφᾶς (kā-fās). Κηφᾶς is as close as Greek can simulate the sound of Peter's Aramaic nickname ܟܦܝܐ (kā-fä). There are other words in both Aramaic and Greek that mean rock, or stone, that Jesus could have used. He didn't. What I'm on about here is that Jesus was making a play on words that intended both words to be equivalent, equal, the same, not different.

Jesus was making a pun – you are the rock and upon that rock I will build My church.

What becomes a little strange in Greek, “You are Πέτρος, and upon πέτρα, I will build...” becomes crystal clear in Aramaic, “You are ܟܦܝܐ, and upon ܟܦܝܐ, I will build...” It works in Aramaic and that is what the Greek is trying to show. We get to English and completely miss the whole thing... “You are Peter and upon this rock, I will build.” Why am I making a big deal about it? Protestants love to make a big deal about

how Peter is the little stone, but Jesus will build His church on the massive rock foundation. The two rocks are completely different and so it is not Peter himself who is the foundation, it is his faith, or his confession, or by extrapolation Jesus' teaching proclaimed.



Why have Protestants worried so much about it? This is the primary passage Catholics use to defend the idea that Peter was the first Pope and that this institutes a perfect line of succession down through the ages to the present Pope, which of course, would mean that only the Catholic church is the true church of Christ. The Pope has the “Keys.”

To fight that idea, Protestants say that it was anything, but Peter himself, that Christ would build His church upon. Such an idea destroys the play on words Jesus painstakingly crafted.

What's the answer? It was Peter upon whom Jesus would build His church, but that does not in any way translate to the Catholics having even the slightest chance of being right about a succession of Popes and the Papal Authority that would go hand-in-hand with it.

The Bible clearly and unambiguously teaches that Jesus is the only true foundation. He is the "Stone that the builders rejected," He and He alone is "The cornerstone" of our faith. There are different ways to look at things – different angles – different metaphors. The church is Jesus' Body, yet He is also the Groom to the church's identity as His bride. Logically, Jesus cannot marry Himself. We know that's not what's intended, but that it's just two different ways to look at things.

In this place, Jesus is talking about His church as an assembly of people through time and He was saying that the cornerstone of that entity – would be founded

on Peter. Not Peter alone, but Peter in Christ – his confession was founded on Christ.

That's the fullness of the blessing. Peter was unique in his position. He was hand-selected because of who he was, and while he was given the same insight the rest of the Apostles were given, as the leader, He was the one who boldly pronounced that insight on behalf of the group. Make no mistake, Peter was the first main leader of the Christian church after Jesus Ascended.



It was to Peter that Jesus said, “Tend My lambs,” and “Shepherd My sheep” and then, “Tend My sheep.” (John 21:15-17). It was Peter who preached 3,000

souls into the church on Pentecost Sunday (Acts 2), and it was Peter who Jesus used to get the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem to accept Gentile Believers as equals (Acts 10).

At the same time, we know that Peter continued to make big mistakes. In the very next passage - just a few verses from here, Jesus will say directly to Peter, "Get behind Me Satan!" Peter would go on to deny Jesus 3 times (Matthew 26:69-75) and even many years later, the Apostle Paul would rebuke Peter for his foolishness (Galatians 2:11).

There is not a credible scholar today, whether Protestant, or Catholic, who would honestly say that Peter's position was permanent, either for him, or for any successor.

The Catholic position is untenable from Scripture. Neither Matthew, nor any of the other Gospels indicate that Peter became the head of the church in some hierarchal official way and remained in that position. Nothing in the rest of the New Testament or the early church Fathers indicates that there was ever such a concept until at least 300 years after the fact.

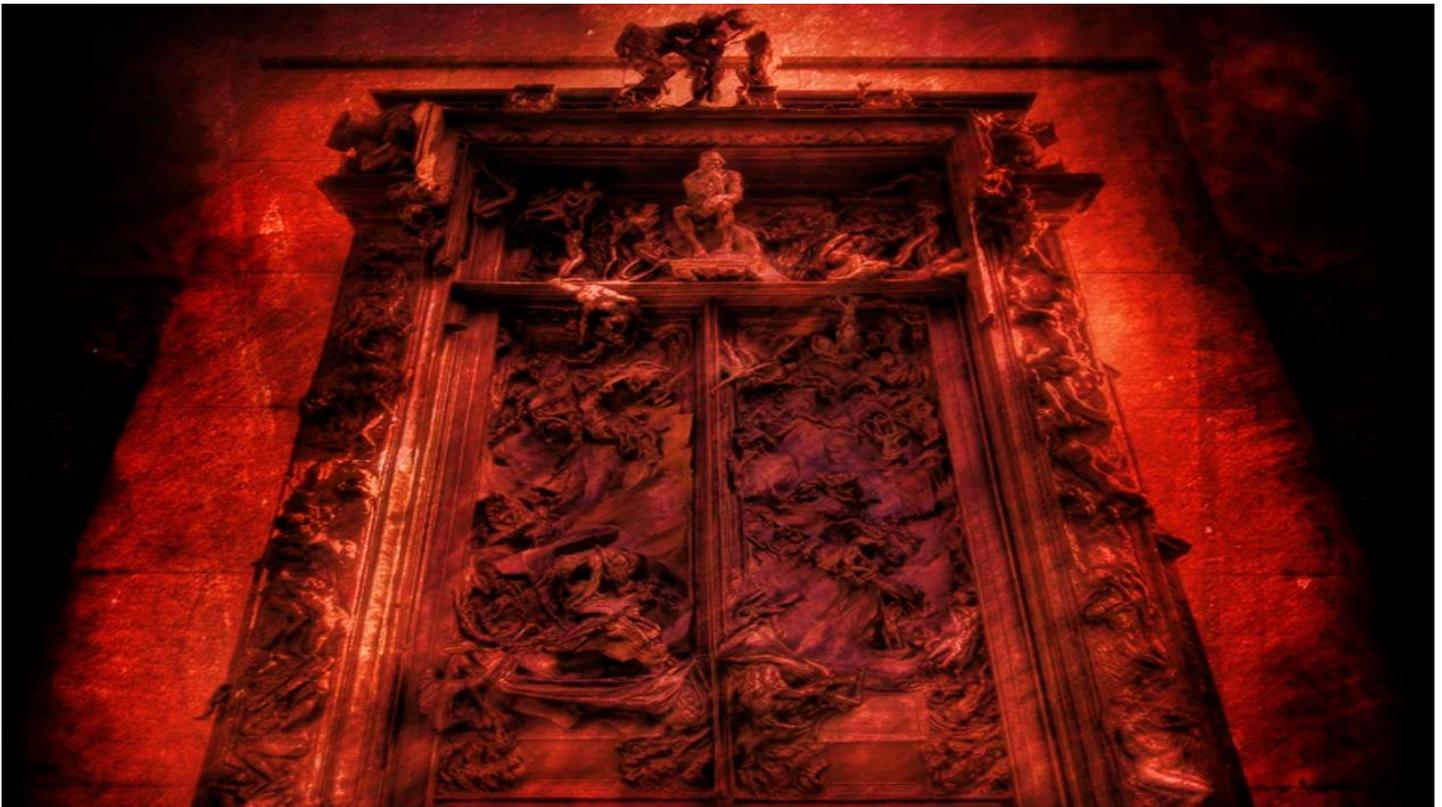
Origin, Tertullian, Chrysostom and even the great church doctor Augustine, never entertained such a notion from a Biblical foundation. Presently, the “Theologian to the Pope,” Cardinal Kasper refutes the notion of a supreme leader of all Christians and under his teaching Pope Francis typically refers to himself, not as “Pontiff,” but as what he truly is, simply the “Bishop of Rome.”

Even if Peter was a Pope – and he wasn’t... There is nothing in the Bible that would indicate a permanent office of Pope.

Protestants don’t need to get creative with Scripture to disprove a Papal legacy that the Bible and the earliest church never once even hints at. We know that in just a few years the church was led by James, not Peter, and from Jerusalem, not Rome (Acts 15:1-35, 21:18).

Let’s not forget though, that Peter was unique. Not only one of the original Apostles, but the leader of those original Apostles. Their mission was unique and never to be duplicated again. There were others that likewise had unique roles in the first century, not the least of which was the great Apostle Paul.

Jesus said that it was upon Peter that He was building. The question one must ask is what was it about Peter? As we've already seen, it was his personality and it was God's choice of blessing him, but more than who Peter was, it was what Peter represented. In that moment, Peter was declaring the God-given Truth in tremendous courage and faith. That is the foundation and through Peter it truly is all those things that Origen, Tertullian, Chrysostom and Augustine said it was – all those things that the Protestant church recaptured after more than a millennium of bureaucracy and hierarchical power struggles in Catholicism – it is the confession – “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God” – it is the faith shown in proclaiming it publicly – it is the teaching of Jesus comprehended, preached and lived – it is Christ Himself, the ultimate Bedrock of Salvation.



Then Jesus said, “And the gates of Hades will not overpower it.” We saw the backdrop of that statement last week. It is a bizarre construction and is the reason it is so misunderstood. It is both passive and active, so some say evil will attack the church, but the church will prevail. Others say the gates are stationary and so it is the church that attacks evil and evil will not stand. The church protected by God, or the church actively fighting for God? I believe it is not one, or the other, but both. Yet, both with less force.

If it was only one thing, then there’s a certain focus and intensity that is somewhat diminished when it’s both.

The other thing is the Gates specifically relate to death – it is the gateway into the place where the dead are kept and the gates function to keep them in – no one gets out of Hades without the help of God.

In keeping with His metaphor, I think Jesus was saying that the world is full of dead people, who are just as locked into their death, as if they were truly behind the Gates of Hades. The church will batter down those gates – Peter will batter down those gates by teaching others what Jesus taught him... Ultimately, he did that, along with many others, in writing it down in what we call the Bible.

Look at the first half of the Book of Acts. God used Peter as the primary mover and shaker to get the fledgling church off the ground – Peter was dynamic, he was bold, he was fearless – he was committed, and God used him mightily.

However, Peter was not an executive, or a manager, or a coordinator. By the time the church expanded, in numbers and diversity and in locations from Rome to Babylon and from Northern Turkey to southern Ethiopia Peter's leadership was largely replaced by other men with other gifts.

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B) and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.”

In the verse 19 statement Jesus says that He will give Peter the “Keys to the Kingdom of Heaven” with the two supporting clauses about “Binding and Loosing.”

First “Keys” are less about power, authority and status than people think. We are Westerners, just like the Romans before us, and we think in terms of position, where the Eastern mind thinks more in terms of role. To them, a man is not a pastor because he holds that office and has that title, he’s a pastor, because he pastors and even more to the point, he pastors, because that’s who he is.

“Keys” both lock and unlock and so they both open and close. In this case, the “Kingdom of Heaven.”

Remember, not a realm, but a reign – not a place, per se, but an existence where everything and everyone are in complete harmony and unity with God. This is not identical to the “Church.” The church is the entity that is proclaiming Christ – the Kingdom is their home imperfectly now, perfectly later.

“Binding and Loosing,” is what “Keys” do. Specifically, in the Bible, it means that a person or a council has the authority to make decrees about what is acceptable and what is unacceptable. It always has to do with the parameters of what is permitted and what is forbidden. Due to context, it is setting the parameters of what constitutes acceptable faith and practice within the church – within Christianity – within the Kingdom.

It would seem that Jesus was going to give this authority to Peter alone. If I say I’m going to give Joe \$100 dollars, does that mean that I’m not going to give anyone else \$100 also? Arguments from silence are horrible arguments.

Skip one chapter, arrive at Matthew 18:1, and it says, 1NASBThe disciples came to Jesus and said, “Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

If Jesus made Peter boss, it was still news to the rest of the gang. Jesus did not respond, “What are you talking about, I put Peter in charge.” In that chapter, Jesus spoke to all the Disciples about what it means to be a Kingdom person and in the midst of it we get verse 18, where Jesus says, 18“Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.”

Identical to the charge Jesus gave Peter with one small exception. Every one of the pronouns is plural – He is saying this to the group, and it is absolutely impossible to read it any other way. You guys will have this authority.

Specifically, if “Two or three have gathered together in My name.” That’s Verse 20. Contrary to popular opinion, it isn’t about prayer, it’s about “Binding and Loosing,” it’s about the “Keys,” it’s about the authority of church leadership in making determinations.

The entire idea is that the leaders would be so in tune with Jesus that the decisions they make will really only be a recognition of what God has already decided. It's called the Bible.

Quickly, if we think of the foundation of the church as churchmen then they constitute a foundation built on the bedrock of Christ. If Peter was the man and then there is a continuous succession of men in Peter's office, the foundation of the church is still being built today. That is precisely what we see in Catholicism. It is a church where doctrine changes over time and can still change on into the future. If however, we see Peter as being the first stone in the foundation and others like Matthew, Luke, Paul and James being foundation stones next to him and recognize that they were to teach what Jesus taught and that they have done that in the Bible, then the Bible, their inspired work, becomes the foundation of the church and it is a foundation that never changes.



How do we know that all the disciples were privy to the conversation concerning Peter? Jesus asked the group the question and without missing a beat He shows that they are all still fully engaged with Him because His charge is to them all... It says Jesus 20NASB“Warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ.”

Jesus started the passage off by referring to Himself as the Son of Man. We talked about that last week. I said it was His humanity that allowed God to bleed.

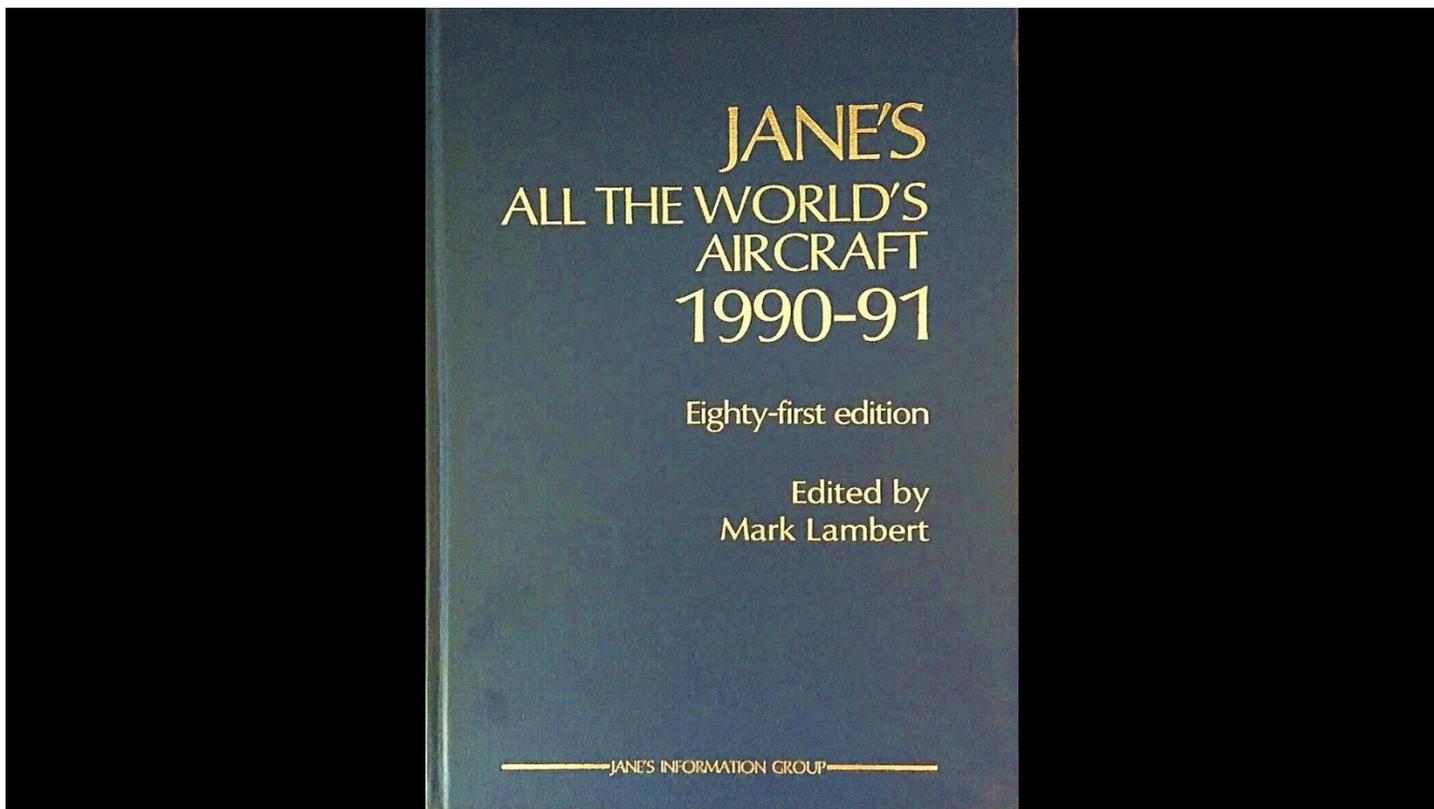
It was what Jesus was born to do – it was the reason for His incarnation as a frail human being. As fully God,

Jesus was able to live sinlessly, but what was required was for Him to die for the sin that the Father would impute to Him – to pay the price no one else can pay – to pay your debt, the debt you could never pay in an eternity of trying.

As the poet said, the bed of the newborn Jesus was blanketed by the shadow of the Cross.

Jesus often tells people and demons to remain silent about Who He is – Scholars call it the Messianic secret. There's enough difficulty with a small group who know – it would be a disaster if everyone knew.

As I mentioned, Jesus is about to dramatically rebuke Peter, because Peter doesn't want the Christ to die, but that's what the Christ must do.



Jane's all the World's Aircraft. Confirmation by a person in a position to know. Many people thought that Jesus was the Messiah, but without direct confirmation from Him, or His Apostles, it wasn't certain enough to drastically act.

Well now the cat's out of the bag – Everyone speaks freely – it has been declassified by God – what will you do with the information?