

Introduction

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.

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

Whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.

If you forgive the sins of any, *their sins* have been forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they have been retained.

Feed My lambs.

The Catholic Doctrine of the Papacy

All five of the above statements were made by Jesus: the first three in Matthew 16:18-19, the fourth in John 20:23, and the fifth in John 21:15. These are the texts upon which the Roman Catholic Church builds its doctrine of the papacy, namely, that Peter was appointed by Jesus as the head of the Church and that the popes of the Catholic Church are Peter's successors. Chapter 1 quotes extensively from the documents of Vatican II and the catechism of the Roman Catholic Church to explain this doctrine in more detail using official sources.

The immediate context of the two verses from Matthew 16 consists of verses 13-20 and is called *Peter's confession*, based on his great statement of faith recorded in verse 16: "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God!" However, Jesus' response to this great confession has been the subject of theological controversy for centuries.

The study presented in this book began because I was asked about Peter's confession by two different people within a relatively short period: one, a Catholic friend, and the other, a former Catholic nun who now attends the church we

attend. It was originally to be a short paper giving a Protestant view of Jesus' response to Peter's statement of faith. However, I soon discovered that to do justice to this text would take a much longer and quite technical analysis. Moreover, since Catholic polemics often include John 20:21-23 and 21:15-19 along with Matthew 16:13-20, these two passages needed to be addressed as well. The result is this book, which presents an in-depth, exegetical study of these texts from an evangelical Protestant viewpoint.

Contribution to an Intermural Evangelical Debate

But the length of the book continued to grow. Due to the use of the terms "church" and "kingdom of heaven" in Jesus' response to Peter, several issues are triggered that are current subjects of hot debate within Protestant evangelical circles. Matthew 16:18 is the first occurrence of the word "church" or ἐκκλησία (*ekklēsia*) in the New Testament, and the fact that it is used in a statement by Jesus himself makes it a doubly important text. Obviously, questions immediately arise: What is the "church," what is the "kingdom of heaven," and what is the relationship between them? But the most important issue raised is the relationship between this "church" and Israel. Conservative theologians are quite divided on this question.

I have used this study of Peter's confession as an opportunity to enter this debate and offer some new perspectives on the issue of continuity vs. discontinuity regarding Israel and "the church." In addition to a rather lengthy study of the terms "church" and "kingdom of heaven," I include somewhat detailed discussions of two closely related texts, Romans 11 and Ephesians 2. Chapter 5 in this book is devoted to Romans 11 and Chapter 6 to Ephesians 2. However, the extensive and detailed argumentation for the views taken in these chapters is given in three appendices at the end of the book.

In view of the vast literature today debating the issues of Israel, the church, and the olive tree metaphor in Romans 11, I can hardly view my contribution here as the final word. However, I do hope others may find some insights of merit here that can serve as the basis for further research.

All this material is, in fact, relevant to any discussion of the Roman Catholic Church. Though not the first to advocate it, Augustine formally established the view that the "church" is "Spiritual Israel" or the "New Israel," and this has been the view of the Catholic Church ever since: it--the Roman Catholic Church itself--is the New Israel. In Protestant circles, the view that the "church universal" is the New Israel is often called "Replacement Theology." In this book I argue strongly against this view, and in this I am far from alone.

How This Study is Organized

The overall structure of this study can be presented as follows:

Part I: Matthew 16:13-20

- **Topic I: "I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church"**
- **Topic II: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven"**
- **Topic III: "Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven"**

Part II: John 20:21-23

Part III: John 21:15-19

However, this is a lengthy and complex study. It is therefore helpful to present a detailed outline here in this introduction. Unfortunately, though, the outline does not easily lend itself to breakdown into chapters. Therefore, I have inserted chapter indicators at the points where the outline breaks occur. The important flow of logic, however, is displayed in the outline, and the reader is encouraged to refer back to this outline frequently.

Part I: Matthew 16:13-20

Topic I: "I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock
I will build my church"

[Chapter 1]

The Position of the Roman Catholic Church

[Chapter 2]

General Observations

The Role Played by Peter

What Was Peter's Name?

Πετρος and Πειτρα (*Petros* and *Petra*)

Who or What Is the πειτρα on Which the Church is Built?

[Chapter 3]

ἐκκλησία: The Aramaic and Hebrew Behind Its Use Here

[Chapter 4]

Preliminary Steps in Identifying the *Qāhāl*

Step 1: What the *Qāhāl* Was Not

Step 2: What Did Jesus Mean by "The Kingdom of Heaven"?

The Kingdom of God in the Old Testament

The Rabbinic Background

Jesus' Use of "Kingdom of Heaven": The Proposed
Answer

This Age and the Age to Come

The Messianic Kingdom as a Present Reality
in Jesus' Ministry

The Messianic Kingdom as a Present Reality
between the Advents:

Its Connection to the *Qāhāl*

The Messianic Kingdom as Future

Conclusion

Step 3: Jesus and Israel

[Chapter 5]

Step 4: Paul and Israel

Romans 11: Israel and the Covenants

Israel's Fall Is Partial: The Remnant

Israel's Fall Is Temporary

The Olive Tree Analogy

Israel's Restoration

Gentile Salvation

Summary of Romans 11

[Chapter 6]

Step 5: Paul and Israel

Ephesians 2: The Gentiles and the Covenants

The Gentiles: First "Far Away" and

Then "Brought Near"

The Gentiles: Citizens of National Israel

The Sense In Which Gentiles Become Part of Israel

The Four Metaphors

The Four Metaphors and National Israel

The Four Metaphors and the ἐκκλησία

National Israel and the ἐκκλησία

[Chapter 7]

Identifying the *Qāhāl*

Objections to this Identification

The One New Man

Jews, Greeks, and the Church

Conclusions

[Chapter 8]

Building the *Qāhāl*

The Future Tense

In What Sense Is the *Qāhāl* Built on Peter?

[Chapter 9]

The *Qāhāl* and the Roman Catholic Church

Introductory Observations

Paul's Warning Against Gentile Conceit

The Result of Gentile Conceit: Replacement Theology
and the "New Israel"

The Peter of Fiction

Chapter 9 Appendix: The Gates of Hades

**Topic II: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of
heaven"**

[Chapter 10]

The Roman Catholic View

Shebna and Eliakim

The Nature of the Office of Shebna and Eliakim

"The Key to the House of David" and Its Function

Eliakim's Downfall and Removal

Is Eliakim a Type of the Messiah?

The Letter to the Church in Philadelphia

"The Key of David" and the Messiah

What "the Key of David" Opens and Shuts

What Was Delegated by Jesus to Peter?

Conclusion

Topic III: "Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven"

[Chapter 11]

The Roman Catholic View

Does the Power of Binding and Loosing
Represent One Use of the "Keys"?

The Verb Tenses

The Meaning of Binding and Loosing

The Rabbinic Usage

Binding and Loosing Things or Acts

Jewish *Halakhah*

Critique of David Stern's View

The View of R. T. France

General Critique of Stern and France

Binding and Loosing People

Roman Catholic View of Binding and Loosing

On Whom Was the Power of Binding and Loosing Conferred?

The Three Choices

The Case for Limiting This Power to the Apostles Alone

The Apostolic Power of Binding and Loosing

Conclusions

Chapter 11 Appendix 1: The Tradition of the Elders
and the Mishnaic *Halakhah*

Chapter 11 Appendix 2: Roman Catholic Sacred Tradition

Part II: John 20:21-23

[Chapter 12]

Commissioning the Disciples: Verse 21

"Receive the Holy Spirit": Verse 22

"He Breathed on Them"

The Work of the Holy Spirit In the Old Testament
and At Pentecost

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

What Occurred in John 20:22?

The Nature of This Work

[Chapter 13]

The Roman Catholic View

Remitting and Retaining Sins: Verse 23

Grammatical Analysis

Objections to the Roman Catholic View

The Traditional Protestant Interpretation

The Rabbinic Background

A Proposed Interpretation

Toward Resolving the Difficulties
Artificial and Unnatural
Unrelated to the Rabbinic Background
No Special Authority Needed
No Connection between Verses 22 and 23
Comfort to Roman Catholics and Former Roman Catholics

Part III: John 21:15-19

[Chapter 14]

The Roman Catholic View
Structural and Lexical Analysis of the Text
Interpretive Issues
"More Than These"
Why Was the Question Repeated Three Times?
Was Peter Crucified?
The Purpose of This Exchange between Jesus and Peter
Critique of the Roman Catholic View

Appendices

Appendix 1

Is the Church a New Entity That Began at Pentecost?

The Second Advent and the Messianic Kingdom
The Interadvent Period: The Key Issue
Hypothesis 1: The ἐκκλησία Begins at Pentecost
Hypothesis 2: No New Entity Begins at Pentecost
Replacement Theology/Amillennialism
The Alternative Offered

Appendix 2

The Olive Tree in Romans 11 and
The Commonwealth of Israel in Ephesians 2

Part I: The Olive Tree in Romans 11
The Parallel between the Two Metaphors
Metaphor 1: Firstfruits and Lump
Metaphor 2: The Root and the Branches
Identifying the Referents of the Two Metaphors
The Identity of the Firstfruits and Lump
The Identity of the Root and Branches
The Olive Tree
Context: Paul's Focus in the Metaphor
Exegesis: "Branches" and "Olive Tree" are
Used Interchangeably
The Debate Over the Meaning of the Olive Tree
Example 1: Replacement Theology

Example 2: Dispensationalism

The Cultivated Olive Tree As National Israel

Part II: The Commonwealth of Israel in Ephesians 2

The Identity of "Israel" in Verse 12

πολιτείας and συμπολιται

Alternatives to the View Taken Here

Conclusions

Appendix 3

The Messianic Community and The Sense

in Which Gentiles as Individuals Become Part

of National Israel During the Interadvent Period

Introduction

National Israel

The Gentiles: Individuals and Nations

The Salvation of Gentiles as Nations

The Salvation of Gentiles as Individuals

The ἐκκλησία and the "Mystery"

The *Qāhāl* of Messiah

A Limited Covenantal Sense

The Need for Defining This Sense

What This Sense Cannot Mean

What This Sense Does Mean

The Centrality of Israel

A Note on the Hebrew and Greek

This is a technical study of the three selected texts together with Romans 11 and Ephesians 2. I have therefore referred to Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek in its original font. However, I also transliterate all the important words into English letters. That makes the words easier to recognize and remember, and it also gives a rough indication of their pronunciation. Therefore, with a careful reading of accompanying discussions, the presence of these words, phrases, and sentences should not prevent anyone from following the argument.

A grammatical analysis is critical to the interpretation of several of these texts. For those readers with no knowledge of the biblical languages, it may not be possible to follow the details of these analyses, but the conclusions are easily accessible to anyone. For those with only a little knowledge of these languages, I provide additional grammatical explanations that would ordinarily not be included in a work at this level.

In short, the material in this book should be understandable to any careful reader and serious student of the Bible.

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A Final Word to Those About to Read This Book

About two years of research went into the writing of this book. It was of great profit to me personally if for no other reason than it reaffirmed my belief in the centrality of the nation of Israel in biblical theology and in God's overall plan of redemption. Israel was, is, and always will be God's chosen covenant nation--the apple of his eye, the nation written on the palms of his hands.

Today is an especially crucial time for the nation of Israel. How sad it is, then, to see Gentile churches virtually ignoring her plight and in their theology denying any significance to the land God gave her as an everlasting possession. They display the very arrogance against which Paul warns Gentiles in Romans 11--and to a degree even Paul himself could not have imagined. Many segments of Christendom see no future for Israel, outside of a few Jewish people who are saved and brought into "the church." How different was the Apostle Paul's attitude!

Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for *their* salvation. Romans 10:1

God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew.
Romans 11:2

From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of *God's* choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. Romans 11:28-29

The psalmist wrote:

Behold, He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. Psalm 121:4

But for our part, let us follow the admonition of David:

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.
Psalm 122:6

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