

thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church" (18a).

1. In the Greek, "Peter" is "Petros," masculine, and "rock" is petra," feminine.
2. The church was then still future: "I will build..." shows it was not built in the days of Abraham, as some teach, or established by John the Baptist, as others assert.
3. The great rock on which it is built was not Peter himself, but the great truth he confessed concerning Jesus, His deity. Jesus built his church upon a divine foundation (1 Cor. 3:11). Christ is the builder and the foundation of his church.
4. The church Jesus built was to be Christ's church: "My church" (Acts 20:28; Romans 16:16). And its creed is also divine, "the doctrine of Christ" (Acts 2:42; 2 John 9-11).
5. His right to build his church was derived from the prophecies concerning it, by the authority of God, and from his great love for it enough to give his blood and himself to purchase it (Zech. 6:12; Matt. 11:27; 28:18; Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25).
6. The church Jesus built is no accident, but a vital part of God's eternal plan for transforming and saving sinners (Eph. 3:8-11). Jesus built it according to divine plan and pattern (Heb. 8:5; Exodus 25:40; 40:16). Its mission is fulfilling his great commission.

C. Its power and security: "And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18b).

1. As "the gates" of a city represent its power, "the gates of Hades" represent the power of Hades.
2. Jesus was to be crucified about six months after he made this promise, but that would not prevent him from building his church. His resurrection would demonstrate his divine power over the grave and enable him to keep his promise.

IV. THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM (Matthew 16:19,20).

- A. "Keys," which symbolize authority in the kingdom, were given to Peter. Those keys represent authority to bind and loose on earth what Christ has bound and loosed in heaven.
- B. But the Bible plainly shows that the same authority was given to all the twelve apostles (John 20:19-23).
  1. Paul was later given just as much authority as any other apostle (2 Cor. 11:5; 12:11).
  2. Their power was imparted to them by the Holy Spirit Jesus sent (Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:4-8; 2:4).

STUDIES IN MARK--LESSON TWENTY-THREE  
Peter's Confession and the Lord's Promise  
Mark 8:27-30; Matthew 16:13-20

INTRODUCTION -

I. LESSON LINKS AND CONTEXT.

- A. About six months before his death, Jesus was at the peak of his popularity, having healed many, walked on the water, and fed the 5000 and 4000. But his personal ministry was nearly over.
- B. Worshipped by friends and hounded by his rising opposition, multitudes still followed him as he went about training his disciples and preaching the word.
- C. Seeking opportunity for private training of the 12 and temporary escape from the crowds, Jesus took his disciples across the Sea of Galilee and northward "into the villages of Caesarea Philippi," at the foot of Mount Hermon, east of the Jordan (Mark 8:27; Matthew 15:39; 16:5).
- D. Jesus asked the question, "Who do men say that I am?" "on the way" to Caesarea Philippi, or as they approached that vicinity (Mark 8:27).

II. THE CONFESSION PETER AND TIMOTHY MADE BEFORE MANY WITNESSES IS "THE GOOD CONFESSION" JESUS MADE BEFORE PONTIUS PILATE AND IT IS TRULY GREAT AND SUPREMELY IMPORTANT.

- A. There is no greater truth than Peter's confession.
- B. The truth concerning the deity of Jesus is the central truth of the Bible, the heart of God's power to save, and no truth is more important than this (1 Timothy 6:12-16).

III. THE TRUTH CONCERNING JESUS IN PETER'S CONFESSION IS THE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIANITY AND OF THE CHURCH JESUS BUILT.

- A. Jesus made the good confession essential (Matthew 10:32,33).
- B. We know, by necessary inference, Jesus put the good confession in the great commission, which is our authority to preach and for baptizing penitent believers (Mark 16:15,16; Matthew 28:19). Since we cannot scripturally baptize unbelievers, and we cannot know one believes until he confesses faith in Christ, we cannot scripturally baptize anyone unless he confesses his faith.
- C. Salvation is contingent upon making the confession in this life (Romans 10:9,10); and the church Jesus built is founded upon the precious divine truth Peter confessed (1 Corinthians 3:11).

IV. MOST ALL CHURCHES REQUIRE A CONFESSION BEFORE BAPTISM.

- A. Yet the type of confession required varies greatly.
- B. Some require candidates for baptism to confess, "I believe that God for Christ's sake has pardoned my sins."
- C. Others follow Acts 8:37: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

## DISCUSSION -

### I. DIFFERENT HUMAN OPINIONS CONCERNING JESUS (Mark 8:27,28; Matthew 16:13,14; Luke 9:18,19).

- A. What Jesus asked: "And Jesus went forth, and his disciples, into the villages of Caesarea Philippi: and on the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Who do men say that I am" (27)?
1. Does it make any difference "who" one believes "the Son of man is," as long as it is similar to the truth (Mt. 16:13)?
  2. The multitudes had followed Jesus, seen his many signs and wonders, and all knew he was no ordinary man or teacher. His signs were to create faith in his deity (John 20:30,31).
  3. Jesus knew what men thought of him, but he wanted to bring his disciples together and enable them to stand before the world on the truth.
- B. What men said: "And they told him, saying, John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but others, One of the prophets" (28).
1. John the Baptist was the great preacher of righteousness who prepared the way for the kingdom of heaven. Elijah was the fearless prophet who rebuked sin and stood against it. Jesus was thought by some men to be Jeremiah, the great prophet known for his weeping during great wickedness in Israel.
  2. But the twelve disciples believed Jesus was someone else: They believed something else, distinctively different, that made a great difference (Mark 5:27,28; Galatians 1:6-9).

### II. WALKING BY FAITH IN DIVINE REVELATION (Mark 8:29; Matthew 16:15,16; Luke 9:20; 2 Cor. 5:7; Rom. 10:17).

- A. The Saviour's crucial question: "And he asked them, But who say ye that I am?" (Mark 8:29a; Matt. 16:15; Luke 9:20)?
1. The twelve had followed Jesus about two years and were in best position to know the truth.
  2. Trained to be his apostles, it was time to elicit and contrast their faith with human opinion.
  3. Jesus thus showed the dangerous difference in reasoning from similarity to identity.
- B. Peter's good confession: "Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ" (Mark 8:29b). "And Peter answering said, The Christ of God" (Luke 9:20). "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16).
1. The substance of the good confession is not ourselves, our religious experience, or that God has pardoned our sins. It is a confession unto salvation, not after (Rom. 10:10). Nor is it a confession of a man-made creed, dogma, or opinion; but of faith in vital truth
  2. It is a confession of faith in Jesus Christ, the central and

supreme truth of all truth, the core and summary of all his teaching, & the cornerstone of faith in God's power to save.

3. It is a divine confession: The one made by both the Father (Matt. 3:13-17; 17:1-5; 2 Peter 1:16-18), and the Son (Mark 14:61,62; Matt. 26:64; 1 Tim. 6:12). Compare John 1:29-34).
  4. It is a comprehensive confession: It expresses faith in the office, nature, teaching and perfect life of Jesus. It embraces the entire New Testament teaching.
  5. It is "the good confession" because the evidence for its validity is overwhelming (from both heaven and men), because it is unto salvation & life everlasting, because, although every tongue will eventually confess Jesus to the glory of God (Phil. 2:9-11), the good confession is made while it will glorify God here on earth before the final judgment.
  6. To confess Jesus as Lord is to acknowledge Jesus as Lord and accept him as Ruler (Luke 6:46; Heb. 5:8,9). One cannot accept Jesus as Lord and reject what he says & commands (Rom. 10:9).
  7. We cannot afford to deny Jesus: The cost is too great. The cost of confessing Jesus is very small, compared with the precious benefits which follow (John 9:22; 12:42; Rom. 8:18). The confession which brought death to Jesus brings eternal life to us.
- ### III. JESUS PROMISES TO BUILD HIS CHURCH (Matthew 16:17,18).
- A. The Lord's reply: "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 16:17).
1. Jesus praised Peter for making the confession made previously by John (John 1:34), Nathanael (John 1:49), the blind man (John 9:35-38), and later by the centurion (Matt. 27:54).
  2. Confession of Jesus as the Son of God is the test of faith in him (Acts 8:36,37).
  3. "Flesh and blood" had not revealed it to Peter. No one could know he was "the Son of God" but by divine revelation: "The world through its wisdom knew not God" (1 Cor. 1:21).
  4. The Father had revealed it to all the apostles by the evidence of his virgin birth, his voice at his baptism and transfiguration, and by his mighty miracles and teaching.
  5. The apostles were united in faith by divine revelation: Peter spoke for all the twelve. Divine revelation brings men into unity of fellowship with God and one another (1 John 1:7; Romans 8:14,15; John 16:13; Eph. 6:17). The way of the Lord, which is the infallibly safe way, is the way of divine revelation, truth and unity (Gal. 1:11,12).
- B. The foundation of the church: "And I also say unto thee that