"Peter: A Fisherman for God"

(From Fisherman to Fisher of Men)

Matthew 4:18-20; 16:18-20; Acts 2:38-42

8/24/2011

INTRODUCTION:

***Like Peter, we should follow Jesus and be a fisher of men!**

Why should we be fishers of men?

I. Peter Realized THOSE IN DARKNESS NEED LIGHT (v. 12-17)

II. Peter Realized SOULS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN FISH (v. 18-22)

III. Peter Realized JESUS IS A GREAT MESSIAH (v. 23-25; Matthew 16:13-20)

Ac 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

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INTRODUCTION:

ILLUS: "The Lifesaving Station" (MacArthur, p. 112)

ILLUS: Painting - "The Rock of Ages" (MacArthur, p. 116)

***Like Peter, we should follow Jesus and be a fisher of men!**

Why should we be fishers of men?

I. THOSE IN DARKNESS NEED LIGHT (v. 12-17)

V. 12

John the Baptist's imprisonment was perhaps a signal to Jesus that His forerunner's ministry was now complete and that He (Jesus) was to call His disciples and continue that ministry of calling men to "repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand? (Mt. 4:17; cp. John's identical message - Mt. 3:2).

V. 13

Capernaum - the home of Peter, Andrew, James & John; a place where Jesus did many of His miracles

V. 14

Matthew again continually cites O.T. statements of prophecy which Jesus fulfilled -- in keeping with his theme that Jesus is the King of the Jews.

V. 15

Zabulon & Nephthalim" - two northern tribes of Israel that settled side by side on the northwest side of the sea of Galilee. (Nazareth was in Zabulon and Capernaum was in Nephthalim).

V. 15-16

Galilee is called the region of the "Gentiles" because Assyria conquered and scattered the northern tribes of Israel in 722 B.C. The land was then populated by Gentiles.

V. 16

Verses 15-16 are quotations from Isaiah 9:1-2.

V. 1 - Zebulon and Naphtali came under the yoke of Assyria (II Ki. 15:29).

"Galilee of the nations" - Galilee of the Gentiles

V. 2 - "Because Christ would minister and live in Galilee, it would be glorious" (Ryrie footnote)

NOTE: Isaiah 9:1-2 clearly refers to Jesus as evident by verses 6-7.

"Darkness" = referring to spiritual darkness (Judea had God's Law; Jerusalem was the place of worship, and the Galileans were viewed as pagans since they did not have God's revelation, the Bible).

"After the fall, mankind had two "candles" as it were, that continued to give light about God and His will - the candle of creation and the candle of conscience. But man paid little attention to either, preferring to walk in the darkness of his own corrupted will (See: Rom. 1:18-21)" (MacArthur, p. 102)

"Sat. . .sat" - Why the word "sat" rather than walked, etc.? ANSWER: When you are in darkness, you can't see where you are going; so rather than walking and stumbling (Jn. 12:35), they complacently sat.

The metaphor of "light" "conveys the idea of the illuminating, truth-revealing and sin-exposing ministry of the Son of God." (MacArthur, p. 101).

"Great light" - Jesus is not merely light, He is great light.

Cp. Is. 42:6-7. The Father prophesied this of the Son (His "Servant") - "I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house."

"Shadow of death" - a common Hebrew expression (EX: Job 3:5, 10:21-22, 12:22, 16:16, 24:17, 28:3, 34:22, 38:17; Psalm 23:4, 44:19, 107:10, 14; Is. 9:2; Jer. 2:6, 13:16).

This phrase means to be on the verge of death; to be i an absolute pitch black region, surrounded by a host of demons, all whose aim is to kill, steal, and destroy.

"Sprung up" - NOTE: the light did not gradually come; but rather, wherever Jesus is there is total light, instant light, because in Him there is "No darkness at all" (I Jn. 1:5).

Instant light - EX: the light switch brings immediate light.

The life of Christ is called "the light of men" (Jn. 1:4).

"Light is come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil" (Jn. 3:19).

"I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life" (Jn. 8:12; cp. Jn. 9:5).

"I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness" (Jn. 12:46).

While we, like John the Baptist, reflect the light of Christ (Mt. 5:14), we are "not that Light" but are sent to "bear witness of the Light" (Jn. 1:7).

Like Paul, it is our privilege to "open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins,a nd inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26:18).

If such a privilege is ours, what will Satan's chief aim be? -- II Cor. 4:4 - "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

God "hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (I Pet. 2:9).

V. 17

The exact same message that John preached (Mt. 3:2) - only this time the kingdom is being announced by the King Himself.

Since the King was on earth, His kingdom was "at hand" (I.e. ready to be established on earth, if the prerequisite of repentance was met).

II. SOULS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN FISH (v. 18-22)

V. 18

This is not the first time Jesus met these disciples.

The chronology is:

1. Jesus met Andrew first in the region of the Jordan River where John was baptizing (Jn. 1:35-40)

2. Then his brother Peter met Jesus (Jn. 1:41)

3. Then in Galilee Jesus met Philip and Nathaniel (Jn. 1:43-46)

4. Jesus then went back to Judea with His disciples and they baptized people (Jn. 3:22-36) (John the Baptist was still not imprisoned)

5. He then went north again into Galilee (Jn. 4:33)

6. It was while He was in Galilee that He confronted His disciples (the fishermen) with a demonstration of His power and deity. It is at this point that four of the prominent disciples left all to become fishers of men
(Lk. 5:10-11; SEE: Mk 1:14-20)

"Jesus walking by the sea" - this evidently occurred the day immediately after the "big catch" described in Luke 5:1-11.

SEE: Lk. 5:1-11

Every fisherman knows the excitement of catching fish, and the anticipation of going back to the same lake where a "big catch: was formerly made. This is what motivated Peter and Andrew to be up and fishing the day after the supernatural catch was made.

"Casting a net into the sea" - a throw net or "cast net" was used during daytime fishing from the shore.

V. 19

"Follow Me" = lit. "come after Me!" come along behind Me, keep up in step with Me and let Me lead you.

Before anyone can be a Godly fisher of men, they must be a follower of Jesus.

If fishing for men is the result of following Jesus, what does this say about Christians who are not fishing for men? ANSWER: They are not following Jesus.

"I will make you" - how did Jesus "make" them such fishers of men?

1. By His example (Jn. 4; Mt. 9:9-13)
2. By His command (2 by 2; Mk. 16:15; Mt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8)
3. By His enablement (Jn. 15:7-8, 16)

"Fishers of men" -

1. Our "lake" is the world (Jn. 3:16; Mk. 16:15)
   (NYC is our part of the lake)

2. Our "net" is the Gospel (I Cor. 1:17-18, 2:1-5)
   (the simple gospel, not eloquent rhetoric)

3. Our "fish" are lost sinners (Rom. 3:23)

Note: Fishing for men is the only type of fishing where you catch them dead and bring them home alive! (Eph. 2:1ff) (whereas, fishing for fish you catch them alive and bring them home dead).

Why did Jesus refer to evangelism as "fishing"?

1) Because evangelism like "fishing" requires <u>patience</u>

2) Because evangelism like "fishing" demands <u>work</u> and <u>discipline</u>

   (NOTE: their type of fishing was not like sitting out on a lawn chair on a lake with a rod and a can of soda on a Saturday afternoon. It was rigorous work to pull in the nets, sort the fish, mend their nets, row their boat, battle the elements and stay up late at night [most fishing was done at night, since their nets were visible cotton, not synthetic line]).

3) Because evangelism like "fishing" requires <u>perseverance</u>

   (Going from place to place, many times covering the same area over and over again)

4) Because evangelism like "fishing" requires <u>dependance upon God</u>

   (only those which God directs into your net, do you catch!)

The greatest long-term, remaining, enduring benefit that we can be to humanity is to fish for them and bring them to Jesus.

Note everyone that we get in the net will be saved. Some false professors will sip in (SEE: the parable of the drag net - Mt. 13:47-50).

V. 20

"Straightway" - immediately; without any delay.

"Left their nets" - for these men, this was leaving their livelihood, their trade, their career, their "first love," their "bread and butter," the work they knew best. They were to leave their fishing business to become disciples of Jesus and fishers of men.

V. 21

"Mending their nets" - James and John were repairing the net that broke the day prior because of the over-abundant catch that Jesus gave them (Lk. 5:6).

V. 22

"Left the ship and their father" - James and John not only left their economic security (fishing) but also their social security (father).

Sometimes it is easy to leave a business to go to a foreign field and be a missionary, but it is not so easy to leave family!

Many "would be" missionaries have forfeited a life of serving Jesus Christ so they could forever enjoy the security of mama and papa!

The former has greater rewards (Lk. 18:29-30 - "And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.")

III. JESUS IS A GREAT SAVIOR (v. 23-25)

Christ's public ministry was three-fold:
"Teaching. . . preaching . . . healing"

His greatness is revealed by:

A. His Message (v. 23a)

"In their synagogues" - Why? Because Jesus went to the "Jew first." (Mt. 10:5-7) -- their promised kingdom was being offered.

Also, the Jew would have the necessary knowledge of God's moral Law, which prepared the way for the reception of the Gospel.

NOTE: Paul followed this custom of Jesus (Lk. 4:16; Acts 9:20, 13:5).

"Gospel" = good news

B. His Miracles (v. 23b)

"Healing all ... sickness and all ... disease" - the evidence of a true miracle worker is his ability to heal all ailments (not just psychosomatic ones, like contemporary "faith healers").

C. His Fame (v. 24)

The typical doctor specializes in one area of medical practice. Jesus being God can do it all! He is the Great Physician.

--"Diseases" - various sicknesses, infirmities, or injuries

--"Torments" - severe pain and torture

--"Possessed with devils"

--"Lunatick" - not crazy, insane people but epileptics (cp. Mt. 17:15)

--"Palsy" - lame, paralyzed

There was no case too difficult for Jesus!

D. His Following (v. 25)

Even today, people among every race and nation follow Jesus because He is the only true Savior and Lord (Phil. 2:10-11).

SEE: Matthew 16:13-20

INTRODUCTION: Verses 13 - 15

V. 13

Perhaps as the disciples crossed over into the territory of Herod Philip (*"Philippi")*, they began talking about how this was the tetrarchy of the Roman leader Herod Philip, which naturally led to questions about the importance (or non-importance) of the Caesars and the Herods, and this set the stage for Jesus to be revealed as the *"Christ."*

"The Son of man" - a title showing how Christ humbled Himself in the incarnation in becoming man. A title which also identified Jesus as the Messiah (Dan. 7:13).

"If anyone else asked, 'Whom do men say that I am?' we would think him either mad or arrogant" (Wiersbe, p. 57).

But Jesus, knowing who He really was, quizzed the disciples to see if they recognized His true identity.

V. 14

"They said" - plural; no doubt each of the disciples had input on this questions. It's easy to say what others think. The question that comes up later is *"Who do <u>you</u> say that I am?"* (and only Peter is bold enough to speak up).

"John the Baptist" - Herod Antipas thought this (Mt. 14:2).

No, he could not be John the Baptist, because John prepared the way for Christ and was not worthy even to untie Jesus' shoe.

"Elias" - Elijah, who was to come before the *"Great and dreadful day of the Lord"* (Mal. 4:5)

No, he could not be Elijah, because Elijah (like John did for His first coming) will

prepare the way for Jesus' second coming.
Jeremias" - No, He was not Jeremiah, although Jesus (Mt. 23:37) like Jeremiah (Jer. 9:1) wept over the sinful lostness of the nation of Israel.

"Of one of the prophets" - No, Jesus was not a mere man, a mere prophet.

Many today have mistaken notions as to who Jesus is.

--To the Jehovah's Witnesses, He is Michael the Archangel
--To the Mormons, He is the brother of Lucifer
--To the Muslims He was the forerunner of Mohammed
--To the theological liberals, He was a "good man"

"One thing is clear: We can never make a true decision about Jesus Christ by taking a poll of the people" (Wiersbe, p. 57).

People have all kinds of ideas as to who Jesus is!

V. 15

"Who do <u>you</u> say that I am?" -

As far as you are concerned, it doesn't matter what others think of Christ. The question is: **"Who do <u>you</u> say He is?"**

Your whole eternity hinges on how you answer that question (Rom. 10:9)

"If ye believe not that I am [He], ye shall die in your sins" (Jn. 8:24)

The eunuch gave the right answer: *"And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the on Son of God."*

The Scriptures reveal Him to be:

I. The DIVINE MESSIAH (v. 16-17)

V. 16

V. 15 - ***"Whom say ye"*** (plural) - The question was asked to all the disciples, but no one had the conviction to admit that Jesus was the *"Christ"* except Peter (v. 16)

"Thou art the Christ" - the definite article *"the"* points to these facts:

1)There is only one "Christ" (not many - Mt. 24:5)

2)Jesus is the specific One promised in the Old Testament; the word *Christos* when "used without the article has the character of a personal name; without the article, it is a title of the one promised in the Old Testament" (Reinecker, p. 49).

"Christ" - the Messiah, the Anointed One (Is. 61:1; Lk. 4:18; Acts 10:38); the Deliverer

--the One whom the Jews expected to come and deliver them (Zech. 12 - 14)

--the One whom Daniel said would die for the sins of others - Dan. 9:25, 26

From the outset of the disciples following Jesus they recognized Him as the Messiah (Jn. 1:41). Now Jesus for 2 1/2 years has proven it before their eyes and ears. And Peter unashamedly recognizes it.

Jesus is the only One who could and did fulfill the Old Testament promises of Messiah:

Here are some of the O.T. prophecies and their fulfillment in the incarnate person of Jesus Christ:

Prophecy of the Messiah	Prophecy	Fulfillment
Messiah would come at an appointed time	Dan. 9:25-26	Mark 1:15
Messiah would be born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Matt.2:1-6
Messiah would be born of a virgin	Isaiah 7:14	Matt.1:18-25
Messiah would die for the sins of the world	Is.52:13-53:12	Luke 22:37 Acts 8:28-35
Messiah would be hated		Jn.15:24,25
Messiah would be rejected	Ps.69:4	Mt.21:42
Messiah would be betrayed	Is.49:7	Jn.13:18-21
Messiah would be forsaken	Psalm 118:22	Mk.14:27
Messiah would be sold		Mt.26:15
Messiah would be smitten	Psalm 41:9	Mt.27:30
Messiah would be spit upon	Zech.13:7	Mk.14:65
Messiah would be nailed	Zech.11:12	Jn.20:25
Messiah would be forsaken	Micah 5:1	Mt.27:46
Messiah would be mocked	Is.50:6	Mt.27:39-44
Messiah would be pierced	Psalm 22:16 Psalm 22:1 Psalm 22:7,8 Zech.12:10	Jn.19:34,37
Messiah would be raised from the dead	Psalm 16:10	Acts 2:22-27
Messiah would come (again) in judgement	Zech.12-14	Rev.19

"The Son of the living God" **-** Peter not only confessed Christ's messiahship, but His deity as well!

Just as Jesus' title *"son of man"* (v. 13) identifies Christ as "man", the title *"son of*

God" identifies Christ as God! (Jn. 5:18)

V. 17

"Blessed" = extremely fortunate; showered with heavenly, spiritual blessings. (in this case, the blessedness was a spiritual understanding that the Father in Heaven gave to Peter).

"Simon Barjonah" - Simon the Son of Jonah (John). This was Peter's original name before Jesus gave him the name *"Cephas"* which is Aramaic meaning "a stone" (Jn. 1:42).

"Flesh and blood" - no human; no man gave Peter this belief (cp. Gal. 1:16). God the Father opened his spiritual eyes.

Unless God opens one's eyes (Heb. 6:4; 10:32; Eph. 1:18) and heart (Acts 16:14), they will remain blind to spiritual truth.

Hence, the new birth is said not to originate from *"blood nor the will of the flesh"* (Jn. 1:13).

"Revealed" - opened up; manifested; uncovered

II. The CHURCH'S MASTER (v. 18-19)

A. Christ is the FOUNDATION of the Church (v. 18a)

"upon this Rock"

V. 18

"Peter (petros). . . rock (petra)" -

Petros = masculine name

Petra = feminine noun

Petros - " a detached stone or boulder (Vine, p. 302), or a stone that might be thrown or easily moved

Petra - "a mass of rock"; bed-rock; a huge foundation (upon which something may be built - Mt. 7:24, 25; 27:51, 60; Mk. 15:46; Lk. 6:48).

Jesus deliberately uses a play on words in the Greek to show that He does not mean (refer to) Peter when He uses the word *"rock"*.

Since the name *"Petros"* means a piece of the rock and not the rock itself, it would make no sense for Jesus to say, *"You are a piece of a rock and upon you I will build My church."*

No one can build anything on a "stone," but you can build on a bedrock!

"This Rock" **- Three Views**

1)<u>Peter</u> (Roman Catholic View)

Peter could not be the first Pope for several reasons:

(1)The word pope means "father." Peter would never have violated the command of his Lord Jesus and allowed others to call him "Father." (Mt. 23:9)

(2)Popes received <u>worship</u>; Peter rejected it (Acts 10:26)

(3)Popes cannot be married; Peter was (Mt. 8:14)

(4)Only <u>Peter</u> is said to possess the keys of the kingdom (no successors are ever mentioned) (Mt. 16:19)

(5)The Catholic church was not even in existence till Constantine enforced Christianity as the state religion

(6) Peter warned against ecclesiastical leadership lording it over God's Church (I Pet. 5:3)

(7)Peter never referred to himself as a "pope" but as an *"apostle"* (I Pet. 1:1) and *"elder"* (I Pet. 5:1) and a *"servant"* of Jesus Christ (II Pet. 1:1).

(8)Peter blundered (cp. Mt. 16:22-23; 26:669-75; Gal. 2:11-14). The RCC says that a Pope never makes a mistake when speaking "ex cathedra," that he is the infallible teacher of doctrine.
The only infallible teacher of truth is the <u>Holy Spirit</u>. It is blasphemous to give such credit to a mere man.

2)Peter's <u>Confession</u>
(i.e. upon this solid testimony that *"You are the Christ the Son of the living God")*

It is true that the boulder of truth that Jesus was the "Christ" was indeed the message the Apostles preached. And it was upon this truth the Church was built.

*Peter on the Day of Pentecost preached *"Christ"* to <u>Jews</u> and the church began (Acts 2:31, 2:38, 3:18).
*Philip preached *"Christ"* to the Samaritans (Acts 8:5).
*Paul preached *"Christ"* to the Jews and Gentiles (Acts 9:20, 22; 17:3; 18:5, 28).

***3)Christ**

The words *"thou. . . this"* show that Jesus is pointing (perhaps with His finger).

"You (pointing to Peter) are a piece of a rock, and upon this Rock (pointing to Himself), He says: I will build my Church."

The proof that Christ was referring to Himself when He used the word *"rock"* is because only He (not Peter nor anyone else) is called a *"Rock"* (*petra)* in the Scriptures:

I Cor. 10:4 - *"And did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ."*

He is the "*<u>rock</u> of offense*" (Rom. 9:33; I Pet. 2:8).

Christ (not Peter) is the foundation upon which the Church is built.

I Cor. 3:11 - *"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ"*

I Pet. 2:4, 6 - *"To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious. . . Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture,*

Behold, I lay in Sion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded."

Cp. Isaiah 8:14, 28:16; Psalm 118:22

No one is a "Rock" except *"our God."* **SEE:** Psalm 18:2, 31; 46

Cp. Psalm 28:1, 31:3, 42:9, 661:2, 62:6-7, 71:3, 78:35, 95:1, etc.

If Jesus were saying that He would build His church on (*upon*) Peter, then clearly Peter would have been the greatest one in the kingdom. However, even the disciples did not take this to be the point, or else they would not have disputed among themselves who would be the greatest in the Kingdom (Mt. 20:20-21, 24-28).

B.Christ is the BUILDER of the Church (v. 18b)
"I will build"

"I will build" - the Church is not built by man, but by Christ. We may be His tools, but He is the builder.

"And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47)

"I will [future tense] ***build My Church" -*** the Church had not been built yet; but was a work to begin in a future time from when Jesus made this statement.

The Church began at Pentecost (Acts 2), a time which Peter refers to as the *"beginning"* (Acts 11:15).

C. Christ is the <u>POSSESSOR</u> of the Church (v. 18c)
"My Church"

"<u>My</u> Church" - The Church belongs to Jesus Christ

--The Church is called *"the bride, the <u>Lamb's</u> wife"* (Rev. 21:9; cp. Eph. 5)
--The Church is called: *"the church of <u>God</u>"* (Acts 20:28; I Cor. 1:2; 10:32; 11:22; 15:9; II Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:13; I Tim. 3:5)
--The Church is called *"the flock of <u>God</u>"* (I Pet. 5:2)
This church is not "my church" or even "our church"; it is His church.

"***"My <u>church</u>" -*** the church (singular) is a called-out group of believers who will one day assemble in Heaven. Not the local church; but the Church in prospect is what Christ is referring to. The wider spectrum o "the church"; all true regenerate believers, all over the earth from Pentecost till the Rapture.

(this wider, general, greater body of believers is the meaning of the word *eklesia* in the following passages:
Mt. 16:18 - "I will build my Church"
I Cor.12:28 -"God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers..."
I Cor. 15:9 - "I persecuted the Church of God"
Gal. 1:13 - "I persecuted the Church of God"
Eph. 1:22,23"Gave Him to be head over all things to the Church"
Eph. 3:10 -"Be made known through the Church"
Eph. 3:21 - "Might be glory in the Church"
Eph. 5:23-32 - "...Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for her..."
Phil. 3:6 - "Concerning zeal, persecuting the Church"
Col. 1:18 - "He is the Head of the Body, the Church..."
Col. 1:24 - "For His body's sake, which is the Church."
Heb. 12:23"To the general assembly and Churchof the firstborn (ones), which are written in Heaven..."
NOTE: The general (generic) usage of the word "Church" is often described as:
"<u>The</u> Church" (Eph. 3:10, 21)
"The Church <u>of God</u>" (I Cor. 15:9)

D.Christ is the <u>PROTECTOR</u> of the Church (v. 18d)
"The gates of hell shall not prevail against it"

"The <u>gates</u> of Hell" - a reference to where the dignitaries and rulers sat.

"The gates stood for those who held government and administered" (Vine, p. 141).

EX: the "gates" in the Old Testament were places where those in public authority and power sat (Gen. 19:1, 22:17, 24:60; Deut. 21:19, 22:15, 22:24, 25:7; Ruth 4:1, 11; Esther 4:6, 5:13; Ps. 127:5; Prov. 24:7).

The ***"gates of <u>Hell</u>"*** is a reference to the *"principalities...powers...rulers of the darkness of this world... spiritual wickedness in high places"* (Eph. 6:12)

I.e. it is a reference to Satan and his high-ranking powerful spirits.

Satan and his host of demons are not in Hell yet (Mt. 8:29), but are associated with "Hell" because everlasting fire was created for them (Mt. 25:41) and Satan will be trapped there forever one day (Rev. 20:10).

"Shall not prevail against it" - There is no way the hoards of hell can overcome, overpower, have strength against or gain mastery over Christ's regenerate believers!

By Christ's death, He destroyed him who had the power of death (that is, the devil) and He delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Heb. 2:14-15).

"*Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them* (the false prophets)*: because <u>greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world</u>"* (I Jn. 4:4)

"If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31)

E.Christ is the SOVEREIGN DIRECTOR of the Church (v. 19)
"I will give. . . keys. . ; shall have been bound . . . loosed in heaven"

"I will give" - Jesus alone has the authority to give such "keys" since He has all authority in Heaven and earth (Mt. 28:18; Rev. 1:18)

"I will give" - future. Jesus gave the keys on the Day of Pentecost.

"Unto thee" - singular (Peter only, not a succession of Popes).

How do Roman Catholic leaders interpret this verse?

Archbishop John F. Whealon says: "This one apostle was made doorkeeper of Heaven. If he opens, we enter. If he closes, we do not enter. His control, then, reaches from earth to Heaven according to this divine promise. . . It makes good sense for us to be friends of Peter if he is our doorkeeper to Heaven." (Columbia, March, 1991, p. 16).

A Roman Catholic once said to a Baptist: "You are in the wrong church; you should belong to the church which has the keys!" The Bible-believing Christian replied, "I don't need the keys. I have the 'Door'!" (Jn. 10:9)

"The keys of the kingdom of Heaven" - the keys to unlock the Gospel of God's kingdom.

The "*keys*" do not suggest that Peter is at the Gates of Heaven and He decides who enters and who does not.

Rather, the keys represent that which unlocks knowledge to people who are spiritually ignorant.

(EX: In Luke 11:52, Jesus said the Pharisees had taken away *"the key of knowledge."* Not only had they failed to enter the kingdom themselves, but they had hindered others from doing so.)

"A key is of great need when a door is locked, but once the door is unlocked, the key loses its importance. . . **After Peter unlocked the mystery of the Gospel to the Jews (Acts 2), Samaritans (Acts 8:14-17) and Gentiles (Acts 110; 11:8-18),** the door was never again locked, so the keys were never again used. After using the keys, Peter himself fades from view (in Acts)" (Vatican Bank, C.E.C., Box 99141, Louisville, KY 40269).

"Shall be bound. . . shall be loosed" - perfect tense, passive voice participles.

Lit. *"shall have been bound (by God). . . shall have been loosed (by God)"*

In other words, Peter was only confirming something that already had been decided in Heaven!

If Peter said that something was "binding" for Christians not to do, it is because God already decided such a prohibition. If Peter said that something could be done (*"loosed"*), it is because God in Heaven already decreed the allowance.

What Jesus is saying is: *"And whatever you bind on earth [forbid to be done], shall have been already bound...in Heaven; and whatever you loose on earth [permit to be done] shall have already been loosed in Heaven."* (Dr. Kenneth S. Wuest, The Expanded Translation; cited by Wiersbe, p. 59)

In order to understand this concept of "binding and loosing" observe how the local church in Matthew 18:18 is given the authority to make decisions regarding church discipline. Such decisions made by the local church would simply be confirmations of what God had already decided in Heaven.

"Jesus did not say that God would obey what they did on earth, but that they should do on earth whatever God had already willed." (Wiersbe, p. 59).

How would Peter know what to "bind" or "loose"? The Word of God which came to him via Christ's teachings while on earth or by direct revelation (Acts 10).

How does a local church make decisions of "binding" and "loosing"? The Word of

God, the Bible.

CONCLUSION:

Ac 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

Prov. 11:30 - "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise."

Dan. 12:3 - "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."

ILLUS: Allegory - "The Fishless Fisherman"

Hymns -"Rescue the Perishing"
"Send the Light"
"Let the Lower Lights Be Burning" (SEE: story, MacArthur, p. 120)