

Visions and Revelations

Messages 16, 17, & 18: The Apostle Peter (6)— The Revelation by Christ: The Kingdom of Heaven

¹⁸And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. (Matthew 16:18–19)

- I. Christ desires to gain the built-up church, which is built on “this spiritual rock,” which is Christ Himself.
- II. The power (“gates”) of Hades shall not prevail against the built-up church.
 - A. Hades is the place Satan rules. There are many gates, continually sending out all kinds of things from Hades and taking captives into the power of Hades.
 - B. It is hard for saints to overcome the temptations from Hades unless they are in the built-up church.
 1. The temptations are various:
 - a. They can be noble, such as PhDs, non-profit organizations for the benefits of fellow mankind, etc.
 - b. They can be common, such as ordinary jobs offering a sufficient and common family life.

c. They can be fallen, such as material or fleshly vices.

2. These are all under the power of darkness of Satan's operations, causing people to leave Christ and the church life, many times even unconsciously.

C. No matter how much saints love the Lord, it is so easy for them to be swallowed by the power of darkness unto the gates of Hades if they fail to see the church and the necessity of the building-up, which renders them fellowship, companionship, praying together, and protection.

III. The kingdom of heaven is the realm of God's government in the vitality of His life. In this realm:

A. Is the self-existing and ever-existing triune God Himself.

1. His being: omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent
2. He has the power of creation, and He is all-possessing, all-sufficient, and all-abundant.
3. His existence: full of energy, full of vitality, full of creativity, and full of execution in the power of His wisdom

B. God desired to dwell with His created man.

1. In God's creation, it was so—"let them have dominion."

2. In God's provision, it was so—the tree of life. Alas, man took the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
3. Due to man's fall, God was confined in the heavenly realm.
4. Though He was the ruler of the universe, He could only be an outward God to man.

C. Christ—the firstborn and prototype of the reality of the kingdom of heaven. Through Him, the heavens rule.

1. The reality of the kingdom of heaven is where Christ's life rules.
2. The reality of the kingdom of heaven is the church today.
3. Christ died and resurrected, releasing (loosing) the reality of the kingdom of heaven.
4. Through Peter's opening of its doors to Jews and Gentiles, God was able to be organically united with man, and believers were enabled to participate in the reality of the kingdom of heaven.

IV. The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

A. This was the gospel John the Baptist preached (Matt. 3:1–2). Afterward, the Lord Jesus also preached, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 4:17).

B. This indicated that the day for God and man to be united

and mingled was at hand.

C. This indicated that the day for the body of Christ—the church—to appear on the earth was at hand.

V. The keys of the kingdom of heaven

A. The Lord Himself is the One who desired to open the door and provide the keys: “And **I will** give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 16:19)

B. By the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, Peter, being united with the Lord, became the one who held the keys to the door (Acts 2:1–4). He opened the Overall door.

C. Peter’s first preaching on Pentecost resulted in three thousand people repenting, being baptized for the remission of their sins, and receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38, 41). They were all **baptized into** the body of Christ. Thus, Peter opened the door of the gospel for Jews.

D. In the house of Cornelius, while Peter was preaching, the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Gentiles, who were all **baptized into** the body of Christ. Thus, Peter opened the door of the gospel for Gentiles (Acts 10).

E. The apostle Paul testified: “When I came to Troas to preach Christ’s gospel and a door was opened to me by the Lord...” (2 Cor. 2:12). This indicates that when he was preaching, he used the gospel as the keys to open the door of salvation. For two thousand years, many servants of the Lord have opened the doors to many races, nations, and

continents in many localities throughout the earth. Even, there is a periodical called “Open Doors” among brother Nee’s publications.

VI. Open door

A. There is no distance between God and man. Through the Spirit, God is no longer confined.

1. This omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent God is able to **abide** in those who are saved.
2. This all-possessing, all-sufficient, and all-abundant God has become the bountiful supply to be **united** with the saved ones.
3. This vital and creative God can be **mingled** in the saved ones.
4. This executor, full of creating power in all wisdom, can be **incorporated** with the saved ones, bringing forth the accomplishment of God’s will.

VII. Binding and loosing (Matt. 16:19b)

A. Through the work of the cross, the Lord has bound the strong man (Satan), plundering his house—vessels which used to be the Lord’s (Matt. 12:29).

1. When the Lord ascended, He led captive (full commitment to Christ) those who were captives (under the authority of Satan) (Eph. 4:8).

2. Darby's translation of Eph. 4:8: "Wherefore he says, Having ascended up on high, he has led captivity captive, and has given gifts to men."
3. He constituted His captives to be gifts; some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as shepherds and teachers (Eph. 4:11)
4. He gave them to the church in order for the church to be built up through their oneness with the ministry of Christ (Eph. 4:12).
5. Through His death on the cross, Christ has spoiled principalities and authorities and made a show of them publically (Col. 2:15). Thus, the apostle Peter was able to work with the Lord for the binding and loosing.

B. The "binding and loosing" was also given to the church. When the experienced brothers in the church serve in one accord, they can execute this authority—"Whatsoever ye shall bind on the earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on the earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 18:18).

VII. The satisfaction of God's desire—the reality of the kingdom of heaven

God is no longer an outward God. Now, He is able to be united and mingled with every saved one in His life. God can be our God, and we can be His children and become the testimony of the body of Christ. **This is the kingdom of heaven.**