

Round Top Church Christian Fellowship

Sermon Series in 1 Peter

1 Peter 2:1-10

Christ our Rock

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(All Scripture is from the New American Standard Bible, unless otherwise noted.)

This sermon, like all the others, teaches God's Word. By the end of the lesson today, you will be confronted with Biblical truth, historical truth and historical misrepresentations. History and the Bible are the same in one respect, but, in another, not everything that has happened in history is recorded in the Bible. However, we have reliable sources to determine what has happened in the history of the Church.

There shouldn't be anything attached to the teaching of the Bible. Meaning that there should not be any filters other than a voice that God has called to teach and preach His Word. There should not be money, fear, control, unforgiveness or any mediator between you and God's Word. There should not be man-made stipulations. You are greatly encouraged to look up every reference and read them for yourself.

Direction needs to be given to use a solid English Bible translation as opposed to a paraphrase or dynamic equivalent. Recommendations include King James, New King James, New American Standard, English Standard Version, and New Revised Standard Version. Of note, in the paraphrased versions are the Holman Christian Bible. Of course, encouragement is made to consult Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament) for the original language sources. Many people have the Strong's Concordance. I recommend a good interlinear

which will show you the actual Greek word and the corresponding English word or words. In addition, you will discover the order of the words in the sentence must be changed for the English text to make sense in our Western grammar.

Above all, read your Bible, which is a grace-gift from God. You will be set free from the false teachings that you have been given. Remember that the Word of God carries more authority than man. The Word of God is more powerful than any man-made robed hierarchy.

Keep in mind who Peter is. He is one of the first disciples. Peter was taught directly by the Lord. Peter preached the first sermon after Pentecost in the name of Jesus. Peter claims Jesus as his Savior then denied him, but was restored. Therefore, Peter is just like we are.

In chapter one, Peter penned the letter God's Holy Spirit had him write, with a view toward the eternal. The people lived in communities that were hostile to the Gospel and life was hard. In chapter one, Peter calls them to focus on the eternal future which had a better environment in which for them to live. Heaven with the Lord or hell on earth. You live through hell on earth for a short time and then you live through one or the other for an eternity. However, God is ushering in His Eternal Kingdom through the lives of Believers in this temporal world. This is a constant. By the fact of the incarnation itself, God, as Jesus Christ, increases His presence in this fallen world. Satan rules here in the lives of non-believers.

John 12:31 "Now judgment is upon this world;
now the ruler of this world shall be cast out.

John 16:11 and concerning judgment,
because the ruler of this world has been judged.

God in the flesh (John 1:14) came and delivered what we call the "Sermon on the Mount" (Matthew 5). This is Jesus' first sermon after He

declares His prophetic messianic ministry, water-baptism and confrontation by Satan in a “Test in the Wilderness” and then He picks His first disciples. Jesus’ opening sermon-salvo against Satan in the middle of his fallen world is the “Sermon on the Mount”, which contain blessings (beatitudes) that are placed upon those who first humble themselves to God. These are the poor in spirit. What does David write in Psalm 51? Eventually, Peter humbles himself to God.

Psalm 51:16-17 ¹⁶ For Thou dost not delight in sacrifice,
otherwise I would give it;
Thou art not pleased with burnt offering.

¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a **broken spirit;**
A broken and a contrite heart,
O God, Thou wilt not despise.

Peter’s Strong Words

Salvation and service to God start with surrendering to His will. This means every aspect of our lives is filtered through what God has called us to do, what God has already planned for our lives (Ephesians 2:10). Therefore, to this end, Peter is calling attention to life-practices that are inconsistent to what the Lord has intended for life. It is hard to accept and believe that Peter must address these offences. After all, Peter is writing to Believers in Christ who are supposed to have overcome the world. Paul and James also uses strong words to address ill-conceived ideas and teachings.

Ephesians 4:31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

James 4:11 Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother, or judges his brother, speaks against the law, and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge of it.

Ephesians 4:22 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit,

Colossians 3:8 But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth.

1 Corinthians 5:8 Let us therefore celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

James 1:21 Therefore putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

2 Corinthians 12:20 For I am afraid that perhaps when I come I may find you to be not what I wish and may be found by you to be not what you wish; that perhaps there may be strife, jealousy, angry tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances;

Ephesians 4:25 Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth, each one of you, with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.

Here is the text in 1 Peter. It's hard to believe that he is addressing Believers. Remember that we are all in transition. Believers are not perfect, but progressing in the guidance and love of the Lord.

1 Peter 2:1-10

1 Therefore,

putting aside [Behavioral Fallen Man) (The Old Natural Man]
 all malice ~ intentional thought and plan to do evil
 and all guile ~ Cunning thoughts to take advantage
 and hypocrisy ~ living false lives, false appearance
 and envy ~ discontent/resentful over someone else's
 possessions
 and all slander, ~ False statement damaging a person's
 reputation

So, we put aside very bad things in our lives to accomplish the Lord's will in our lives. Good thing not everyone operates this way inside the Church?

In contrast to the deplorable behavioral list, Peter redirects people to Jesus and the power of His Word. Therefore, we are to be like. . .

² like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word,
 [Babies in Peter's day would not survive without nourishment such as
 milk]
 [Not only live, but the emphasis here is for growth]
 that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, (Heb. 6:1-3)

Causes of Bad Behavior

If you are stuck in life or if you are not growing in your walk with the Lord the answer to your situation is in how you are spending your time. People that struggle spend more time with rebellious people and do not read (are read little) and study God's Word. Their prayer life is lacking. In addition, do you

rely upon a church leader for your sole source? Do you follow up on your own from what was taught on Sunday mornings? Peter encourages the recipients of his letter to long for the pure milk of the Word. Wherever you are in your relationship with the Lord, your growth depends upon your drawing closer to His Word. This is why God gave His Word to us. The Bible is our guiding light through all things. Since we have tasted the Lord's kindness, we have received the value (the power) of His strength in our lives. We should know that our growth depends on staying close to Him. Peter delivers a description to the recipients of his letter identifying how they should perceive themselves in Christ.

³ **if** you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

⁴ **And** coming to Him

as to a **living stone**, (lithos)

rejected by men,

but choice and precious in the sight of God,

⁵ you also, as **living stones**,

are being built up

as a spiritual house

for a holy priesthood,

to offer up spiritual sacrifices (Psalm 51: Heb. 10:1

ff)

acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ---→

[Jesus judges all of our sacrifices at the Great White Throne Judgment: Rev. 20:11 ff]

DAVID ~ Psalm 51:16-17 ¹⁶ For Thou dost not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; Thou art not pleased with burnt offering. ¹⁷

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart,
O God, Thou wilt not despise.

Peter Transitions to Christ in Scripture (Isaiah 28:16) in verse six. He refers to Old Testament passages in Isaiah, who is a prophet that lived before the Northern Kingdom was destroyed in 722 BC and before the Southern Kingdom (Judah) was destroyed and carried away into the Babylonian Captivity. Isaiah prophesied for the Lord from 762 BC to 680 BC. Isaiah is one of the prophets the Jews looked to for providing insight into their anticipated coming Messiah.

⁶ For *this* is contained in Scripture:

"Behold I lay in Zion a **choice stone**,

[choice = select, favorite ~ eklektos]

a precious corner *stone*,

[corner = right angle as in corner of building]

And he who **believes** in Him shall not be disappointed." (Isaiah 28:16)

⁷ This precious value, then,

is for you who **believe**.

But for those who **disbelieve**,

The **stone** which **the builders rejected**,

(Matthew 21:42, Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17)

This became the very **corner stone**,

⁸ and,

"A **stone** of **stumbling** and a **rock** (Petra as in Matthew 16:15-18)
of offense";

[Who is the ROCK ~ J.C. not Peter]

for they **stumble** (Isaiah 8:14-15)

because they are **disobedient to the word**,

and to this **doom** (*Romans 1;18 ff turned over to their own desires*) they were also appointed (set, destined). (*Heb. 6:4-6*)

Where in the Old Testament is the reference to “a stone, a corner or foundational stone, a stone to offend and stumble over”?

Isaiah 28:16 Therefore thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, A costly **cornerstone for the foundation**, firmly placed. **He who believes in it will not be disturbed.**

Isaiah 8:14-15

14 "Then He shall become a sanctuary; But to both the houses of Israel, **a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over**, And a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

15 "And many will stumble over them, Then they will fall and be broken; They will even be snared and caught."

Jesus said . . .

Matthew 21:42 Jesus said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures, **The stone which the builders rejected, This became the chief corner stone**; This came about from the Lord, And it is marvelous in our eyes ?

Mark 12:10 "Have you not even read this Scripture: **The stone which the builders rejected, This became the chief corner stone**;

Luke 20:17 But He looked at them and said, "What then is this that is written, **The stone which the builders rejected, This became the chief corner stone** ?

Luke 20:18 "Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust."

Romans 9:33 just as it is written, "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, And he who believes in Him will not be disappointed."

Romans 10:11 For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed."

Not Finding Fault, But Finding Freedom

Preempting any ill-response to the next section, I want to make something very clear: God's Word is supreme over all of man's traditions, regardless of how big the organization is or how long it has been in existence or how powerful it is, power and wealth do not make them right or people righteous in God's judgement. The big historical problem is that the Word of God was kept from the population for over a thousand years (Dark Ages) and no one was allowed to check the state-church's teachings against God's Word. This is why the Reformation is so impactful. The Reformation changes world history and is still doing so today.

I went to seminary at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary receiving a Master's degree in Biblical Language. My Bachelor of Science degree was earned at Houston Baptist University, and I was ordained in a Southern Baptist Church. I have pastored in Southern Baptist churches and have also served at Houston Baptist University as a part of the office of Development. During that time, I also taught New Testament studies as an adjunct professor. I guess someone may assume that I am a card-carrying Southern Baptist who has been indoctrinated in their specific beliefs. Fair

enough. However, through my journey, I had sincere professors who were blatantly open and transparent about Southern Baptist traditions and practices of faith.

One Baptist tradition is the use of Deacons. Southern Baptists have a tradition that only men can serve as Deacons. They ignore or turn their head to the side while reading Romans 16 which calls Phoebe a deacon and coworker with Paul. The Greek word in Romans 16:1 is “diakonon” that Paul uses to describe Phoebe. The word means servant and is often associated with the men chosen in Acts 7 who were to serve the community and are considered Deacons. The word simply means *servant*. 1 Timothy 3:11 gives a qualification for a woman Deacon. However, the Southern Baptist tradition is for women not to be leaders in the church. In the New Testament, Deacons are more servants than leaders. It is the office of Elder/Overseer that is the leader. However, Baptist, for the most part, do not have the office of Elder. They use Deacons to oversee the church. This leads to a bigger problem. The qualifications for Elder include the ability to teach God’s Word and defend the faith. The qualifications for Deacons do not include this ability/calling/gift. Therefore, many Deacons in Baptist churches do not teach and cannot defend the church. They may be good servants as administrators, but they do not all meet the qualifications to be an Elder. This has created leadership problems in addition to excluding women from being Deacons. There is an understanding in Baptist churches. If the women would stop serving, the church would fall apart. They allow women to serve, but reserve the title of Deacon for men. It is true that there is not an example of a woman in the New Testament who is an Elder, while we have Phoebe as our Deacon example. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the office of Elder is reserved for men. Again, we defer to God’s plan, not man’s. God’s plan does not change, because someone in a later century sees that His plan is outdated.

In the New Testament, we see that it is an Elder administered assembly led by the Holy Spirit. The Elders exercise their role by lovingly listening to the

needs of the congregation and consider their needs and position. This is the response we see in Acts 6. The disciples (Overseers/Elders) responded to a complaint. The same oversight procedure takes place at the Jerusalem Counsel in Acts 15 led by James.

The other huge observation in, most if not all, Southern Baptist Churches is that they require that you must be water-baptized to be a member, and, at the same time, teach that since water-baptism is a work, and by no works are we saved (Ephesians 2:8), then your membership into Heaven does not require water-baptism. Thus, it is harder to join a Baptist church than it is to get into Heaven. I understand their requirement. I see that every Believer should want to witness their faith in the Lord by being publicly water-baptized. This should not be by compulsion or by holding the carrot of local church membership in front of someone. The belief, in its purest form, is that a Believer will automatically want to be water-baptized and publicly state their faith soon after conversion. This is or can be a true measure of a person's faith in Christ. Placing water-baptism as a "work of membership" in a local Baptist church reassigns the emphasis away from witnessing a surrendered heart to God leading to a "*Rebirth of Spirit*" or in other words "*Baptism of the Holy Spirit*" (John 3). Both meanings can co-exist. However, through Baptist history, water-baptism membership has placed a greater demand on people using the ordinance as an instrument to gain local church membership over the witness of the transformation Rebirth of Spirit/Spirit Baptism.

Anyone can go through an act of water-baptism. Not everyone will surrender to being baptized by God's Holy Spirit. In fact, John the Baptist said that he baptized with water, but the one coming after him would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; Acts 11:15-16). How is Jesus' baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire accomplished in water-baptism? It is not. It may symbolize it. Rebirth of Spirit / Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the point of salvation (John 3). And Peter witnesses that this happens to them at the beginning (Acts 11:15-16). This is what Jesus told Nicodemus. This

takes an actual surrender of the heart (Circumcision of the Heart Deut. 30:6; Acts 2:27), a heart change. *Rebirth of Spirit* and *Circumcision of the Heart* is the same thing as *Spiritual Baptism*. Both wordings point to an internal change that only can be accomplished once a person surrenders to God's conviction. You cannot fake *Spiritual Baptism*. God is the one administering and watching. *Spiritual Baptism* is administered by the Lord. Man cannot control *Spiritual Baptism*. As we have seen water-baptism can be controlled by man.

There is tremendous pressure to report membership numbers in Baptist life. Membership is gained through water-baptism. Therefore, the great push to get people baptized.

Baptist also point to Philip and the Ethiopian who received Christ and then was water-baptized right away (Acts 8:27-40). True enough, this can happen. However, we need to examine this event more closely and not just of the timing of the water-baptism. Note, the Ethiopian was seeking God, he was already reading the prophet Isaiah. He did not have to get talked into anything. Joining a local church was not his reason to be water-baptized.

Another example of people being water-baptized right away after salvation is when Peter preaches at Cornelius' house and gentiles speak in tongues prior to being water-baptized. Peter announces to those present "**who can hold them back from water-baptism.**" The timing is short from salvation to water-baptism, but again we need to look at all the facts presented in the text.

Acts 10:43-48

⁴³ "Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who **believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.**" [loosen sin]

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking these words, the **Holy Spirit fell upon** all those who were **listening** to the message.

⁴⁵ And all the circumcised believers who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the **Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles also.**

⁴⁶ For they were hearing them **speaking with tongues** and **exalting** God. Then Peter answered,

⁴⁷ "**Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *did*, can he?**"

⁴⁸ And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.

Peter was preaching the Gospel which can **loosen sin**. Loosening sin is part of the commission the disciples, including Peter, received from Jesus. We will discuss later that all Believers have this commission. This is the Holy Spirit conviction working through Peter to the target audience. Their hearts were convicted of the Gospel and then they received a gift from the Holy Spirit of speaking in tongues. This proved to the Circumcised-Believers present that these gentiles had attained the state of salvation. But note: those speaking in tongues were seemingly compelled by the Spirit working inside of them. They did not have to make themselves speak in tongues. This is the way water-baptism should be. No one is talked into being water-baptized to join a local church. It is the Spirit working inside of the heart that compels them.

There is a lot happening here at Cornelius's house of which water-baptism is apart. It is obvious that the witness of the Holy Spirit working through someone is evidence of salvation. In this case, it is speaking in tongues and exalting God. Consider 1 Corinthians 12 for a teaching on spiritual gifts. Local church membership should be evaluated over time to see the fruit and gifts of the Holy Spirit are working in a person's life. This can be visible right away or it may take time. Caution needs to be taken.

The outcome of the Baptist (and others) practice is that they have many members who went through the work of water-baptism just to become a member. By some member's behavior (know them by their fruit) it is apparent God's Holy Spirit is not leading their lives. With membership comes a vote at the congregational meeting. This is why they have non-believers voting in their

meetings on every issue of the church. This gets into a discussion about democracy in the assembly of which we have no example in the New Testament. Another discussion.

So, I have written the above paragraphs to demonstrate that I am not examining the Roman Catholic Church in the next section without objectively examining the tradition from where I was educated and served. The goal is for all of us to see that we should consider ourselves as ONE body of Believers. By identifying traditions that separate us, we can grow closer together. We should be able to see, after identifying barriers we can live without, that we can cast those barriers aside and accomplish the unity in life in which God has called us. Our witness will be stronger.

Roman Catholic Church and Peter

**After Pentecost, at Peter's first sermon,
he calls Jesus the "stone," not himself.**

Acts 4:11 "He is the **stone** which was rejected by you, the builders, *but* which became the very **corner stone**.

1 Peter 2:6 For this is contained in Scripture: "Behold I lay in Zion a **choice stone**, a precious **corner stone**, And he who believes in Him shall not be disappointed."

Why is this important to correctly identify Peter's role? Why is it important to correctly determine how Peter viewed himself in light of Jesus commissioning him and the other disciples. Because the Roman Catholic Church claims that Peter is the foundational "rock" that Jesus Christ built His Church. They claim Peter is the first Pope. Through Peter comes the authority of Christ passed through Peter and on to successive generations of Popes. In

addition, through apostolic succession comes the authority over all the church does and at the same time claiming all other authorities are illegitimate. They quote Matthew 16:13-20. We need to remember that context is key in any Biblical study. We consider the whole Bible as one revelation from God. One passage does not stand independent from another.

Critical Examination of Matthew 16

Matthew 16:13-20

¹³ Now when **Jesus** came into the district of Caesarea Philippi,

He *began* asking **His disciples**, saying,

"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 And **Simon Peter answered** and said,

"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

¹⁷ And **Jesus** answered and 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 "And **I** also say to you that **you are Peter**,

and upon **this rock** I will build My church;
and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.

¹⁹ "I will give you the **keys of the kingdom** of heaven;
and whatever you shall **bind** on earth shall be bound in
heaven, and whatever you shall **loose** on earth shall be
loosed in heaven."

²⁰ Then He warned the disciples that they should tell no one
that He was the Christ.

This conversation Jesus has with all the disciples is revealing in the prophetic context of the Old Testament (Example: see in Isaiah quoted above and following). Remember that Jesus is talking to his disciples who are Jews who know the Scriptures. They know Isaiah. Therefore, Peter and the disciple are looking for "a" Messiah. They are familiar with specific words and phrases the prophets used to identify the coming Messiah. The community around Jesus is still learning who He really is. Jesus uses this conversation to highlight His Messianic identity. Note that Jesus is the one who asks the question, "**Who do people say that the Son of Man is?**" (verse 13). Verse fourteen reveals that there is diverse opinion as to His identity. However, all the names mentioned are Jewish and have Messianic applications. In verse fifteen, Jesus asked the disciples specifically who they say He is, "**But who do you say that I am?**" Peter speaks up and responds, "**Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.**" Jesus tells Peter that he is blessed, but not specifically for getting the answer correct, but, more importantly, that Jesus said "**My Father who is in heaven revealed this to you.**" This spiritual connection is important for all of us to have and receive divine teachings from God. Once Peter correctly identifies Jesus as the Messiah, Jesus correctly identifies Peter. "**And I also say to you that you are Peter,**" there is a pause marked by a comma; then Jesus points back to himself and says "**upon this rock I will build my assembly.**" How can

this be understood? Remember the first question Jesus asked, “Who do you say that I am?” Jesus did not ask the group who they thought Peter was. The question was to identify Jesus, not Peter. Jesus refers to himself as the “rock” that the Isaiah prophecy announced. Peter is identified for receiving a blessing, because he availed himself to a message from God the Father. Remember, we must consider the whole biblical context and not make an interpretation based on one passage of Scripture and ignore others that pertain to the same subject.

Some interpreters make a case that Peter in Greek is *Petros* (noun masculine singular) which is a form of the word “rock” and is similar to *petra* (noun dative feminine singular) which means *rock* in Greek. Therefore, Jesus is using Peter as an example and his faith demonstrates what the church will be built upon. This interpretation still takes away Peter himself as being the “rock” and points to his faith. However, considering the heavy weight of Isaiah and the great Jewish anticipation of the Messiah, the “rock,” the cornerstone, it is evident that Jesus points to himself.

Matthew 16:18 καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ σοὶ λέγω ὅτι σὺ εἶ Πέτρος, καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν καὶ πύλαι ᾗδου οὐ κατισχύσουσιν αὐτῆς.

Looking at the correct parsing of the two words we see that *Petros* for Peter is in the masculine form. The word for rock (*petra*) is in the same sentence but in the feminine form. Peter did not change genders in front of Jesus. What makes sense is that the “rock -*petra*” is in the feminine because the application of the word is to birth the church. The reference is to the origin of the church which in Jesus Christ the cornerstone of which Isaiah prophesied. We see the feminine image of Christ as birthing the church in **John 1:12** “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children (literally = come into being) of God, even to those who believe in His name,” Also we consider **John 3:6** “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” And Paul writes to the Believers in

Galatians “My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you.”

Analyzing verse 18

**18 "And I also say to you that you are Peter, [Part one]
and upon this rock I will build My church; [Part two]
and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it. [Part three]**

There are three parts to verse eighteen. Jesus identifies Peter. Jesus points and identifies himself as the “rock” Isaiah prophesied about. And three, the gates of hades shall not overpower the Church.

Isaiah 28:16 Therefore thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, A costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed.

Isaiah 8:14-15

14 "Then He shall become a sanctuary; But to both the houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over,
And a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
15 "And many will stumble over them, Then they will fall and be broken; They will even be snared and caught."

Note that Isaiah declared that “He who believes in it will not be disturbed.” The cornerstone for the foundation is the cornerstone for the assembly of “Believers.” This is what we call in English “The Church.”

The third part supports Jesus as the “rock” and not Peter. “and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.” What is the “rock” the gates of Hades shall not overpower? Peter? Really! No man can defeat Hades (Hell). Only the blood of Jesus can defeat sin and death and Hades. No mortal man was sent to defeat

Hades. Therefore, the correct translation identifies Jesus, not Peter, as the “rock” which upon the church is built. Jesus is exactly who Isaiah identifies. The whole mission of the incarnation was to defeat Hades. Peter is not God; he is mortal/temporal Peter, who, by the way, died a physical death. Whereas, Jesus died on the Cross for the sins of the world, rose from the tomb and ascended to Heaven. Peter did not do this. God’s work as Jesus upon the Cross shall not be overpowered by the gates of Hades! No work of Peter or the church can accomplish the work of the Cross.

We must see the whole context here. Looking to verses 21-23, we see that Jesus identifies Peter as the man through whom Satan is working. Is this the man, Peter, the “rock” which upon the Church is built? It is not acceptable, and contrary to the rest of Scripture to teach from this conversation (that starts in verse 14) Jesus is having with His disciples appoints Peter as the “foundation rock” which upon the Church is built and then identifies him as the man through whom Satan is speaking.

²¹ From that time Jesus Christ began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.

²² And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid *it*, Lord! This shall never happen to You."

²³ But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's." Matthew 16:21-23

Keys to Heaven (Matthew 16:19)

What are the keys to Heaven? The holder of the keys is associated with authority. This can be seen in the holder of the Key of David. The Key of David holder is possessed by the one who will judge. This is Jesus Christ himself (Isa. 22:22; Rev. 3:7). Keys unlock doors/gates. Keys give access. Above all, access to Heaven is provided by God through His **grace** and **faith and love. This is the Gospel. Who possesses the Gospel? We Believers do.** All believers are the holders of the keys to Heaven. We have all be given a priesthood with the authority of Christ inside each of us. We are the priesthood of believers Peter writes about (1 Peter 2:9). Through these three (grace, hope, love) come God's mercy, and therefore, we receive forgiveness, restoration and entrance into God's Heaven. Jesus did give all these to Peter, but not for him to hold for the purpose of dispensing them to the rest of us. Peter was too fragile and vulnerable as we have just read in Matthew 16:21-23.

Reading other Scriptures was see what gives access to heaven. What unlocks Heaven's gate? Grace, Faith and Love.

Ephesians 2:⁸ **For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is the gift of God*; ⁹ not as a result of works, that no one should boast.**

Quoting Paul 1 Timothy 1:13-14

And yet I was shown mercy, because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; ¹⁴ and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are *found* in Christ Jesus.

Anyone who thinks that Peter, by himself, was appointed to hold the keys (grace, faith and love) to Heaven has misplaced the intent God has for dispensing grace, faith and love. These are a gift from God given to all Believers. God's grace and love operate in us, which produces faith. Faith is what specifically places us in Heaven (Eph. 2:8). Faith is the key to

forgiveness, which is salvation. Did Jesus give Peter faith? Yes, He did, just like Jesus gave all of us faith. Jesus did not give Peter faith alone to hold and then dispense to the rest of us. We are told that through the faithful Christ we are forgiven, because we have the faith to go to Him to receive forgiveness.

1 John 1: ⁷ but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ **If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.** ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

Paul defends himself to Agrippa in Acts 26 and testifies to him that it is **by faith** we receive forgiveness of sin and an inheritance (entrance into Heaven), because we have been sanctified by faith (key), not Peter.

Acts 26:18 Paul quotes Christ to Agrippa

¹⁸ to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those **who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'**

Faith Binds and Loses Sin Commission to the Whole Church not Just Peter

In both Matthew 16:19 and John 20:20-23, Jesus gives the same commission to the disciples.

John. 20:20-23 ²⁰ And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples therefore rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus therefore said to them again, "Peace *be* with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you." ²² And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ "If you forgive the sins of any, *their sins* have been forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they have been retained."

[See Matthew 18:18 ~ Jesus commission all disciples to bind and loose sin.]

In Matthew 16, (text on page 9) he is talking in front of the disciple and addresses Peter specifically after Peter spoke-up. In John 20, Jesus is talking to the disciples as a group. The same commission is given. Therefore, the commission is not exclusively charged to one person. The reality is that all Believers are given the same commission. Go into all the world and tell people that their sins can be forgiven, if they surrender to God. If they do not surrender to God, then their sins will not be forgiven. It is that simple. This commission is the duty of the whole assembly. Jesus gave the commission at first to the disciples who first carried out Lord's commands. Obviously, the task of witnessing the Gospel to the whole world is not tied to one person or a small group of people. Including the passage in John 20, all four Gospels have commissioning charges. Mark 16:16 follows the command that whatever you loose are forgiven and whatever you bind is not forgiven. Note that the forgiveness in Mark 16:16 is tied to "He who has 'believed'." "Belief" is the "key" not the water-baptism. Peter demonstrated "faith" which is a component of the "keys" to which Jesus pointed. What does Jesus give us? "FAITH." In Mark 16:16, baptism is the product of belief. If a person does not believe, they will not be water-baptized. Instead,

they are condemned but only for the non-belief not for failing to be water-baptized. It is obvious that some people have been untruthful and made a false profession of faith by being water-baptized. It is unfortunate that man has made water-baptism a work of salvation. Therefore, people that undergo water-baptism witness to the act as proof of their salvation and, again, it is contrary to Ephesians 2:8. Water-baptism is a witness to our belief and therefore, our salvation.

Back to Peter. Peter was given a two-fold commission concerning loosening and binding sin. He and the other disciples were given the commission to announce to people who “believed” that their sins were forgiven, and, at the same time, commissioned to tell non-believers that their sins are not forgiven. This is what the Gospel proclaims. To be clear. The Gospel commissions Believers to tell non-believers of their need for salvation and forgiveness of sin in order that they can be saved from being separated from the Lord forever. There is no ill will.

Hebrews 3:18-19 ¹⁸ **And to whom did He swear that they should not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient?** ¹⁹ **And so we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.**

What happened at Peter’s first sermon after Pentecost? Peter is preaching a condemning sermon (binding sin) and at the same time he is fulfilling Jesus’ commission concerning loosening sin.

Acts 2:21-23 ²¹ **'And it shall be, that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'** ²² "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know-- ²³ this *Man*, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, **you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death.**

Acts 2:36-37 36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ-- this Jesus whom you crucified." 37 Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

Peter preached how sins can be loosed and at the same time bound their acts as sin because they crucified Jesus Christ. **“you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.”** verse 23. The product of Peter’s sermon is that people’s sins were loosed, and they were forgiven. Peter tells them, ²¹ **'And it shall be, that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved' (Acts 2:21)**. Peter’s discipline in carrying out the Lord’s commission is seen in the fruit brought forth. The Holy Spirit, speaking through Peter, convicted the Jews that were present. Again, Peter tells them that their sins are loosed, if they repent. Remember the order. Holy Spirit conviction leads to surrender of the heart and then a person can repent by the Spirit working inside of them. They obviously then are eligible to be water-baptized, symbolizing/witnessing their change of heart and direction in life. Then they can receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, because they had received the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:38 **And Peter said to them, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit**

Below are Great Commission verses to loosen sin and to (bind) condemn sin through Gospel proclamation. The mere fact that the Gospel is preached and heard by unsaved people brings awareness of condemnation. Sounds harsh. Many in the world reject the Gospel because it is condemning. This is like the

doctor telling you that you have life-threatening cancer. You do not want to hear the doctor's diagnosis, but you need to hear it so that you can be healed.

Luke 24:47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

Mark 16:15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

Acts 2:38 And Peter said to them, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 24:14 "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come.

Matthew 28:19-20 ⁹ "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,
²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Mark 16:16 "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.

Through claiming Peter as the first Pope, the RCC makes their case for supreme authority in all of Christendom. Through this tradition comes (to list a few) the claim of the treasury of merits, sole authority to officiate over the

Lord's Supper, in addition to changing the elements into the body and blood of Christ which by itself is not called for in Scripture.

This claim alone places the RCC as the sole authority on planet earth to forgive sins and restore a person as being acceptable to God. After Vatican II, (mid 1960's) there is more openness and acceptance that those of us outside of RCC life are considered Christian and can receive forgiveness of sin by praying directly to God. However, their teaching concerning the Reformers is not so conciliatory. For they hold the Reformers to be burning in hell for leading us astray. This is exactly what the senior priest told me.

Through objective research, anyone can find both claims are based upon tradition and not the Bible. Tradition in RCC life has authority. The first time Peter was referenced at a Church-wide conference was in 451 AD at the council of Chalcedon with the phrase "The fisherman has spoken" uttered by the recognized city of Rome Bishop named Leo. He was just that . . . the Bishop of Rome, like all the other Bishops in the Christian world. Historically, in Protestant churches, the Bible trumps tradition. Luther, for one, is credited with the phrase "Solo Scriptura" and "Solo Fidia." This means that the Bible has more authority than the Pope or man's tradition. At the Chalcedon council in its twenty-eighth canon, it states that the bishop of Constantinople had authority equal to that of the bishop in Rome. In fact, through historical research, Bishop equality is the historical position from all the Bishops in the Christian world up until the Roman Bishop, eventually aided by state force, politized his realm. To further the point, the Bishops in the East never did recognize the Roman Bishop's claim. Thus, we have the Eastern Orthodox or Eastern Churches. People in America have a misconceived idea that prior to the Reformation there was only the RCC. This is historically and factually in error.

People in RCC life who have surrendered to the Lord, just as we have, are our brothers and sisters in Christ, and we will all be in Heaven together. It is

unfortunate for RCC adherents to carry additional baggage in this life as they strive to satisfy the demands of their leadership which can be found nowhere in the Bible.

It needs to be noted that the RCC has many rules and regulations written down. One of those is called the Catechism of Catholic Church. There is a section called "The Church and non-Christians" which address Jews and Muslims. Paragraph 841 specifically address Muslims.

Paragraph 841 The Church's relationship with the Muslims. "The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place amongst whom are the Muslims; these profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind's judge on the last day."

It is hard to accept that the RCC puts its members through all the man-made ritual and bondage-of-guilt-ridden-baggage in order to appease God, then they just simply declare that Muslims are saved because they profess to hold to the faith of Abraham. You shall know them by their fruit. People can profess to be anything. Per this paragraph (841), and through reading the whole section, you basically can do away with the whole RCC and can be whatever you declare and still go to heaven. Well, Ok, with the RCC there is a short stop in purgatory of a few thousand years so you can be purified in order to be in the presence of God. They, themselves, by these teachings, gut their whole purpose for existing. We have taught that Islam is founded in Baal worship and is as Satanic as you can get. If you read this and want to discuss with me, give me a call.

Luther said, "a simple layman armed with Scripture is greater than the mightiest pope without it". He taught and wrote, making his major impact in 1510 AD, his death at the age of 62 in 1546 AD.

I see that the Reformation continues to this day. There is healing that needs to take place. Healing comes when there are open hearts and ears that reach out to understand beyond what has been said through man's traditions. Jesus's commission is to all of us. No one man or man-made organization holds the keys to Heaven. Jesus holds them and gives them to every person upon their salvation. The Gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes . . . in the Gospel the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. Notice that it is faith (one of the keys) that transfers the righteousness of God. Man cannot control this process. Paul sums up the Gospel in 1 Corinthians 15. What is the power of God for salvation? The Gospel. Not a man-made institution.

Romans 1:16-17 ¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous *man* shall live by faith."

AMEN....

Continuing in 1 Peter . . . [**TRANSITION BACK TO BELIEVERS**]

⁹ But you are a chosen race,
 a royal priesthood,
 a holy nation,
 a people for God's own possession,
 that **you** may **proclaim** the excellencies of Him
 who has **called** you out of darkness
 into His marvelous light;

¹⁰ for you once were not a people, [Jews before Abram, Includes Gentiles]

but now you are the people of God;
you had not received mercy, [Under the Law]
but now you have received mercy. [Through The Cross – Gospel]
[Paul sums up the Gospel in 1 Corinthians 15.]

CHANGE OF MESSAGE

¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts,
which wage war against the soul.

¹² Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles,
so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers,
they may on account of your good deeds,
as they observe *them*,
glorify God in the day of visitation.

¹³ Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution,
whether to a king as the one in authority,

¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him for the **punishment of evildoers
and the praise of those who do right.**

¹⁵ For such is the will of God
that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.

¹⁶ *Act* as free men,
and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil,
but *use it* as bondslaves of God.

¹⁷ Honor all men;
love the brotherhood,
fear God, honor the king.

¹⁸ Servants,
be submissive to your masters with all respect,
not only to those who are good and gentle,
but also to those who are unreasonable.

¹⁹ For this *finds* favor,
if for the sake of conscience toward God a man
bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.

²⁰ For what credit is there if,
when you sin and are harshly treated,
you endure it with patience?
But if when you do what is right and suffer *for it*
you patiently endure it,
this *finds* favor with God.

²¹ For you have been called for this purpose,
since Christ also suffered for you,
leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,

²² who committed no sin,
nor was any deceit found in His mouth;

²³ and while being reviled,
He did not revile in return;
while suffering,

He uttered no threats,
but kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously;

²⁴ and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross,
that we might die to sin and live to righteousness;
for by His wounds you were healed.

²⁵ For you were continually straying like sheep,
but now you have returned
to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.