

DEEP IN SCRIPTURE

Verses & Notes October 18, 2006

Matthew 16:13-20

Matthew, chapter 16

- 13** When Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples,
"Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"
- 14** They replied,
"Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."
- 15** He said to them,
"But who do you say that I am?"
- 16** Simon Peter said in reply,
"You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."
- 17** Jesus said to him in reply,
*"Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah.
For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father.*
- 18** *And so I say to you, you are Peter,
and upon this rock I will build my church,
and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.*
- 19** *I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven.
Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven;
and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."*
- 20** Then he strictly ordered his disciples to tell no one that he was the Messiah.

Discussion Notes:

Introduction: Guest, Carlos Caso-Rosendi, former Jehovah's Witness

- Short summary of Carlos' background
- Why did he chose this passage?

Context:

- Immediate scriptural context:
 - Called disciples
 - Sermon on the Mount
 - Many healings and signs;
 - Further instructions & sending forth of disciples
 - Confrontations with Phar / Scribes
 - Amazement by all!
 - Chapter 16:
 - Phar / Scr demand for a sign (1-4)
 - Teaching abt the leaven of the Pharisees (5-12)
- "When Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi..."
- Matthew's context: (assumption based on views of ECF, Tradition, faithful scholars)
 - Written to Jewish believers in diaspora, for reading in liturgy;
 - Not new information, but confirming what they had already heard thru oral

- tradition;
- Originally written in Hebrew / Aramaic; translated into Greek.

How did Carlos understand these verses as a Jehovah Witness?

How have these passages been generally understood by Protestant interpreters?

- Notes from Harper's Study Bible (Evangelical Calvinist):

"Some have interpreted this verse to mean that Christ founded His church on Peter himself. But such an interpretation overlooks some very important elements in this conversation. It is plain that Christ was making a play on words, for *Peter* and *rock* are *Petros* and *petra* in the Greek. The church is not built on Peter or any other individual as its foundation-stone, for Peter himself makes it clear in 1 Pet 2:4-8 that Christ Himself is the only cornerstone of the church (cf. also Eph 2:20-22). The church, then, is built upon the person of the Lord Jesus and its membership includes only those who have confessed Him as Peter did. The "gates of Hades" cannot prevail against this church, for Christ has risen again from the dead and will keep His body safe from the onslaughts of death."

How were these understood and applied by the Early Church Fathers? (Jim's Notes)

What is the scriptural background?

Isaiah 51, 1-2

1 Listen to me, you who pursue justice, who seek the LORD; Look to the rock from which you were hewn, to the pit from which you were quarried; **2** Look to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah, who gave you birth; When he was but one I called him, I blessed him and made him many.

Isaiah 22, 16-25

15 Thus says the Lord, the GOD of hosts: Up, go to that official, Shebna, master of the palace, **16** Who has hewn for himself a sepulcher on a height and carved his tomb in the rock: "What are you doing here, and what people have you here, that here you have hewn for yourself a tomb?" **17** The LORD shall hurl you down headlong, mortal man! He shall grip you firmly **18** And roll you up and toss you like a ball into an open land to perish there, you and the chariots you glory in, you disgrace to your master's house! **19** I will thrust you from your office and pull you down from your station. **20** On that day I will summon my servant Eliakim, son of Hilkiah; **21** I will clothe him with your robe, and gird him with your sash, and give over to him your authority. He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. **22** I will place the key of the House of David on his shoulder; when he opens, no one shall shut, when he shuts, no one shall open.

What are some implications given this data?

- **Key moment for Israel** when the promise made to Abraham comes to its realization. The destiny of Israel is **universal**. In Isa. 51, 1-2 God reminds us that He has made from the "one" Abraham the "many" of Israel. This is the only verse in the O.T. –outside Genesis- where Sarah is mentioned. This is also the only verse in the O.T. where anyone other than God is compared to a rock.
- **Changes of Names and fruitfulness:** Sarai (my princess, a singular possessive term of endearment) to Sarah (princess, more general like a princess of a kingdom.) Sarah conceived Isaac after her name was changed by God. Abram (father of a multitude) to Abraham (father of nations). Finally Simon bar Jonah to Kepha or Petros. Abraham was the Rock from which Israel was hewn and Petros is presented as another rock. It follows that as Israel was hewn from the rock that is Abraham, the Church is hewn from this new rock that is Peter.
- **Authority:** Jesus bestows upon Peter the keys of the Kingdom of Israel in the same manner of the kings of the dynasty of David thus making him his vizier or steward for the "new Israel" a universal Israel that is to be a light to the nations.
- The true Church thus must have some qualities:
 - It must remain until the return of Jesus
 - It must be fruitful
 - It must be universal
 - It must bear the authority of Peter

What difference does this make for us today?