

# Notes for the Ekklēsia Meeting

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## Ekklēsia: Built Upon Allegiance To The Messianic King

by Dan Trygg

He said to them, "Who do you say that I am?" And Simon Peter said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 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. And I also say to you that you are Peter (Gk., Petros, m., a stone), and upon this rock (Gk., petra, f., bedrock) I will build My church (Gk. - ekklēsia) and Hades' gates will not stand against it. And I will give to you (sing.) 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."

Matthew 16:15-19

As we continue to attempt to understand what Jesus meant His ekklēsia to be, we return to this key passage in Matthew to glean some of the fundamental components that comprise His vision. From these verses, we can make the following observations:

**1. "You are the Christ"** -- In answer to Jesus' question, "Who do you say that I am?", Peter blurted out this declaration. It is obvious from Jesus' response, that this was a major insight, "...flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven...(vs. 16). What is the significance of this exclamation? To us, who have grown up in the church, the word "Christ" has come to be so familiar as to be perceived by most as being Jesus' last name. It was *not*. It was an important title.

**Christos is Greek for "anointed one."**

Messiah is the Hebrew equivalent.

"Anointing" was used to appoint prophet (I Kg. 19:16), priests (Ex. 28:41), and kings (Judges 9:8) in the OT. David's habitual use of the phrase "the Lord's anointed" to refer to King Saul established Messiah as a kingly title (I Sam. 16:6; 24:6,10; 26:9,11,16,23; II Sam 1:14,16).

**"Christ" is the title for a king**, specifically the King of Israel (Psa. 2:1-6). Therefore, **Peter's insight was that Jesus was Israel's promised king, the Messiah prophesied about in the OT.**

**2. "You are ...the Son of God"** -- Again, for most Christians, looking back through the lens of 2,000 years of church history, this phrase means that Jesus was the offspring of God, the result of the miraculous conception caused by the Holy Spirit in Mary's womb. This is not at all what this phrase would mean to a first-century Jew, however. It is *not* what Peter meant by His declaration, nor is it the insight that Jesus is saying was revealed by God to the Galilean fisherman. What does it mean? **The title, Son of God, had a long, well-established history in Jewish culture.** In Psalm 2, a psalm ascribed to King David (Acts 4:25,26), David testifies that God referred to him as His son (vss. 7-12). **What is the significance of this title?** It meant that *God had uniquely "begotten" David*, in that He caused him to rise up almost miraculously from the meek, unpretentious role of a shepherd *to become king over Israel*. Furthermore, *He was adopting David as His own child*, meaning that He would take a special interest in David, in comparison with all other earthly monarchs. To mock, or attempt to injure David, was tantamount to dishonoring God Himself. His fury and vengeance would be applied to the offender with the same zeal that a father would protect his son from his enemies and detractors.

In II Sam. 7:1-16 and I Chron. 17:1-14, *this unique relationship with God is promised to be extended to David's "seed", his offspring, who would rise up after him and reign in His stead*. God would be a father to this Son of David, and he would be a son to God his Father.

**"Son of God" is also a kingly title.** That is what it would have meant to Peter, and to most first-century Jews. Peter was reiterating, with a different word-picture, that **Jesus was the Messianic King.**

3. **"...upon this rock (petra) I will build My church (ekklēsia)..."** -- The word translated as "rock" is a feminine Greek noun, meaning "bedrock". There is no way in the Greek language that one could be confused so as to think that this "bedrock" was *the same as* Peter (Petros, a masculine Greek noun, meaning "detached stone, boulder"). Jesus was *not* linking the two as equivalent. **The Bedrock upon which Jesus' will build His ekklēsia is the realization and confession that He is the Messianic King.**

**What is an ekklēsia?** The word means "called out", and refers to a people called out of everyday life to meet together for a purpose. We are God's "called out ones". We have been recruited by the King to do the King's business. We gather together to strengthen and prepare one another for the battle, and to deal with what pleases the King when we gather. He is the King, we are to look to Him for direction.

**To call Jesus our King acknowledges the basis of a functional relationship.** This was not an empty word picture for these people. *They knew what a king was.* What did it mean to them? *A king had absolute, unquestioned authority.* He had the absolute power of death over any individual within his realm. He was the commander in chief over the army. He decreed laws, passed legal judgments, and determined foreign policy. He would have the right to raise taxes, and to conscript troops or workers, to support his administration.

4. **Gates of Hades -- Gates were fortified entry points of an established city.** When an army laid siege to a city, they would attempt to break down the gates so their troops could rush in and plunder the city.

**Jesus said that Hades' gates would not be able to withstand the ekklēsia.** This word picture describes the ekklēsia as a fighting force that aggressively assaults the established fortifications of the kingdom of darkness and death. We are not in a *defensive* position, according to this image. It is *the enemy's* kingdom which is hard-pressed to hold its territory against the offensive attacks of the ekklēsia!

5. **The Kingdom of Heaven --** The other side in this great power struggle.

**"Kingdom" refers not so much to a geographical area as it does to a political allegiance and practical influence.** *It is the reign and rule of God the King.* It is manifested wherever, and whenever, the King's wishes are carried out. It is the "King's dominion" expressed in action.

Notice that, on the simplest level, what "binding and loosing" means is that there are things running around loose here that need to be confined, and things that are "bound up" or "in bondage" that need to be let loose.

It is important to note that **the ekklēsia is not equal to the Kingdom of Heaven.** God is often referred to in the OT as "Yahweh of hosts", referring at the very least to the armies of angelic beings under His dominion (Gen. 28:12,13; Hos. 12:4,5; Ps. 89:6-8). It may be so broad a term as to be inclusive of all the things God made which are subject to Him, e.g., the "host of the heavens" (referring to the sun, moon and stars -- Deut. 4:19; Isa. 45:12), or even extending to the multitude of animals which are the product of His handiwork (cf. Rev. 5:11-13). Like Israel of old (I Sam. 17:45), **we are under command of the King of Heaven.** We *are* representatives of it, *agents* who are to carry out Kingdom business. ***The Kingdom itself, however, is much "bigger" than we are.***

6. **Keys -- We have the resources of the Kingdom of Heaven at our disposal to accomplish our missions.** For whatever reason, however, *the job will not get done without our involvement.* We must turn the keys.

The realization that Jesus is the Messiah, the King sent from God, is the foundational truth we all agree on. We are called by Him to meet together to build one another up and to prepare for the King's objective, namely to take away territory and influence from the forces of darkness, and display the King's glory before a watching world. We seek the King's direction, use the resources He provides (the gifts and empowering of the Holy Spirit), to do His Kingdom work.