

Lesson 29 Matthew 16. 15-20 (20)

Jesus teaches that the Father reveals the Son

Simon Peter is very clear in his epic response

Peter's response to the Lord's question, 'Whom do you (plural) say I am' is direct and precise and perfect, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God (Yahweh).

Peter had light from heaven coming through the work of the Holy Spirit in his heart.

Jesus' epic reply

You are a happy, Simon Bar Jonah! Now although Peter's father may have been Jonah it would seem that the Master is making a difference between his 'flesh and blood' father and the Holy Spirit -for "Jonah" means "dove"-so Simon is being addressed as "son of a dove" and indeed as Peter himself later tells us "holy men are carried along by the Holy Spirit" 2 Peter 1.21. So the work of revelation is determined by the Father, enabled by the Spirit in close association with the word of the Son of God. Like Paul in Galatians 1.16 he had an inner revelation in the circle of his experience. Paul was in a circle of this sort even on the Damascus Road when a light shined round him. With that light came also the voice of Jesus -God the Word- and Paul describes the light later as coming from the excellent glory. Others had no idea what revelation was taking place within the soul though they were aware of some real transaction. So there is a dimension in which the Holy Spirit works-seen also in Revelation 1.10

You are Peter

The contrast of Peter and the Rock mass of which Jesus spoke was well illustrated by David H who during a visit to the location in 1996 described the huge mass of rock shelf as $\pi\epsilon\tau\rho\alpha$ and the broken pieces of shale rock at its base as $\pi\epsilon\tau\rho\varsigma$. Peter was a "rock chip" and Christ was the "rock cut without hands" (Daniel 2.34)-the heavenly "Son" of Peter's confession-He who as to his work of atonement was the foundation of the church and as to the Spirit's work of creating faith was the foundation of the confessing Church.

The Gates of Hell shall not prevail

Hell is strong. Satan is redoubtable. Jesus is Lord. Despite the injury the adversary has inflicted and may yet inflict on the people of God the Gates of Hell shall not swallow up a blood bought saint of God and when the story of history is told the Kingdom of God shall prevail and that to the farthest reaches of the world. Isaiah's vision of 'the earth filled with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea' is not an empty day-dream. Why even today by unchallenged internet access and by satellite broadcasting the truth is pushing back darkness worldwide.

The Keys

As you enter the Vatican doors a great set of keys is visible on the marble of the entrance floor. Early bishops of Rome gained unequalled evangelistic opportunities but the insignia belongs not exclusively to one seat of the Christian religion. The last rights, penances, the prayers of saints or mass for the repose of the soul, however well intended, are none of them a valid means of bestowing eternal salvation. The right use the keys by the Church when it offers salvation by faith and repentance has all the authority of Christ behind it. The Lord Jesus holds the keys of death and hell (Revelation 1.18) but to the believer in whom the Father reveals His Son for the purpose of preaching and witnessing to Christ the keys of the kingdom are given. The plainest of preachers may open the door of heaven to a soul who will believe. The simplest of preachers may pronounce that the heavens are as brass to the one who will not repent. On the day of Pentecost Peter was the first to stand and proclaim Jesus-and the power of the keys was exercised in his scriptural proclamation which cited many passages of the bible



From paper to practice

How is Christ revealed to the soul?

Can the devil's fury or persecution snuff out the witness of the gospel?

What is the correct use of "the power of the keys"