

Peter and the Rock

Matthew 16: 15.



“He [Jesus] said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”
Matthew 16: 15.



I. Introduction: FOUNDATIONS OF THE CHURCH

The statement of Jesus, 'I will build my church' reminds us that the creation and the development of the church are the work of Jesus Himself. Human beings can never replace God's authority. This is why it is important to reaffirm God's ownership of His church for His glory.



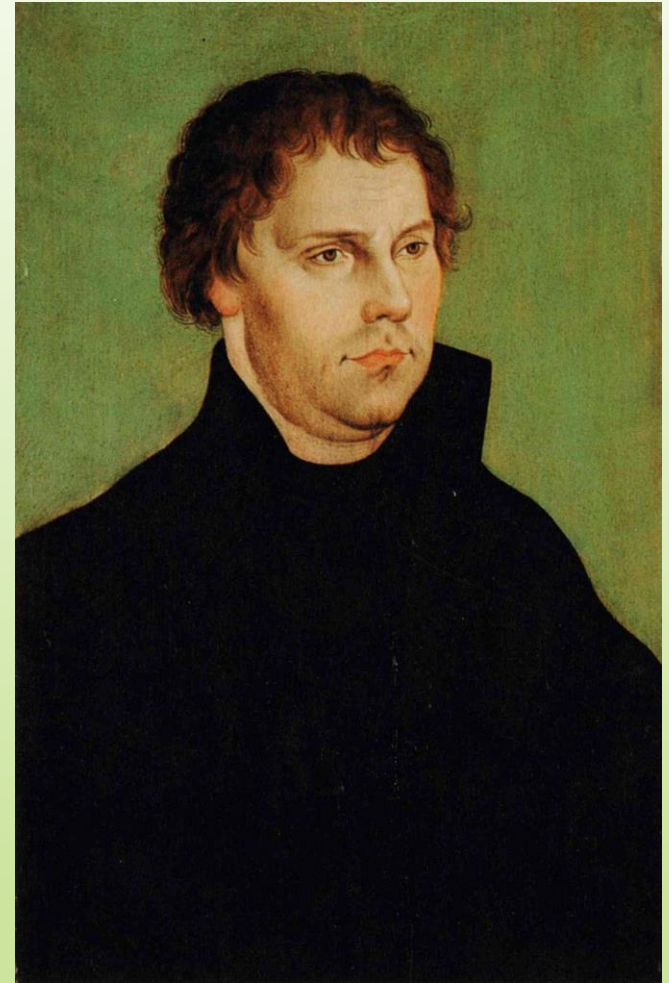
"Men can build buildings and men can build organizations but only Jesus Christ can build the church. There are churches built by men, some of them you have attended, no doubt, as I have. But here our Lord says, "I will build My church," the only one approved by God and supernaturally constructed."
John MacArthur



“And if we too have said like Peter, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,' not as if flesh and blood had revealed it unto us, but by light from the Father in heaven having shone in our heart, we become a Peter, and to us there might be said by the Word, 'Thou art Peter,' etc. For a rock is every disciple of Christ of whom those drank who drank of the spiritual rock which followed them, and upon every such rock is built every word of the church, add the polity in accordance with it; for in each of the perfect, who have the combination of words and deeds and thoughts which fill up the blessedness, is the church built by God... Shall we otherwise dare to say, that against Peter in particular the gates of Hades shall not prevail, but that they shall prevail against the other Apostles and the perfect? And if any one says this to Him, not by flesh and blood revealing it unto Him but through the Father in heaven, he will obtain the things that were spoken according to the letter of the Gospel to that Peter, but, as the spirit of the Gospel teaches, to every one who becomes such as that Peter was.”
Origen, Commentary on Matthew, 12:10 – 11. (185 – 254 A.D.)

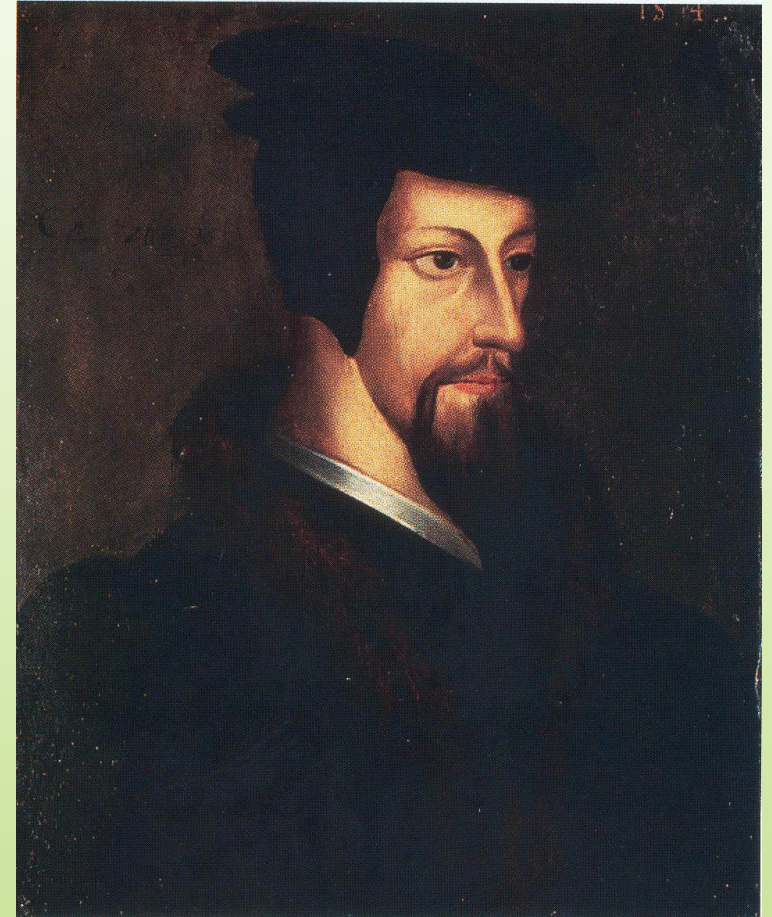
“All who agree with the confession of Peter
[in Matt. 16:16] are Peters themselves,
setting a sure foundation.”

Martin Luther



“Peter was one of twelve, their equal and colleague, not their master. He indeed brings the matter before the council when anything is to be done, and advises as to what is necessary, but he, at the same time, listens to the others, not only conceding to them an opportunity of expressing their sentiments, but allowing them to decide; and when they have decided, he follows and obeys. When he writes to pastors, he does not command authoritatively as a superior, but makes them his colleagues, and courteously advises as equals are wont to do (1 Pet. 5:1).”

John Calvin



"The Real Church is the assembly which is called, united, held together and governed by the Word of her Lord, or she is not the Real Church."

Karl Barth



“He (St. Peter), then, who before was silent, to teach us that we ought not to repeat the words of the impious, this one, I say, when he heard, ‘But who do you say I am,’ immediately, not unmindful of his station, exercised his primacy, that is, the primacy of confession, not of honor; the primacy of belief, not of rank. This, then, is Peter, who has replied for the rest of the Apostles; rather, before the rest of men....”

Ambrose of Milan



“Christ alone is the head of that church, and his predestinate are the body and each one is a member, because his bride is one person with Jesus Christ.”

John Huss



II. Context



Evolution in the perception of Jesus' Ministry

Matthew 16: 13 – 20. Structure

Beginning of Text: Jesus as Son of Man		
INTRO	13a	Geographic Element: Caesarea Philippi
A	13b	Jesus' Question (1) about people's opinion of His identity and ministry
B	14	Answer of all disciples
A'	15	Jesus' Question (2) about disciples' opinion of His identity and ministry
B'	16	Answer of Peter about Jesus
C1	17a	Blessing of Peter
C2	17b	Divine origin of Peter's Inspiration
C3	17c	The Heavenly Father revealed the answer to Peter
C4	18a	Jesus reaffirms the identity of Peter
C5	18b	Jesus' decision to build His Church on 'that rock'
C6	18c	The Church of Jesus will be indestructible
C7	19a	The Church of Jesus is an Institution working with His authority
C8	19b	The Victory in the current Spiritual War is Guaranteed through Jesus
C9	19c	The Church is proclaiming the forgiveness of Sins
D	20	Jesus' Request to His Disciples to keep His identity confidential
End of Text: Jesus as Christ (Messiah)		

“Peter was told he would possess the keys and be able to bind and loose people. These were decisions Peter was to implement as he received instruction from heaven, for the binding and loosing occurred there first. Peter simply carried out God's directions. This privilege of binding and loosing was seen in Peter's life as he had the privilege on the day of Pentecost to proclaim the gospel and announce to all those who responded in saving faith that their sins had been forgiven (Acts 2). He was able to do the same thing with the household of Cornelius (Acts 10-11; Acts 15:19-20). The same privilege was given all the disciples (John 20:22-23).”

Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:58). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

"The marvelous light that illumined the darkness of Saul was the work of the Lord; but there was also a work that was to be done for him by the disciples. Christ had performed the work of revelation and conviction; and now the penitent was in a condition to learn from those whom God had ordained to teach His truth... Thus Jesus gave sanction to the authority of His organized church and placed Saul in connection with His appointed agencies on earth. Christ had now a church as His representative on earth, and to it belonged the work of directing the repentant sinner in the way of life."

Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 121. 122.

“God willed the church! Which is what we might call the conclusive argument, since further than God's authority you cannot go. "Upon this rock I will build my church," said Jesus. He came into the world to save it. Jesus was God's revelation, and upon His departure from the earth He left the church as the new humanity bearing His image. Weakened in one place, it is strong in another. Persecuted and hounded into obscurity, it emerges cleansed, reduced to a remnant, but with a new authority because of suffering.

What is our greatest impediment? Is it not simply this: that we have lost our sense of the divine nature of the church?”

Rex Edwards

“Peter’s right confession obviously does not lead to a complete grasp on the nature of Jesus’ mission. When Jesus takes the opportunity to clarify precisely what it means to be the Messiah on his terms (16:21–28), Peter’s “God forbid!” makes it plain that his concept of kingship is still too worldly.”

David Nienhuis



“The church of God on earth, therefore, is the locus of spiritual authority. It is here that the Supreme Bearer of authority has His residence. ” 'For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them' ” (chap. 18:20, R.S.V).”
Charles Bradford



“On the church has been conferred the power to act in Christ’s stead. It is God’s instrumentality for the preservation of order and discipline among His people. To it the Lord has delegated the power to settle all questions respecting its prosperity, purity, and order. Upon it rests the responsibility of excluding from its fellowship those who are unworthy, who by their un-Christlike conduct would bring dishonor on the truth. Whatever the church does that is in accordance with the directions given in God’s word will be ratified in heaven.”

Ellen G. White, 7T, p. 263.



III. The knowledge of Jesus precedes all other knowledges. There is no progress of the church without a deep knowledge of who Jesus is and His ministry.



“The church has always been and will
always be about Jesus.”
Britt Merrick



1. Jesus is
questioning His
disciples about their
understanding of
His ministry

“He [Jesus] said to them”



“Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God” is not just a statement we make. It is the acknowledgement of a powerful, costly Truth. We must not merely say it with our lips. We must be ready to back it with our lives.”
Charles Salmon



“There is no more important question in
the cosmos than who is Jesus?”
Russell D. Moore



“If you or I are to get the answer correct to the most important question, we won’t discover it by human reason alone. It will require faith to believe. There is a knowledge by discovery. Science offers us tremendous understanding through discovery. But, there is also a knowledge to be gained by revelation that discovery alone cannot provide. We cannot know God unless God makes Himself known to us.”
Kerry Shook



2. The opinion of
the disciples about
Jesus is essential
for the fulfillment
of their ministry

“But who do you say
that I am?”



"The test has come: He asks them the question, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter's answer was clear and sure: "You are the Christ. You are the One we have been looking for. You are not Elijah; you are not Jeremiah, or John the Baptist. You are not one who is looking for another; you are the Other for whom all men have been looking." It must have been a startling realization to these disciples that here indeed was the One of whom all the Old Testament Scriptures spoke. Peter expressed their faith -- they had arrived at it that very moment -- when he said those words: "You are the Christ." Now, this is what Jesus wanted them to know. He had been working with them toward this end. He knew they needed to come to this knowledge, and all he had done up to that point had been designed to lead them to this understanding of who he was, that they might then answer their own question."

Ray Stedman

“The truth which Peter had confessed is the foundation of the believer’s faith. It is that which Christ Himself has declared to be eternal life. But the possession of this knowledge was no ground for self-glorification.

Through no wisdom or goodness of his own had it been revealed to Peter. Never can humanity, of itself, attain to a knowledge of the divine. Only the spirit of adoption can reveal to us the deep things of God.”

Ellen G. White, Conflict and Courage, p. 311.



“Who does the Bible say Jesus is? The living God, the Holy One, the Savior, the only valid object of saving faith, the sovereign Lord, and the righteous Judge. Who do you say Jesus is? That is the inescapable question. He alone can redeem you—free you from the power and penalty of sin. He alone can transform you, restore you to fellowship with God, and give your life eternal purpose.”

John MacArthur



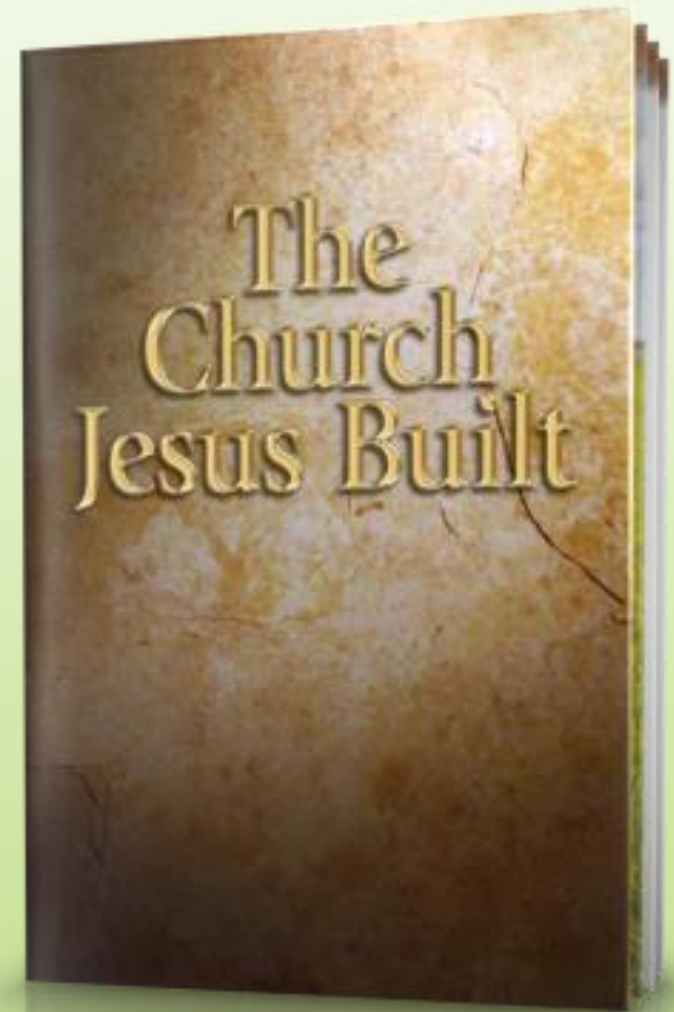
“The confession of Peter proclaims the messianic ministry of Jesus, but also His divinity (‘the son of the living God’.) To affirm that Jesus is the Son is to affirm His divine nature, His equality with the Father and His unity with Him.”
Max Overney



V. Conclusion



“The church is built on Christ as its foundation. It is not to depend on man or be controlled by man. Many claim that a position of trust in the church gives them authority to dictate what other men shall believe and do. The Saviour declares, “All ye are brethren.” Matthew 23:8. Upon no finite being can we depend for guidance. The Rock of faith is the living presence of Christ in the church. Those who think themselves the strongest will prove to be the weakest, unless they make Christ their efficiency. See Jeremiah 17:5; Psalm 2:12.” Ellen G. White, From Heaven with Love, p. 279.

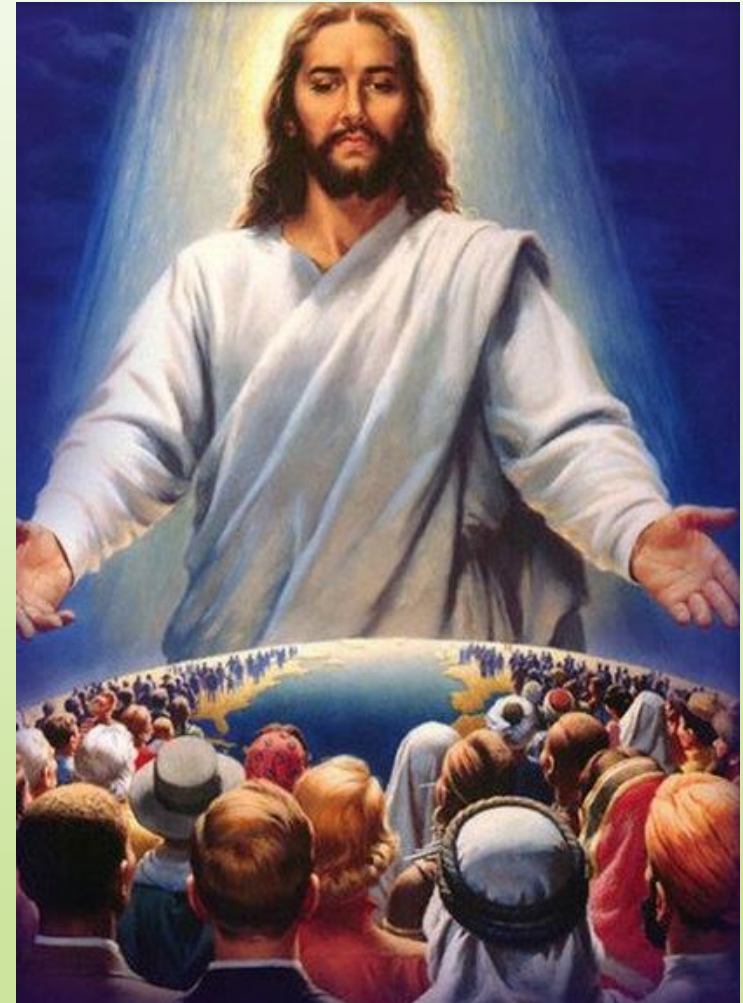


“Jesus did not come to preach a "feel good" message, but the reality of human sin and the radical measures God takes on behalf of our redemption. Jesus is indeed a great moral teacher, but he is much more as well. He calls us to repent and follow him. The early church encapsulated their belief by saying merely, "Jesus is Lord." This statement, however, and commitment to it could have resulted in severe persecution (and often it did). But either Jesus is Lord or he is not.”
Walter Elwell



“World missions is not ultimately dependent on human initiative or human wisdom or human perseverance. It is ultimately dependent on the power and wisdom and faithfulness of the risen and living Christ to keep this promise: "I will build my church." Not, "You will build my church." Or, "Missionaries will build my church." Or, "Pastors will build my church." But, "I will build my church.”

John Piper



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