

## Section III: Choosing Sides

### 19. The Keys of the Kingdom

Jesus said to Peter, “And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will already be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will already be loosed in heaven.” (Mt. 16:19) Here in this verse hangs perhaps the most tantalizing nugget of knowledge the intellect could wish to grasp – the keys to the kingdom of God! With this knowledge, one must certainly possess eternal life! Though this thought seems valid, it is mistaken. One can ask and even answer questions like “What is the kingdom of God?” and “How do I get in?” but knowledge of or about the kingdom of God is not nearly the same as being *in* God’s kingdom. It is also to be noticed that the kingdom of God is, to the fallen and natural mind, concealed and unable to be explained and understood. Its existence can perhaps be acknowledged but the true shape and substance of it will remain hidden from those who have not yet entered into it. Those who have entered into it, especially those who have not come primarily by way of the intellect but rather by way of the heart and of faith (which, in truth, is how all must come, with or without extensive knowledge), will recognize these “new” truths about the kingdom as well-known signposts on the road they’ve already been traveling.

When one seeks to understand the kingdom of God, one approaches a subject that has been brutalized by “scholars” and “theologians” for centuries, even millennia. Cults have taken up the concept and formulated their own dogmas and deceived millions. How, then, can we hope to know the truth about the kingdom of Christ and God? Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.” (2 Cor. 11:3) The simple truth about the kingdom of Christ and God – the one by which we can evaluate all ideas concerning genuine life in Christ – is the simple fact that the kingdom of Christ and God is that realm where Christ is actually and truly the King. And we can know whether He is really the King when *He*, and not some other, is the One telling *everyone* what to be and do and how to live and think and behave. This simple definition rules out many things done by men, things done even in the name of Christ and God, as *not* being His kingdom and exposes the fallacy of many things in our own lives that we have presumed to be “the right way” to follow and seek God. Simply put, if, in any given arena or context, Christ is not the literal King, then it is not His kingdom. We do well not to be deceived into thinking otherwise.

But because we approach a subject that has been so misrepresented, we need to address some of the misconceptions, though, of course, one cannot hope to address them all! And unfortunately, there are a significant number of these misconceptions that must be addressed so that we can better discern the truth of the kingdom.

#### **The King Is Here**

Mark records, “Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the kingdom of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the good news.’” (Mk. 1:14-15) Because John’s gospel account of Jesus’ public ministry begins with the Samaritan woman and Nicodemus rather than Jesus’ preaching of the kingdom and because John never uses the word “repent” and only rarely uses the words “king” or “kingdom” when speaking of Christ, all manner of notions are put forth by “scholars” and “theologians” that depart from the simple truth that Christ is King.

The relative absence of the words “king” and “kingdom” in John’s writings is easily explainable. First, consider the time. John’s gospel was written between 60 and 90 A.D. John’s gospel does not mention the destruction of Jerusalem and some have used that as a reason to believe it was not written before 70 A.D. But this is not necessarily the case since the subject of John’s gospel is the life, execution and resurrection of Christ (33-34 A.D.), events that were concluded long before the sacking and destruction of Jerusalem. The burning of Rome (64 A.D., an event blamed – perhaps rightly – upon “Christians”) and the following waves of persecution were certainly factors that would cause John to find other words that would not be so volatile or subject to misuse by politically minded “Christians” using the kingdom of God (which in reality is not of this world – Jn. 18:36) to overthrow or disrupt the empire of Rome.

Second, John routinely uses words differently from Paul and the other writers but the underlying notions are still there. For instance, Paul uses “elder” or “overseer” and “deacon” while John uses “father” and “young man.” (1 Tim. 3:2, 4-5, 12, 1 Jn. 2:13-14, also see Acts 5:6, 20:17, 28) John’s emphasis, in part because the father was king and lord of his family, is upon the Father-nature of God and the family nature of His children. There is nothing of the Kingliness of Christ and God lost in John’s mind and his contemporaries, especially the political “Christians,” would be forced to rethink their over-emphasis on Christ as King at the temporal expense of Caesar. (see also Rom. 13:1-7, 1 Pet. 2:13-17, Mt. 22:21) That later “scholars” and “theologians” would concoct some hair-splitting distinction between the ideas of a father’s authority over his own family as substantively different from a king’s authority over his realm is only evidence of how successful the devil can be at deceiving people away from the simple truths of God’s kingdom.

Third, one of John’s emphases (though certainly not the only one), especially in the gospel, is upon the humanity of Christ. His gospel was written in response to Gnostic teachers like Cerinthus who taught that Christ only *appeared* to be a human man. Christ was really a divine emanation who took on the *appearance* and not the substance of sinful mankind. John, in emphasizing Christ’s humanity, would rightly prefer words that spoke of the normal human existence. Only a tiny handful of men ever get to be king but almost all men become (or at least have!) a father.

There are also some who, because John does not use the word “repent,” now teach that we need only “believe.” This, as did Marcion, the first major schismatic in church history, results in having to cut away large portions of the New Testament. It is always easier to dismiss the sayings of the Bible that don’t match up to one’s preferred “theology” but the harder way of being guided and enabled by the Holy Spirit to balance or harmonize the seemingly “conflicting” truths is the only way to find the rightly divided, whole counsel of God. (Jn. 16:13, 2 Tim. 2:15, Acts 20:27) It is the only way the people of Christ can be the upright, always perpendicular “pillar of truth.” (1 Tim. 3:15)

Thus we can look at Jesus’ proclamations about the kingdom of God being at hand or nearby enough to touch and take them at face value. The kingdom is here, Jesus said. How can an observer verify and know this to be true? Because the King Himself is here. To begin to recognize the kingdom of God, one needed to already believe Jesus was and is the King. To have eyes, ears, heart and spirit capable of grasping that idea, one must have rejected his own sinful ways and recognized his inability to change himself by himself. In other words, one needs to repent in order to believe.

### **Seeing and Entering In**

Many passages of the New Testament speak of entering the kingdom. Let us consider these before we attempt to define what it is that is being entered into.

- Jesus said to Nicodemus, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God... Most assuredly, I say to you unless one is born of water [i.e., naturally or physically] and the Spirit [i.e., spiritually, from above], he cannot enter the kingdom of God... You must be born again.” (Jn. 3:3, 5, 7) Nicodemus was a Pharisee, one of those zealous separatists (“Pharisee” means “separated”) who kept themselves apart and aloof from those “sinners” who did not, as they did, observe every minute law of tithing and ritual purity. Nicodemus, like the Pharisee of Jesus’ parable contrasting the tax-collector (Lk. 18:11-12), probably did not think he had any sins to repent of! Yet Jesus’ talk with this Pharisee, who had felt it necessary to come to Jesus under the cover of darkness and secrecy (Jn. 3:2), ends with a discussion of the condemnation that is upon men who are doing evil who hate to have their actions seen in the light. (Jn. 3:20) To enter the kingdom is to be changed from darkness into light. (also see Col. 1:13) Nicodemus, one of Israel’s top teachers yet who could not even grasp the concept of being born again, had some sins in his own life to repent of before he could believe that Jesus was the Messiah.

- Jesus said to His disciples, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted (changed) and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Mt. 18:3) The Amplified Version offers four characteristics of little children that are well worth considering: “trusting, lowly, loving, forgiving.” But let us notice that being converted or changed (repentance, belief, new birth) precedes as well as accompanies turning toward the characteristics of little children. It is by this *process* we may enter into the kingdom of God.

- Jesus also said to His disciples, “Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” His dumbfounded disciples then asked Him, “Who then can be saved?” Jesus answered, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” (Mt. 19:23-26) The rich man, susceptible to and overloaded with “the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of wealth” (Mt. 13:22), is unable, apart from the power of God, to enter the kingdom of God. It should also be noted that Jesus’ sayings and the disciples’ question demonstrate that “entering the kingdom” and “being saved” are the same thing in the teachings of Jesus. It is only later “scholars” and “theologians” who have concocted a separation of “the gospel of salvation” from “the gospel of the kingdom.” The New Testament knows *nothing* of a salvation apart from the Kingship of Christ. (Heb. 5:9, etc.)

- When Paul preached, he preached the kingdom of God, “testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Acts 20:21, also see v. 25, 28:30-31) The prominent “keynote” or

“bottom line” of his preaching was “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.” (Acts 14:22) Though many modern “scholars” and “theologians” promote a trouble-free, pain-free “gospel” (thus only proving they are accursed – Gal. 1:7-9), the New Testament *assures* us that “*all* who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (2 Tim. 3:12) and instructs us to arm ourselves with the expectation of suffering and to rejoice in the extent that we share in Christ’s sufferings! (1 Pet. 4:1, 13) Suffering is a *requirement* for entering the kingdom of Christ and we are wise to embrace that idea sooner rather than later.

- At the close of what is popularly (if somewhat inaccurately) known as “the Sermon on the Mount,” Jesus taught, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.” (Mt. 7:21) Luke records Jesus, in perhaps the same situation, as asking the people, “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do the things which I say?” (Lk. 6:46) In the parable of the two sons, the father asked each son to work that day in the vineyard. The first said he would not but later regretted it and changed his mind and went while the second son said he would go but never did go. Jesus then asks, “Which of the two sons did the will of his father?” and the obvious answer, “The first,” is given. Jesus then says to the chief priests and elders of the people who had confronted Him in the temple as to the source of His authority, “Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and prostitutes enter the kingdom of God before you. For John [the Baptist] came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and prostitutes believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward regret it and believe him.” (Mt. 21:23, 28-32) *Doing* the will of the Father – and not just calling Jesus “Lord” or “King” – is a requirement for entering the kingdom. The first and foremost work that we must do is believe. (Jn. 6:29) From this faith will flow all the subsequent works that are *required* to accompany salvation, the works that demonstrate the health and life of our faith in Christ (see Jas. 2:17, 22, Heb. 6:9, Eph. 2:10), the absence of which works demonstrates that we have been deceived and blinded and are in the process of forfeiting our inheritance. (2 Pet. 1:9, Heb. 12:15-17, 25) This *is* the reality of the kingdom we are inheriting, a kingdom which cannot be shaken. (Heb. 12:28)

- Jesus said to His disciples, “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things [that you need for life] shall be added to you.” (Mt. 6:33) One man, volunteering to follow Jesus, said, “I will follow You, but let me first go and say goodbye to those who are at my house.” But Jesus said to him, “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” (Lk. 9:61-62) Following Jesus and being a citizen of His kingdom and gaining His eternal life is a *commitment*, not a convenience or a part-time addition to one’s self-centered life.

### **Understanding the Mysteries**

When Jesus began teaching about the kingdom of God, He did so by using parables, His disciples asked, “Why do You speak to them in parables?” (Mt. 13:10) Mark’s gospel reveals that they were also asking about the meaning of the parable of the sower and the seed. (Mk. 4:10) Jesus’ answer reveals the purpose and points at the way to understand His meanings behind His seemingly simple stories. Jesus said, “To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but to those who are outside, all things come in parables...” (Mk. 4:11) or, as in Matthew’s account, “..it has not been given [to them].” (Mt. 13:11) Jesus goes on to explain, “I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.” (Mt. 13:13) The disciple of Christ who is in the kingdom has been given the ability to know and understand the mysteries of the kingdom of God. The one who must turn to the works of “theologians” and “scholars” in order to rationally reason out and intellectually try to understand what Jesus meant in the parables is looking for insight and wisdom in the wrong places and only demonstrates that he is not in or at least not yet fully functional in Christ’s kingdom.

Jesus then asks the disciples a question that shows they were not yet using what had been given to them. Jesus asked, “Do you not understand this parable [of the sower and seed]? How then will you understand all the parables?” (Mk. 4:13) Jesus then goes on to explain the parable and its hidden meanings. He similarly tells and explains the parable of the wheat and tares when the disciples do not yet understand that teaching. (Mt. 13:24, 36-37) But Jesus gives them a handful of more parables and then asks them, “Have you understood all these things?” And they answer, “Yes.” (Mt. 13:51) How did they start understanding these things when only a few stories before they had required a complete explanation? They had been given the right and the ability to know what the stories meant and they were beginning to use that God-given ability. As Jesus would tell them later, the Spirit of truth would guide them into all truth. (Jn. 16:13) – these beginning stages of training in the ways of the Spirit would prove essential when opposition would arise as they walked the same path their Master was on.

We must also recognize that even though the disciples were beginning to understand the mysteries of the kingdom, they did not yet understand all. They certainly did not understand yet the need for Christ to be crucified – Peter got himself soundly rebuked for trying to tell Jesus how determined he was that such a thing should never happen. (Mt. 16:21-23) When Jesus warned the disciples about the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees and they reasoned among themselves that He was saying this because they had forgotten to bring bread, He reprimanded them sharply: “Why do you reason because you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still hardened?” (Mk. 8:14-17) Jesus then uses the same language He used to describe the people to whom He spoke to only in parables: “Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember? ...How is it you do not understand?” (Mk. 8:18, 21) It was only after they again used their spiritual eyes and ears that “Then they understand that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” (Mt. 16:12) And it was only when Jesus appeared to them after His resurrection and “He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures” He had fulfilled “which were written in the Law of the Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning [Christ]” (Lk. 24:44-45) that they began to understand, because it had now been given to them to know, what the real mission of Christ was all about.

Now they would know that when Jesus had said that some were standing there who would not die before seeing the kingdom of God (Lk. 9:27), they would recognize that three of them had seen the kingdom of God when Christ was transfigured before their eyes and Moses

and Elijah “appeared in glory and spoke of His death which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.” (Lk. 9:30-31) The kingdom of God would not be a visible, temporal, earthly kingdom but would instead be something they could perceive, understand and experience within and among themselves. (Lk. 17:20-21)

This is also why, when Jesus saw that the scribe truly understood the significance of the two laws Jesus had cited as the greatest commandments, He said, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” (Mk. 12:32-34) Understanding the teachings of Christ *as He intended them to be understood* is the sign that Christ’s Spirit of truth is one’s Teacher and that Christ is indeed one’s Lord – and having Christ as one’s Lord or King is the sign that one is truly in Christ’s kingdom and on the path that leads to eternal salvation and life.

### **The Substance of the Kingdom**

There are only two descriptions or “definitions” of the kingdom of God given in the New Testament and both are given by Paul. He wrote:

“The kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” (Rom. 14:17) and

“The kingdom of God is not in word but in power.” (1 Cor. 4:20)

Instructions like these are given to those who have not yet fully grasped that Christ’s kingdom truly is not of this world. Followers of Christ’s teachings, not yet functioning in the other-ness of His spiritual kingdom, could become confused enough to start fires in Rome that would fulfill prophecies of “the destruction of Babylon” on that very date. Such confused followers could learn and memorize various creeds and dogmas – and then persecute to death others who do not share every jot and tittle of those creeds and dogmas. Such followers who were ignorant of and unacquainted with the spiritual aspects of following Christ could be easily convinced to sit passively and hear sermons while they do little or nothing to advance the kingdom of God, all the while believing themselves to be “saved and on their way to heaven!”

“No lie is of the truth,” John wrote. (1 Jn. 2:21) “God is not the author of confusion,” Paul wrote. (1 Cor. 14:33) And James wrote that “confusion and every evil thing” would be present wherever there are hidden agendas of self-seeking and envy. The “wisdom” behind having secret agendas such as envy and self-seeking (the motives that prompted the Jews to crucify Christ – Mt. 27:18 - and to oppose and persecute Paul – Acts 13:45), James says, “does not descend from above [from the kingdom not of this world], but is earthly, sensual, demonic.” (Jas. 3:15-16)

Paul wrote, “We speak wisdom among those who are mature...” (1 Cor. 2:6) – that would be “those who by reason of use [the usage of their spiritual eyes, ears and hearts to see, hear and understand the secrets and hidden truths of Christ’s kingdom] have their senses trained to discern both good and evil.” (Heb. 5:14) Paul continued, “We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery [a divinely withheld or revealed truth], the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory...” (1 Cor. 2:7) And James wrote, “The wisdom that is from above [from that kingdom not of this world] is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality [class distinctions] and without hypocrisy [play acting].” (Jas. 3:17)

Again, the kingdom of God is that realm where Christ is truly King. And though there are only two “definitions” of the kingdom given, we can see that Christ’s kingdom is characterized by light and truth and genuinely divine wisdom. Any context or arena characterized and dominated by other things is *not* His kingdom. Run, do not walk, to the nearest exit!

### **The Keys to the Kingdom**

Jesus rebuked the lawyers (scribes), saying, “You have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in [to the kingdom of God] yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered.” (Lk. 11:52) The scribes and Pharisees, with their manmade traditions that formed a “hedge of protection” around the law, had cast aside the real key of knowledge of the kingdom of God and replaced it with a counterfeit of the real thing. The modern day “church” has similarly replaced the simple truths of Christ’s gospel of His kingdom with creeds, doctrines and dogmas, replacing life in the Spirit with routine “church” attendance, sermons and various “ministries” (works) that are used as credentials to “prove” that one is “saved and on their way to heaven.”

Jesus said, “I will give you the keys of the kingdom...” (Mt. 16:19) Because this was said to Peter, some, trying to justify their worldly hierarchy authority structure, have tried to say that the keys were given only or at least primarily to Peter. The Catholic sect, spring-boarding off of Rome’s prominence as the imperial city, the large number of Roman Christians (perhaps as many as 30,000 in the middle of the third century) and historically inaccurate reports of Peter and Paul being the founders of the assembly in Rome, later declared that Peter was the first “pontifex maximus” (the old heathen title that means “the ultimate bridge” between men and the gods) even though this title stands in direct conflict with what Jesus had taught. This teaching about Peter was first used to justify the position and practice of the first real Pope, Leo I, in 461 A.D., four centuries *after* Christ!

Jesus said, “Do not call anyone on earth your father [“pope” is directly derived from “papa,” “father”]; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ.” (Mt. 23:9-10) By claiming Peter (or Paul or any other man) as one’s father, one rejects God as one’s Father. By claiming Peter (or Paul or any other man) as one’s teacher, one rejects Christ and the Spirit of truth as one’s Teacher. The spiritual eyes, ears and heart lie dormant and unused and men relied on their own reason to decide what was right in their own eyes (Jdgs. 21:25) as men chose which leaders (“bishops”) to follow and place in positions of power that have no basis in the New Testament. Jesus said, “The rulers of the Gentiles lord it over [their subjects], and those who are great exercise authority over them. *But it shall not be so among you.*” (Mt. 20:25-26 – emphasis added) The “bishop” rose from the ranks of the elders, corrupted the gospel and drew followers after themselves – precisely as Paul prophesied they would. (Acts 20:30)

The keys to the kingdom of God were not given only or even primarily to Peter. Those who use Jesus’ statement about the keys to confer special status on Peter and his supposed “successors” have failed on two fronts. First, they fail to recognize that the keys of the kingdom are simply the way to open the door into that realm where Christ is truly King. The keys of the kingdom *are* the very things we have been discussing up to this point: repentance, belief, new birth (conversion, translation), the ability to discern and understand the mysteries, an ear to hear what the Spirit says to God’s people and a heart that pursues the will of God above all else.

Second, they have separated the keys from what is said before and after. It is always dangerous to isolate a truth and then push it so far that it is no longer counterbalanced by the

other truths that constitute the whole counsel of God. When Jesus asked His disciples, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus replied,

“Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My ekklesia, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom, and whatever you bind on earth will be already bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will already be loosed in heaven.” (Mt. 16:15-19)

This one answer to Peter’s having received the revelation that Christ was the Son of God has several parts. Even the light by which we have been examining the kingdom of God shows us how extensively this passage, indeed a key part of the gospel, has been the special target of the enemy’s deceptions.

### **Examining the Deceptions**

It is not just Peter to whom the keys – the right and ability to enter and experience the reality – of the kingdom of God are given. They are given to *every* individual who spiritually receives the revelation from the Father that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

It is not Peter upon whom the ekklesia (the English mis-rendering is “church”) is built. The ekklesia is the people of Christ who have been called out of this world’s darkness to live in and attend to the needs and affairs of Christ’s kingdom of light. The ekklesia is composed of those people who have received the revelation that Jesus is the Christ, have repented of their own sin and self-reliance, believed in Christ, have taken up their cross and are following after Him, both individually and corporately with others in the ekklesia. Thus the prison gates of death and darkness, designed to imprison souls and prevent the light of Christ from shining on them, will not overcome the citizens and warriors of the kingdom of light.

As has already been said, it is not just Peter to whom the keys of the kingdom are given. The keys – the right and ability to enter and experience God and His rule of righteousness – are given to all who will receive and obey God. This is particularly visible when we come to see and understand what Jesus meant about binding and loosing. J.B. Phillips, a spiritually-enlightened, gifted and talented translator of the New Testament, wrote of this passage:

“There is a very curious Greek construction here, viz. a simple future followed by the perfect participle passive. If Jesus had meant to say quite simply, ‘Whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in Heaven,’ can anyone explain why the simple future passive is not used? It seems to me that if the words of Jesus are accurately reported here, and I have no reason to doubt [that they are], then the force of these sayings is that Jesus’ true disciples will be so led by the Spirit that they will be following the heavenly pattern. In other words what they ‘forbid’ [bind] or ‘permit’ [loose] on earth will be consonant with the Divine rules.

“If a simple future passive had been used it would mean an automatic heavenly endorsement of the Church’s actions, which to me, at least, is a very different thing.



“In the pertinent verses of John’s Gospel (Jn. 20:22-23), it is quite plain that ‘holy spirit,’ of which Christ is giving His disciples a first breath, so to speak, (for the Holy Spirit in person was not given until Pentecost), would be the factor by which alone human beings could perform the Divine function of forgiving or not forgiving sins. There is again no ground for supposing that celestial endorsement automatically follows human action, however exalted.” (*The New Testament in Modern English*, Note 3, p. 552)

Authority among the people of Christ is not based on titles or positions. Indeed it is precisely as the apostles said to the wrong-headed and evil-hearted Jewish rulers: “We must obey God rather than men.” (Acts 5:29) It is the responsibility of every man, woman and child in Christ to hear Christ for him or herself (Jn. 10:20, 1 Jn. 2:27, Heb. 8:10-11) and to obey whatever God is saying no matter through whom He says it! Any person – whether “pope,” “priest,” “pastor,” “elder,” “apostle,” “prophet,” whatever – who permits or forbids something inconsistent with God’s will, quite simply, is to be ignored and God is to be obeyed.

This is no license for rebellion or lawlessness. It is simply the personal responsibility God places upon every individual who takes hold of the keys of the kingdom of God and seeks to enter that realm where Christ is truly King. It is the priesthood of every believer (Rev. 1:6, etc.) taken from the realms of theory and “theology” and put into literal practice. It takes Jesus’ statement, that there is one Teacher, Christ, and the rest of us are all equal brothers (Mt. 23:8), at face value and embraces it in practical obedience and faith.

Christ has not given His blanket endorsement to every thing done in His name. In fact, the more lawlessness and evil one does in His name, the more certain will be that one’s eternal dismissal from the kingdom of Christ and God. (Mt. 7:23, also see Mt. 13:41) Possessing and using the wrong keys – keys of darkness, deception and death – does not get anyone into Christ’s kingdom of light. Only the right keys, used appropriately at the right doors, will bring us into that realm where Christ is truly King.

Let he who has ears hear.

Chapter 18: Enemies of the King

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Chapter 20: The Message of the Kingdom

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