

"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half-truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, O, God of Truth, deliver us."



## *A Controversial Newsletter "The Printed Voice of Summit Theological Seminary"*

~ All articles are written by George L. Faull, Rel. D. unless otherwise stated ~

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George L. Faull, Editor

### **A BRIEF SURVEY – "Why I am Not a Catholic"**

There are many unscriptural doctrines and practices that Roman Catholicism has taught and practiced over the years.

1. **Their Confessional** – Where the so-called "laity" confesses their sins, deeds, and thoughts to a priest.

There is no call for an order of priests between God and man today. No man can absolve us from our sins, nor does the Church have the authority to forgive sins.

Christians are to confess their sins to God. **1 John 1:9**, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

The Church does not have the authority to prescribe penance nor penalties, nor works of merit or prescribed rituals, to remove the guilt of sins. The confession to priests, who are like sinners, is a blasphemous blow at the Priesthood of Christ. There is one Mediator between God and man, and it is the sinless Son of God. **1 Timothy 2:5**, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;"

2. **The Sale of Indulgences** – Was protested by many and with good reason.

No one can excuse sins by the payment of money or by favors rendered to the Church. **1 Peter 1:18-19**, "18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:"

Likewise, to prepay for the "right to sin" and allow a sin to be forgiven before it is even committed, is blasphemy. There would neither be Godly sorrow nor repentance; both of which are necessary for sins to be removed. This would involve God in the sin and make Him justify the sin.

3. **The Blasphemous and Unscriptural Titles the Clergy Wears** – Has to be offensive to God.

They assume Christ's titles and contradict what our Lord has commanded us. Jesus commanded us to neither be called by, nor call others by certain titles. No one is to be considered our guide, master, or father. Jesus is THE way, THE truth, and THE origin of life.

**Matthew 23:8-10**, "8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. 9 And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. 10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ."

#### **Compared To:**

**John 14:6**, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

To call a man "Pontifex Maximus" (greatest or highest Priest) or "Supreme Pontiff", is the highest of offenses. Jesus is the **only** High Priest.

Jesus is the origin of life and no man is to be viewed as "father", "papa", or "pope" in a Spiritual sense.

4. **The Idolatry of Worshipping Mary, the Saints, their Idols and Relics and Doctrine** - That any of these are aids to receiving physical or Spiritual blessings or salvation, is blasphemous.

We err greatly if we think idolatry is only an Old Testament stumblingblock. Listen to the Apostle's instructions:

**1 Corinthians 10:14**, "Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry."

**1 John 5:21**, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen."

**Revelation 9:20**, "And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the

works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk.”

Mariolatry is one of Rome’s chief sins. They are looking at her as “co-redeemer”. The Pope’s offer incense to her. Compare **Hosea 11:2**, “As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images.”

They teach that she never sinned, yet in the Magnificat she said, “My spirit hath rejoiced in God, **my Savior**”. The higher they exalt her the more untrue her magnificat is. She, herself, gave the best advice to the servants at the wedding in Cana when she spoke of her Son. “Whatsoever He sayeth unto you, do it.”

Why would she say, “My Savior”, if she was sinless and allegedly the only woman who was immaculately conceived, born, lived a perpetual virgin and never saw death but bodily ascended to Heaven and now sits as Queen of Heaven to make intercession for those who pray to her? They blaspheme and call her “the Mother of God” when she was actually the only woman who gave birth and nursed Jesus when He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh.

What did Jesus say when a woman wished to bless her? **Luke 11:27-28**, “27 And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, **Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked**. 28 But he said, **Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.**”

That Mary was a wonderful young woman, I do not doubt; but I deny strongly that she was sinless, a perpetual virgin, or worshipped in the early Church. We are more blessed to obey Him than be His mother!

I affirm that she was a faithful wife obeying **1 Corinthians 7:2-5**, “2 Nevertheless, *to avoid* fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. 3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. 4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. 5 Defraud ye not one the other, except *it be* with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.” Rome makes her a poor wife.

And from prophecy of Jesus, we learn that she had other children - **Psalms 69:8**, “I am become a

stranger unto my brethren, and an **alien unto my mother's children.**”

God shows that Solomon’s brother, Adonijah, tried to get Bathsheba, Solomon’s mother, to grant a request that Solomon rejected, He put his brother to death. **1 Kings 2:22-25** Mary has no more power with Jesus than Bathsheba did with Solomon.

When we give power to the creature to save from sin, answer prayer, accept worship, adoration, incense and have other attributes of God, we worship the creature instead of the Creator. The idols of Mary are all over the world and an affront to Him who said, “Thou shalt worship the Lord, thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.”

## 5. The Prohibitions of the Catholic Church.

Rome forbids what God has sanctified. It is the doctrine of demons that forbids the eating of meats and marriage. They forbid marriage to the Church leaders but the Elders and Deacons are required to have wives and children in the very same Bible that condemns those who forbid marriage.

Meat is for those who believe and know the truth. **1 Timothy 4:1-5**

Marriage is honorable in all. **Hebrews 13:4**

Christianity, unlike Judaism, Muslims, and paganism, is not about meat and drink (**Romans 14:17**) and Christians do not let men judge them by such criteria. (**Colossians 2:16, 20-22**)

## 6. The Copy-Cat Baptized Paganism of the Church – is blasphemy, also.

Its convents copy the vestal virgins of Rome; pagan calendars copy the holidays of Roman deities; the Monasteries are replicas of the monks of pagans; and its rosaries are the replicas of vain repetitions of the heathen. Its christening of pagan idols, which became the idols of the saints, is idolatry. Even some of the teachings are the superstitions of men. The tonsures, like Friar Tuck, were copied from sun worship.

They reject the command of God not to do as the heathen do with their gods. We are told to destroy the idols and not to use the names of their gods. Rome rejects these Scriptures in both practice and Spirit.

## 7. The Infallibility of the Pope – This doctrine was hotly debated as late as 1870. It was decreed to be true and made law to believe under threat of Anathema.

You may order Bishop Strossmayer's speech (which was made before the Vatican council in 1870 against the doctrine) from Summit Theological Seminary.

The doctrine is baseless and blasphemous because the Popes have contradicted each other, as well as the Word of God. At one time there were three Popes claiming to be the Pope. Which one was infallible?

8. **The Mass is said to be a Re-crucifixion of Jesus Christ.**

The Scriptures show He died once for all. **Hebrews 10:9-14**, "9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. 10 By the which will we are sanctified through the **offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all**. 11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12 But this man, after he had offered **one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God**; 13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. 14 **For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.**"

Jesus is no longer a victim on the cross. His work for salvation is finished. He said, "It is finished" (or "it is paid"). He no longer is sacrificed for us. It was a one-time event.

He was a priest who offered one sacrifice forever. **Hebrews 7:27**, "**Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.**"

**Hebrews 9:25, 27-28**, "**25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; 27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.**" His work is done and He sits on His throne only to make intercession by the blood of His cross.

The mass is blasphemy because it infers the need to crucify Christ over and over. He was not an insufficient Lamb as under the Old Testament.

9. **The Doctrine of Transubstantiation** - Catholics believe the cup and the loaf become the literal body and blood of Christ.

Though He was standing there when He instituted the Supper, the Lord said, "This is My body and Blood", He had not even died yet!!! They ate it while He stood there alive!!!

If it is changed to the actual body and blood and we eat it, then it is cannibalism. The eating of blood is forbidden to Christians. **Acts 15:19-20**, "19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: 20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and *from* fornication, and *from* things strangled, and *from* blood."

Where Jesus spoke of drinking His blood and eating His flesh, He said, "**Which I will give for the life of the world.**" Notice the future tense. He was using a figure of speech called a **hypocatastasis**, an implied representation.

10. **Apostolic Succession** – This is the false teaching that Peter was the first Pope and that the Bishops of Rome are his direct successors in an unbroken line.

Well does Cardinal Strossmayer in his speech refer to the above refuting apostolic succession, quotes the learned Cardinal Baronius:

*"The learned Cardinal Baronius, speaking of the papal court, says (give attention, my venerable brethren, to these words), 'What did the Roman church appear in those days? How infamous! Only all-powerful courtesans governing in Rome! It was they who gave, exchanged, and took bishoprics; and horrible to relate, they got their lovers, the false popes, put on the throne of St. Peter' (Baronius, A.D. 912). You will answer, these were false popes, not true ones: let it be so; but in that case, if for fifty years the See of Rome was occupied by anti-popes, how will you pick up again the thread of pontifical succession? Has the church been able, at least for a century and a half, to go on without a head, and find itself acephalous? (Head less)*

*Look now: The greatest number of these anti-popes appear in the genealogical tree of the papacy; and it must have been this absurdity that Baronius described; because Genebardo, the great flatterer of the popes, had dared to say in his Chronicles (A.D. 901). 'This century is unfortunate, as for nearly 150 years the popes have fallen from all the virtues of their predecessors, and become apostates rather than apostles.' I can understand how the illustrious Baronius must have blushed when he narrated the acts of these Roman bishops. Speaking of John XI (931), natural son of Pope Sergius and of Marozia, he wrote these words in his annals- 'The holy church, that is, the Roman, has been vilely trampled on by such a monster.' John XII (956), elected pope at the age of eighteen, through the influence of courtesans, was not one whit better than his predecessor.*

*I grieve, my venerable brethren, to stir up so much filth, I am silent on Alexander VI, father and lover of Lucretia; I turn away from John XXIII (1410), who,*

*because of simony and immorality, was deposed by the holy Ecumenical Council of Constance. Some will maintain that this Council was only a private one; let it be so; but if you refuse any authority to it, as a logical sequence you must hold the nomination of Martin V (1417) to be illegal. What then, will become of the papal succession? Can you find the thread of it?*

*I do not speak of the schisms that have dishonored the church. In those unfortunate days the See of Rome was occupied by two competitors, and sometimes even by three. Which of these was the true pope? Resuming once more, again I say, if you decree the infallibility of the present bishop of Rome, you must establish the infallibility of all the preceding ones, without excluding any. But you can do that, when history is there establishing with a clearness equal to that of the sun, that the popes have erred in their teaching? Could you do it and maintain that avaricious, incestuous, murdering, simoniacal popes have been vicars of Jesus Christ? Oh, venerable brethren! To maintain such an enormity would be to betray Christ worse than Judas. It would be to throw dirt in His face."*

11. **Purgatory and Prayers for the Dead** – Catholics try to defend praying for the dead by alleging prayer for Onesiphorus, whom they assume was dead.

- a. First - The early Church and Church fathers did not believe he was dead but thought he was alive when Paul wrote.
- b. Second - Paul asked for mercy for the house of Onesiphorus. He saluted them in **2 Timothy 4:19**, "Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus."

He did not ask that he would be expedited through an imaginary place called "purgatory". Purgatory is an unbiblical concept that has evolved over the years. It was not known till 600 years after Christ, and it was not even an article of faith to the originating Church until the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Gregory the Great added the idea of tormenting fire and it gradually grew into a doctrine, from which there could be revenue acquired by the apostate proponents of the doctrine. Indulgences were sold to expedite persons through the purifying fires, by collecting revenue from the unfortunate people who were so Biblically ignorant that they could not see through the diabolical scheme.

- c. Third - Paul prayed that Onesiphorus would find mercy in that day; that is, the Day of Judgment. The mercy he sought for Onesiphorus' soul was "future at the Judgment Day", and only then would his kindness not be forgotten. There is no mention of a present need for mercy to

expedite Onesiphorus through an imaginary purgatory.

- d. Fourth, He wanted Onesiphorus to be remembered for the kindness he had shown Paul, not only in Rome, but also at other times. He had diligently sought out Paul while Paul was in prison in Rome. It may have taken weeks or months to find Paul and cut through the government's red tape, so that he could minister to Paul. Onesiphorus was a great man, and Paul was not forgetting to mention him to Onesiphorus' home Church where his family lived.

Onesiphorus is worthy of our imitation. He was consistent in his goodness. He often refreshed Paul. Onesiphorus was diligent in his goodness for he sought Paul out diligently so that Paul could minister to him. He was unintimidated by Paul's chains, but Paul owned him as a friend though Paul was at odds with the Roman emperor. There were not many such men to be found, and Paul would have Onesiphorus remembered.

- e. Fifth - "Prayers for the dead" is against the tenor of the Scriptures, which teaches, "Now is the day of salvation" and "it is appointed unto man once to die and after that the judgment." I am aware that the perpetuators of this doctrine do not say that the fires of purgatory save a man, but only purges him of sin so that he may get ready to go into Heaven.

Nevertheless, if one is not ready in this life, he has no promise that he can ever expect to be able to change in the next life. Christ is able to present us faultless before the presence of His glory and He does not need some "holy fire" to purge us. We are pardoned, not paroled. We are cleansed, not merely washed. There is a difference between "a white wash and being "washed white". We have been washed white and it is not necessary that a fire after our death be used to cleanse any dross that remained.

- f. Sixth - Praying for the dead is against the fact that it is the death of Christ that saves us and makes us accepted.

It is not the prayers of those who remain behind that can cleanse us so that we can enter into God's Heaven. Paul was not asking the Christians to pray for Onesiphorus' soul. The work of Christ is all sufficient. It is sacrilegious to think that our prayers could add to the atoning work of Christ. It is blasphemous to think that "mere fire" could do what the blood of Christ could not do. How apostate men's hearts are to teach that cleansing comes by fire and not by the

innocent, holy blood of Christ, our Savior, I do not know. If Onesiphorus was in Christ, there is no condemnation, for the Scripture states:

**Romans 8:1**, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

To believe that we can expedite our family and friends by lighting candles, by saying prayers, or by paying a priest a set amount, only shows a total ignorance of the nature of God, and His means of salvation by grace, apart from works. Christ satisfied God's justice so that He might show mercy. He did not save us so that we might go through a "taste of Hell". He died to save us from the wrath to come.

- g. Seventh - What prayer could we possibly offer that would better the state of those who are already in Paradise with the Lord?

Those who were at the Council of Trent and formed this delusion may have believed that the blood of Christ was insufficient to cleanse us so that we could enter His presence, but no one who has earnestly studied the tenor of the Scriptures could ever subscribe to this doctrine: "A prison where the righteous suffer temporary punishment so that they may be purged from sin so that they may be able to enter into Heaven." Who, but Satan himself could originate such a doctrine?

Prayers for the dead? It would be better that we pray for the perpetuators of such a blasphemous doctrine which denies the power of the Blood of the Lord and affirms that it offers insufficient cleansing to enter into the presence of the Lord. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

--Pages 122-123 from 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus book by George L. Faull, Rel. D.

## 12. The Alleged Claim Peter Had Primacy over the Apostles and that the Church is Built Upon Peter and the Popes of Rome Aid His Divine Successors and Lords over the Church – This is a great doctrinal error.

These claims are easily refuted.

--B. W. Johnson – Peoples N.T. Commentary Matthew 16:18: "And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church. This is the first time Jesus speaks of his church, and here, as not yet founded. Three terms are to be noted: (1) Peter, in the Greek, Petros, meaning a single stone;

(2) Rock, in the Greek, Petra, which means the solid, immovable bed-rock, a great mass like a cliff, and (3) church, Greek, ecclesia, those "called out," the fellowship of believers, the organized society of Christ, the kingdom of heaven on earth. There is probably no passage in the word of God that has called forth more discussion. The Papal church insists that Peter is the rock upon which Christ founded his church. The Catholic position is based upon the fact that Peter means a stone (see Joh 1:42), and the Savior's language might be rendered, "Thou art a stone, and upon this rock I will build my church." The Catholic view is untenable, for (1) The Savior does not say, "Thou art a stone, and upon thee I will build," etc., or "Thou art a rock, and upon this rock I will build." He changes the word in the Greek from Petros (Peter, a stone) to Petra, a rock, or ledge of rock--a solid bed-rock. (2) Every saint is a stone (see 1Pe 2:5). The Lord declares that Peter is one these living stones, made such by his confession of faith, and ready to be built into the church, the spiritual temple, formed of living stones, and built upon the rock. So is every confessor of Christ. In order to settle what the Savior does mean by the rock, we must consider Mt 16:18, 19 together, and keep in mind the entire figure. This figure portrays (1) a Builder, Christ; (2) a temple to be built, composed of lively stones, the church; (3) a foundation for that temple, the rock; (4) the gates of an unfriendly city or power which shall seek its destruction, hell, or more correctly, Hades, the unseen abode of the dead, the grave; (5) a door-keeper of the church, or spiritual temple, with his keys, Peter. Peter's place in the figure is not that of the foundation, but that of the key-holder, or turnkey. The only difficulty is in settling what the Lord means by the rock. Since this rock is the foundation of the church, the central principle, the fundamental idea, we are aided to a correct decision by the teachings of the Word elsewhere. We learn from 1Co 3:11 "That other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." This excludes Peter or any human platform. Christ is often called a stone: "the stone that the builders rejected" [Mt 21:42; Mr 12:10; Lu 20:17], "the chief corner stone" [Eph 2:20], "the stone that is the head of the corner" [Mt 21:42; Mr 12:10; Lu 20:17; Ac 4:11; 1Pe 2:7], "the spiritual rock which is Christ" [1Co 10:4]. Faith in Christ held in the heart, and confessed with the lips is the very foundation of the spiritual life and of the church. This constituted the fundamental difference in apostolic days between Christians and unbelievers, the church and the world. It does still. It is the essence of the teaching of the New Testament that the platform or foundation of the Christian society, the church, is this belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God (see Mt 16:16; Joh 6:69). It is then Peter's grand confession, faith in the Spiritual Rock, the faith that lays hold of Christ, belief that he is the Anointed of God, the Divine Savior, that the Lord pronounces the rock upon which he will found his church. That this

view is correct is shown by a correct understanding of the declaration,

*The gates of hades shall not prevail against it. From the gates of the city always marched forth its armies. The powers of hades are represented by its gates. Hades is not hell (Gehenna), but the unseen abode of the dead that holds the departed within its gates. Just after these words the Lord talks of his death, or entering hades. Six months later the Sanhedrim sent him to death for making the same confession Peter had just made. See Mt 26:64-67.*

*They expected to demonstrate that the confession of his divinity which he had made was false by sending him to hades, which they supposed would hold him and prevail against the confession of the ROCK. He was sent there from the cross, but the gates of hades did not prevail, for they could not hold him, and the living Savior, rising triumphant from the tomb, was the unanswerable argument that his own and Peter's confession was a rock that could never be moved. His resurrection demonstrated that he is the Rock. Hades did not prevail."*

It cannot be proven that Peter had any primacy over the other apostles.

- a. Peter did open the doors to the Kingdom to the Jews on Pentecost (**Acts 2**) and the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius (**Acts 10-11**) but the rest of what Jesus told Peter in **Matthew 16:16-19** is said to all the apostles – **Matthew 18:18** and **John 20:23**.
- b. Can you imagine these words being said spoken to Peter by the early Church if Peter was like a Pope claims today?
  - × **1 Corinthians 1:12-13** - If Peter was the head of the Church, why were some denying it?
  - × **1 Corinthians 3:10-11** – How could this be true if Peter was the foundation?
  - × **Acts 15:19-23** – How does James, the Lord's brother, seem to be in charge of the convention of the Church, not Peter?
  - × **Galatians 2:11-21** – How does Paul confront Peter to his face and rebuke Peter for his hypocrisy and yielding to peer-pressure at the dinner at Antioch?
  - × **Acts 3:4-12** – Could a modern Pope ever say and do what Peter said and did?
  - × **1 Peter 5:2-4** – How would Peter affirm what it said here if he was like a modern day Pope?
  - × **Mark 10:42-45** – How many times did Jesus have to rebuke His disciples over their arguing of who would be greatest? Would Peter then accept the acclaim and blasphemous titles of "Papa", "Grand Pontiff", "His Holiness", and the worship and adoration of today's Popes?

- c. Can they prove **from Scripture** that Peter was ever in Rome, unless they are ready to admit that Rome is synonymous with Babylon?

**1 Peter 5:13**, "The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son." See **Revelation 17**.

This the Roman Church admits because they need it to show that Peter was in Rome. In the Apocryphal **Acts of Peter**, Simon Magus challenged Peter to a flying contest in Rome around the Roman forum but Peter prayed Simon would crash to the earth proving Peter had more power.

Peter did not ever go to Rome except in Apocryphal literature and there is no evidence he died there. We are told he was buried at St. Peter's, but it cannot be proven.

Consider **Matthew 20:25-26**, "25 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. 26 **But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;**"

For these simple 12 reasons, I am not Catholic. Consider these blasphemies, my loved ones.

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## Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven... Are Still Available Today!

--A Bible Lesson by Richard Sprague

Jesus was talking to Peter in **Matthew 16**. After Peter confessed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, Jesus said to him in verse 19, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." (NIV)

It has become very clear to me, more than ever before, that those keys were revealed to Peter when Jesus gave the apostles the words of the Great Commission. We shall look at the three records of the commission as given in **Matthew 28:18-20**; **Mark 16:15-16**; **Luke 24:45-49**. These are the New International Version but the King James and other versions include them as well.

In **Matthew 28:18-20** we read, "(18) Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (19) Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'"

**Mark 16:15-16** tells us that Jesus said, "(15) Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. (16) Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."

**Luke 24:45-49** includes these thoughts, "(45) Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. (46) He told them, 'This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, (47) and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem. (48) You are witnesses of these things. (49) I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.'"

Jesus taught the apostles many things during the three years that he "went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness." **Matthew 9:35** The apostles were with him all that time, hearing Jesus teach and preach, and watching him as he healed the sick. They had many opportunities to hear Jesus preach, as illustrated in **Matthew Chapters 5, 6, and 7** when He gave what we call "the Sermon on the Mount". There is much doctrine there for the apostles to hear and accept. They also heard Jesus give many parables about the Kingdom of Heaven as found in **Matthew 25**, among others.

It is normal for a person to give final instructions to his workers when he is going on a journey. This is what

Jesus was talking about when He gave the Parable of the Talents in **Matthew 25:14-30**. The owner was going on a journey so he instructed his servants as to their duties while he was gone. When the owner returned, he asked the servants to give an account of what they had done in carrying out his instructions. You read it and see what happened as the owner found out what had been done, or what had not been done.

Now Jesus was ready to leave on a journey to be with His Father in Heaven. He gives His faithful followers some last-minute instructions about what they are to do while He was gone. He expects them to do what He tells them to do. When He returns, will He find His followers faithfully carrying out His final instructions?

It appears to me at least, that those final instructions contain the **KEYS TO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN**. I say that because I see them being used by the Apostle Peter when he preached that first sermon as recorded in **Acts Chapter 2**. This was after the Holy Spirit came to guide them in establishing the Kingdom that Jesus said would 'come with power before some who were standing there, would die.'" **Mark 9:1**

### What Are Those Keys to the Kingdom of Heaven?

Jesus established that He had the authority to tell them what they were to do while He was gone. That was His first statement: "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me." **Matthew 28:18**

The very next word, "therefore" refers to what He had just said. What He is about to add to that has the power of His authority behind it. As we "go and make disciples of all nations," we do so because He has the authority to tell us to do. The "disciples" we are to make will become the citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. But, for that to happen, we must use the "keys of the Kingdom" that Jesus gave to Peter. Any other works keys will not open the door to that Kingdom.

Do you remember the Parable of the Good Shepherd? It is found in **John 10:1-18**. In verse 1, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber." What does He mean when He says, "by the gate?"

We find in **verses 7 – 9**, "(7) Therefore Jesus said again, 'I tell you the truth I am the gate for the sheep. (8) All who ever came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them, (9) I am the gate; whoever enters through Me will be saved.'" It is obvious that this "sheep pen" relates to the Kingdom and Jesus is the only way into that Kingdom of Heaven. **John 14:6**

Since Jesus was going away, He gave Peter the keys that open the way through the Gate to enter the Kingdom. We must therefore understand what those keys are if we are

to “make disciples” who are the sheep that belong to the Good Shepherd.

Making disciples is the function of all who are disciples of Jesus. A disciple is a person who disciplines himself according to the teaching of the one he is following. We let our lives reflect the One whose teaching we follow. Jesus made many disciples who followed Him and lived in harmony with His teachings. The twelve apostles were the core group and in Jerusalem after Jesus ascended to Heaven, there were 120 that stayed there (**Acts 1:15**) until the Holy Spirit came “to remind you of all that Jesus had taught.” **John 14:26**

### The “KEYS” are in the “COMMISSION”

**Mark 16:15-16.** Verse 15 repeats the same “Go” command that Matthew includes. Making disciples is done by preaching the Good News. The “Good News” is the news that “the Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day.” **Luke 24:46**

That is the Gospel of which we are not to be ashamed. **Romans 1:16** That message is “the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes, first for the Jew, then for the Gentiles.” It is what Paul describes in **1 Corinthians 15:3-7**. There, you have one of the KEYS that will open the door for entering into the Kingdom of Heaven. It is the key of BELIEF, otherwise known as FAITH. Mark includes it in his Great Commission and he quotes Jesus when he says “Whoever believes - - - will be saved.” BELIEVING THE GOOD NEWS IS ONE OF THE KEYS TO THE KINGDOM.

Now look at what Matthew also included that the disciple makers were to do in making disciples. Jesus said it, “.... Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

Mark also tells us that Jesus included baptism along with “believe”. “He that believes AND IS baptized will be saved.” This, it seems to me, makes baptism become one of the KEYS along with believe. That is what “and is” means. Now we must go to what Luke tells us that Jesus said as he put it in his account of what the final instructions of Jesus included. **Luke 24:47**, “and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

Did you see another KEY in that verse? I did and it was often referred to throughout the four Gospels as being expected for anyone to be accepted by God. It is REPENTANCE and is required of anyone who would enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

### Did Peter Use These Keys in His Sermon in Acts 2?

It only takes a few minutes to read this entire chapter. His sermon is found in verses 14-36. Did Peter preach the Good News that Jesus died, was buried, and was raised from the dead? That message is the KEY to the whole

matter of entering into the Kingdom. Yes, Peter did preach the Good News. Note verse 23, “This man (Jesus) was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge, and you, with the help of wicked men, put Him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised Him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.” There you have the KEY to the whole matter. The Good News was preached by Peter. See also verses 29-36.

This sermon so convicted the crowd that they asked what they needed to do. Verse 38 tells us that Peter used two of the above-mentioned keys that Jesus had said should be preached. He said, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Peter continued to “warn and plead with them” and we see another KEY in that they “accepted his message and were baptized.” That means they BELIEVED what Peter had preached about Jesus and OBEYED it. The result was there were “about three thousand added to their number that day.” They entered the Kingdom of God through the gate of Jesus by using the keys to the Kingdom as preached by Peter.

The next thing we read about these new “sheep”, is they began to learn to be disciples by devoting themselves to the apostle’s teaching, learning to discipline their lives according to what Jesus had commanded in Matthew’s account of the Great Commission, “teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

The fact that their sins were remitted, or forgiven, means the blood of Christ was there as they were “baptized into His death” as **Romans 6:3-14** says. See also **Colossians 2:6-13**. For a more complete reading of how important baptism is as a key to entering the Kingdom, find in my posts the study of baptism as it appears in the New Testament.

Without a doubt, Jesus made it one of the elements that is KEY to receiving Him as our Good Shepherd and as the GATE into the Kingdom of Heaven. It is this same “pattern of preaching” that the apostles used to spread the Good News throughout the entire Roman Empire during those first 100 years of the Gospel age. Are preachers today using the Keys to the Kingdom of Heaven as Jesus directed in His final instruction?

**PRAY WITH ME:** Father in Heaven, In Jesus’ Name I pray your Holy Spirit, Who gave us the Scriptures, will open OUR understanding of the Scriptures as the Spirit did with the apostles about what we are to preach to the lost so they can be the sheep of the Good Shepherd. In Jesus’ Name, Amen!

See **Luke 24:45** and make this your prayer as you study the Word and preach it to others.