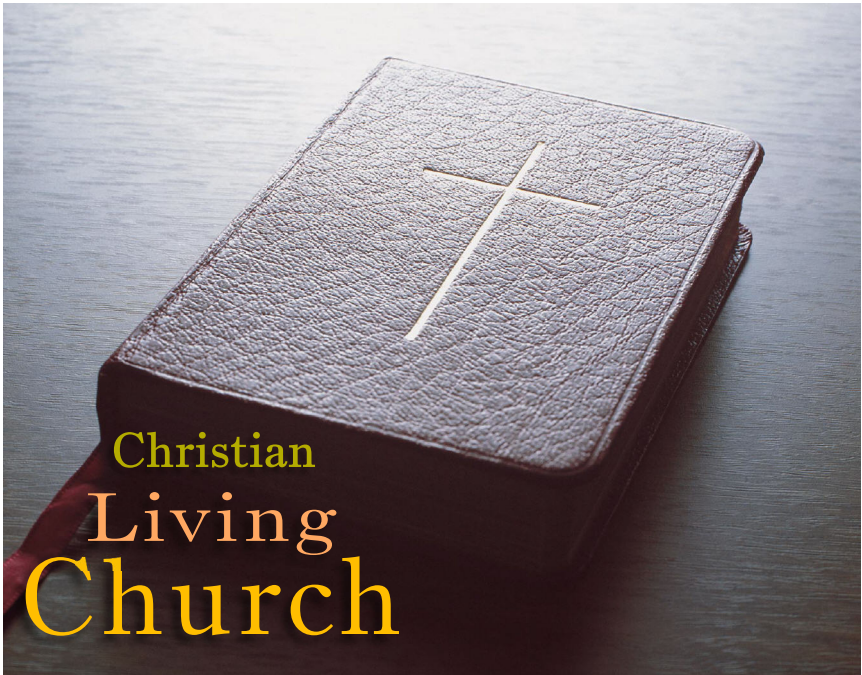


LESSON 20

The Origin of the Church

“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”



Christian
Living
Church

The Origin of the Church



This series of lessons has been designed for private study or classroom presentation. The purpose of this foreword is to explain certain conventions utilized throughout the program. The overall concept is to begin with the basic concepts necessary for the new convert to understand and progress toward more complex doctrine. The lessons are numbered in order to maintain the proper sequence of study.

When Scripture references are encountered in the text, various actions are recommended. When in parenthetical bold (**Genesis 1:1**) the verse is to be looked up and read right away. Frequently, the next textual statement will comment on that verse. Reading verse and text in proper order will enhance one's understanding of the verse. Direct quotes from Scripture will be "*bold italicized and contained in quotation marks*" and, unless otherwise noted, will be from the King James Bible. When the reference is in parenthetical non-bold (Genesis 1:1) it is to provide the Scriptural basis for the statement if confirmation is desired. References in blue [Genesis 1:1](#) will be listed in the lesson section entitled **FURTHER STUDY**.

FURTHER STUDY is the "homework" section. Its purpose is to encourage Bible study at home. The referenced verses have a short summation to assist the student desiring more knowledge about a subject to find what they are looking for.

The **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS** section is primarily for classroom use. Open discussion with the exchange of ideas produces growth for all involved. Most of the time the answer is contained in the referenced Scripture but sometimes the question is offered for open discussion. Even in private Bible study, analysis of the question and the search for its answer can be rewarding.

This work is offered to anyone with a desire to better understand God's Word. It is our hope and prayer that the person studying these lessons will come away with a better understanding of God's will and a closer walk with our Lord, Jesus Christ.

With Loving Concern for all those seeking God's Message
The Church of God Rocky Mount
Rocky Mount, Virginia

Key Verse: Matthew 16:18



“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

Discussion Question: What does this Key Verse mean to you?

The moment before Jesus announced that He would build His church upon “this rock” He had asked His disciples whom they thought He was. Peter had answered and said “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (**Matthew 16:16**). Pleased with Simon Peter’s response, Jesus then made the statement contained in the Key Verse. Referring to Peter as a small stone (Petros) Jesus said He would build (oikodemeo G3618, to construct or confirm) His church upon a rock (petra G4073, a mass of rock). The Greek word “petra” was used to refer

to a mountain. Jesus was saying to Peter, “You are a small stone that can be moved, but I will build My church upon the truth you have declared, that I am the Son of God, and this truth is a mountain (petra) that cannot be moved. So immovable is this rock, not even the grave will prevail against it. My church will never die out.”

The next verse (**verse 19**) is one of the most misunderstood verses in the whole Bible. The general thought has been that whatever doctrine the church decrees on Earth will get an automatic “Stamp of Approval” from the Kingdom of Heaven. The verb “shall be” is not a direct rendering of the Greek text but is assumed by the translators and could just as well be “is.” This puts a completely different perspective

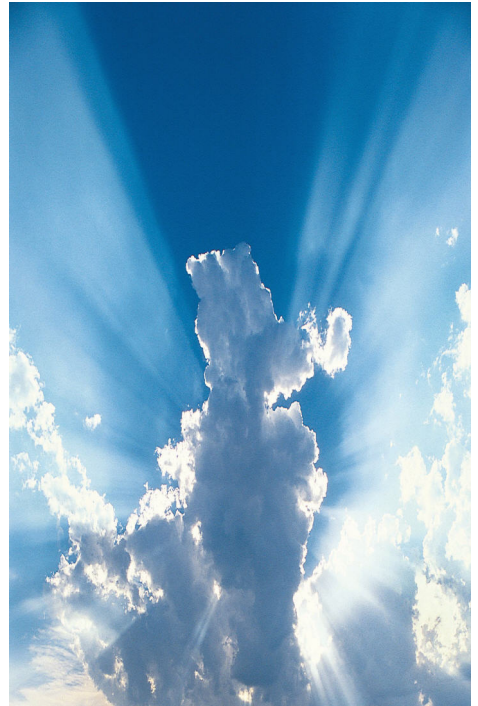
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into the verse. Now, instead of Heaven approving of whatever doctrine the church dictates, the church is *authorized* to initiate doctrine that is already established in Heaven, such authorization being symbolized by the giving of the *keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*. The holder of the keys was in charge of the gate and had the authority to open and shut them. He did not have the authority to *move* them. Since God does not change His values or principles, this makes much more sense because if the church adopted a doctrine that violated God's purpose or plan, He would not change in order to go along with it. Therefore, that would render false the statement of Jesus if it indicated the "Stamp of Approval" idea.

Many errors and false doctrines have resulted from this incorrect application of verse 19. Assuming the authority to

establish whatever doctrine its leadership preferred, the church of the third and fourth centuries established Sunday worship, abolished the Passover as "Jewish" and instead instituted Easter and decreed that the birth of Christ occurred in December when, in fact, the flocks would be in their winter folds, not in an open field (**Luke 2:8**). These facts should make it evident



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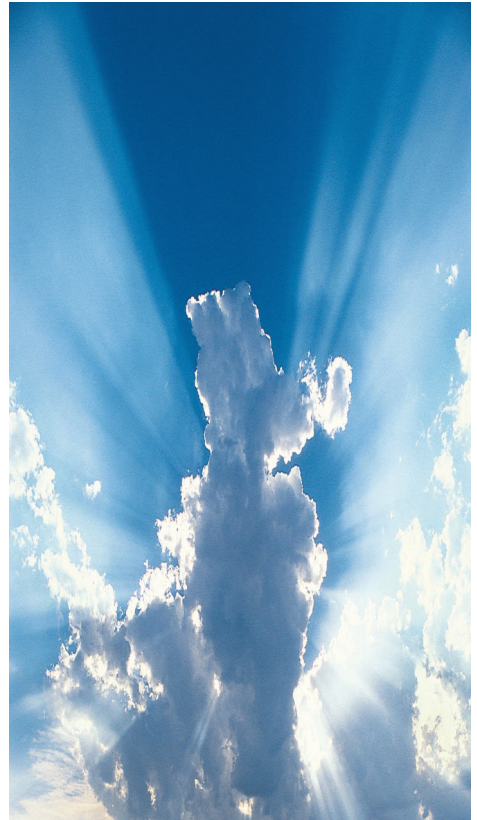


that Jesus would not give His church carte blanche to formulate whatever doctrine it wanted.

Keeping true to His word, Jesus has not let His church die out. In a world where the law is “done away,” the Old Testament no longer applies and the Annual Holy Days are ignored, there is a small remnant still keeping His Sabbath, celebrating the seven annual Holy Days and preaching all the Bible to the faithful. This promise has been kept for two thousand years and will be kept until Jesus returns.

Pentecost is often considered the “birth of the church” and some may think it should be considered as the origin. That day was the day the church was established, but its origin was with Jesus. When a ship is built, the first act of construction is the laying of the keel. This is considered as the

first day of the building of that ship. When Jesus told Simon Peter that He would build His church on “this rock,” He laid the keel of the church. Pentecost was the launching of the church, but instead of breaking a bottle of champagne on the bow, the Holy Spirit descended.



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Discussion Questions:

1. How did Simon Peter know who Jesus was?

Matthew 16:17

2. If the church has the authority to establish any doctrine it chooses, is there an example in Scripture that illustrates a rejection of certain doctrines adopted by it? **Revelation 2:20-24**

3. Upon receipt of the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, what is the primary responsibility that the church of God is supposed to meet with this authorization? **Matthew 28:18-20**

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