

**GOD has made Provision for our Forgiveness of Sin
and our Welcome Into His Family.**

**“For His Compassions Never Fail
They Are New Every Morning.”** (Lamentations 3: 22, 23 NIV)

The Keys of Heaven

What Keys Are You Using To Enter Heaven? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ?

**The Church’s ROCK: What is the Rock you are
building your life on?**

“ _____ ”

Not Sure? – Make Sure. Examine The Scriptures.

Acts 17: 11

“ _____ were more opened minded _____ They welcomed the word very readily;
Every day they studied the scriptures to check whether it was true.” (TJB)

GOD: “For His anger lasts only a moment, but His favor lasts a lifetime;
Weeping may remain for a night, but Rejoicing Comes In The
Morning.” (Psalm 30: 5 NIV)

At Caesarea Philippi Jesus begins to Prepare His Disciples for The Beginning of the Church & The Importance of Their Coming Ministry.

Jesus: “‘Who do you say I am?’ Simon Peter ... **‘YOU ARE THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD.’** Jesus ... ‘Blessed are you Simon ... for this was ... revealed to you ... by My Father in heaven ... You are Peter, and on this **ROCK** I will build My Church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome **IT**. 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.’ Then He warned His disciples not to tell anyone that **HE WAS THE CHRIST.** From that time on Jesus began to explain to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and **SUFFER** ... and ... be **KILLED** and on the third day be **RAISED** to life. Peter ... ‘Never Lord! ... This shall never happen to You!’ Jesus said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.’”
(Matthew 16: 13, 15-23 NIV)

In this passage **Jesus** refers to Himself as the **ROCK** upon which the **Church** would be built. **All true members** of the Church **must and will proclaim** as Peter did **“You Are The Christ, The Son Of The Living God.”** **Jesus** shares that **His suffering -- death, (burial) and resurrection** are **The Keys of The Kingdom of Heaven.** He testified that the gates of Hades would not overcome the **Rock**, the **Christ**, The **Son of the Living God** because **after His death** He would be **raised to life.**

Jesus Confirms He was referring to Himself as the **Rock** when He warns His disciples: **“Tell no one that HE WAS THE CHRIST.”** (Mt. 16: 20 NASB) **And when** He earlier taught: **“Everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon (does) them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the ROCK.”** (Matthew 7: 24 NASB)

Apostle Paul clarifies this truth using an Old Testament event, the Israelites exodus from Egypt: “They drank from the spiritual ROCK that accompanied them, and that ROCK was CHRIST.” (1 Cor. 10: 4 NIV)

It is evident, that when **Jesus** rebukes Peter, that Peter [himself] is not the “ROCK” of the Church. This is also evident when Peter tells us about Jesus:

“... the Lord. He is ‘The LIVING STONE, rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to Him’ ... scripture says: ‘See how I lay in Zion a precious CORNERSTONE, that I have chosen and the man who rests his trust on it will not be disappointed ... a STONE to stumble over, a ROCK to bring men down.’ They stumble over it because they do not believe in THE WORD.” (1 Peter 2: 3, 4, 6, 8 TJB) “... because they disobey THE MESSAGE.” (1 Peter 2: 8 NIV)

The points in “THE WORD” or “THE MESSAGE” are “The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven” because they explain that **Jesus is the Christ.**

: Matthew records Jesus’ explanation of these “Keys”

“He must go unto Jerusalem, and **SUFFER** many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes (teachers of Jewish law), and be **KILLED**, and be **RAISED** again the third day.” (Matthew 16: 21 KJV)

“**Jesus** said ... ‘The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: And they shall **KILL** Him, and the third day He shall be **RAISED** again.’” (Matthew 17: 22, 23 KJV)

: Apostle Paul used these “Keys” “... I declare unto you THE

GOSPEL which I preached ... which ... ye have received ... wherein ye stand: By which ... ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached ... For I delivered ... that which I also received ... CHRIST DIED for our sins According to the Scriptures ... HE WAS BURIED and that HE ROSE AGAIN the third day According to the Scriptures. And that He was seen of Ce’-phas (Peter) ... And ... of me.” (1 Corinthians 15: 2-5, 8 KJV)

: Apostle Peter used these “Keys” in his opening message to the Jews. “Ye men of Israel, hear these words; **Jesus** of Nazareth ... being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have **CRUCIFIED AND SLAIN: Whom God hath RAISED UP**, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it ... His soul was not left in hell (Hades TJB; the grave NIV; Hades NASB), neither His flesh did see corruption. This **Jesus** hath God **RAISED UP.**” (Acts 2: 22-24, 31, 32 KJV)

: Apostle Peter used these “Keys” to open heaven for the Gentiles. “I now realize how true it is that **God does not show favoritism** but accepts men from every nation who fear Him and do what is right. **You know THE MESSAGE GOD SENT ... THE GOOD NEWS OF PEACE THROUGH JESUS CHRIST ... They KILLED HIM** by hanging Him on a tree, but God **RAISED HIM** from the dead **on the third day** and caused Him to be seen ... **He is the One** whom God appointed as a **judge of the living and the dead.** All the prophets testify about Him that **everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name.**” (Acts 10: 34-36, 39, 40, 42, 43 NIV)

The reason those who believe in **Jesus** receive forgiveness of their sins is because **Jesus** is the **Rock** the gates of Hades will not prevail against.

As the **Apostles teach, preach** and the **people read the scriptures** those who **believe the message of Jesus death, burial and resurrection** will be **loosed from their sins** those who **do not** will be **bound in them.**

: Apostle John shares WHY JESUS CAME “He that commits sin is of the devil; for the devil sins from the beginning. For this purpose **THE SON OF GOD** was manifested (revealed), that He might destroy the **works** (operations) of the devil.” (1 John 3: 8 KJV)

: The Book of Hebrews reveals HOW JESUS CAME “One who has become a Priest ... **on the basis of the power of an indestructible life.**” (Hebrews 7:16 NIV) “For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have **One Who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin.**” (He.4:15 NIV)

Jesus was sinless. Death and Hell could not overcome Him. Those who trust in Him will not be overcome. Jesus victory over sin and death becomes their victory.

Believers in Jesus will be loosed from their sins by obeying the call of faith in the Message of The Cross: Jesus is the Christ, the sinless Son of the Living God, Who suffered -- died, was buried and rose again on the third day.

: Apostle Paul on Jesus’ sacrifice and victory “For **Christ** did not send me to baptize, but to preach the Gospel (the Good News TJB) – **not with** words of human wisdom, lest the Cross of Christ **be emptied of its power.**” (1 Corinthians 1: 17 NIV)

“For THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 1: 18 NIV)

“It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe ... we preach **CHRIST CRUCIFIED ... who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”** (1 Corinthians 1: 21, 23, 30 KJV)

“So that, just as it is written, ‘Let Him Who Boast, Boast In The LORD.’” (1 Corinthians 1: 31 NASB)

“For since by man came death, by man came also the **RESURRECTION of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so IN CHRIST shall all be made alive ... The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But **thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our LORD JESUS CHRIST.**”** (1 Corinthians 15: 21-22, 56-57 KJV)

“He was **delivered** over to **DEATH** for our sins and was **RAISED** to life for our justification.” (Romans 4: 25 NIV)

“Therefore having been **justified by faith**, we have **peace with God** through our **LORD JESUS CHRIST** ... For if by the transgression of the one death reigned through the one, much more **those who receive** the abundance of **grace** and of **the gift** of righteousness **will reign** in life through the **ONE JESUS CHRIST.**” (Romans 5: 1, 17 NASB)

: Jesus rebuked and warned those who did not believe

“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.” (John 8: 24 KJV)

The book of Acts records **Peter** using **The Keys of The Kingdom of Heaven** after **He** and **John**, through **Jesus’** name, healed the crippled beggar.

: To the Onlookers “Peter ... ‘Men of Israel ... The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, **the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up** and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. But you denied **the Holy One and the Just**, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and **KILLED** the **Prince of life, Whom God RAISED** from the dead, of which we are witnesses ... you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But those things which **God foretold** by the mouth of all His prophets, **that the CHRIST would SUFFER**, He has thus fulfilled. **REPENT therefore and BE CONVERTED, that YOUR SINS MAY BE BLOTTED OUT ...**”
(Acts 3: 12-15, 17-19 NKJV)

: To the Rulers and Elders of the People “Let it be known ... by the name of **JESUS CHRIST** of Nazareth whom you **CRUCIFIED** whom God **RAISED** from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the **‘Stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the Chief Cornerstone.’** Nor is there salvation in any other,

for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4: 10-12 NKJV)

: And in speaking before the Sanhedrin "They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail." (Acts 5: 18 NIV) "The angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, 'Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people ALL THE WORDS OF THIS LIFE.' And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught ... Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence ... set them before the Council (Sanhedrin) ... Peter and the other apostles answered and said, 'We ought to obey God rather than men.'" (Acts 5: 19-21, 27, 29 KJV) "The God of our fathers **RAISED** up **Jesus** whom you **MURDERED** by hanging on a tree. Him God has **EXALTED** to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.' [And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment." (1 John 3:23 NKJV)] ... they (the Apostles) departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, **they did not cease teaching and preaching JESUS AS THE CHRIST.**" (Acts 5: 30-32, 41-42 NKJV)

The full message of this new life or "The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven" has been explained by Jesus and used by the Apostles to loose people from their sins. Those who have heard and obeyed The Message of salvation and forgiveness have had their sins cleansed away by the blood of Jesus.

When you put your faith in **Jesus Christ** you are saying that, "Yes, I do not want to receive God's grace in vain, I believe **Jesus** is who He says He is; **He is the Christ** the Son of the Living

God. He was sinless, I am an unrighteous sinner deserving of eternal separation from God {Hell}. He suffered and died for my sins according to and in fulfillment of the scriptures. He was buried, He was raised to life on the third day according to and in fulfillment of the scriptures and He appeared to His disciples and was seen. And Because He Lives, I Can and Will Live Through HIM!”

: Apostle Paul said “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but CHRIST Lives in Me. The life I live in the body. I Live By Faith In THE SON OF GOD, Who Loved Me, And Gave Himself For Me.”
(Galatians 2: 20 NIV)

The Scriptures tell us that Jesus went to and is seated at the right hand of God the Father. Jesus has finished the work of our redemption. Jesus’ sacrifice for our sins has been accepted as full payment by God the Father. No other sacrifice for sin is needed, nor can any be offered. The sacrifices God wants from His followers now are sacrifices of praise that confess Jesus as Lord and sacrifices of service which show God’s love.

: The Book of Hebrews records “For CHRIST is not entered into the holy places made with hands ... but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us Nor ... that He should offer Himself often ... For then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: But now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to PUT AWAY SIN BY THE SACRIFICE OF HIMSELF. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment. 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.” (He. 9: 24-28 KJV)

“JESUS CHRIST is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever. DO NOT BE CARRIED AWAY BY VARIED AND STRANGE TEACHINGS ... Through Him ... let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. And do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”
(Hebrews 13: 8-9, 15-16 NASB)

: James writes “PURE RELIGION and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” (James 1: 27 KJV)

To Whom or to What Are You Entrusting Your Soul To?

King David entrusted his soul to God whom David called his **“MIGHTY ROCK”**.

“My soul finds rest in God alone, my salvation comes from Him. He alone is my ROCK and my salvation ... My salvation and honor depend on God; He is my MIGHTY ROCK my refuge. Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to Him, for God is our refuge ... One thing God has spoken, two things have I heard: that You, O God, are strong, and that You, O Lord, are loving. Surely You will reward each person according to what he has done.” (Psalm 62: 1, 2, 7, 8, 11, 12 NIV)

Psalm 78 records for us that at times the Israelites forgot God and did not trust in His deliverance.

“They refused to walk in His law, and forgot His works and His wonders that He had shown them ... they sinned even more against Him by rebelling against the Most High ... they tested God in their heart by asking for the food of their fancy. Yes, they spoke against God ... they did not believe in God, and did not trust in His salvation (deliverance NIV).”
(Psalm 78: 11, 17-19, 22 NKJV)

Have You Forgotten What Jesus Has Done?

Will You Disbelieve God And Not Trust In The Deliverance He Has Provided Through The Cross?

Luke writes about an event that took place during Jesus suffering on the Cross:

“The people ... the rulers ... sneering at Him, saying, ‘He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the **Christ of God**, His Chosen One.’ The soldiers ... mocked Him ... saying, ‘If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself!’ Now there was also an inscription above Him, ‘**THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.**’ **One of the criminals** who were hanged there was **hurling abuse** at Him, saying, ‘**Are You not the Christ?** Save Yourself and us!’ But **the other** answered, and **rebuking him** said, ‘**Do you not even fear God**, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And **we indeed are suffering justly**, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but **this man has done nothing wrong.**’ And he was saying, ‘**Jesus**, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!’ And He said to him, ‘**Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.**” (Luke 23: 35-43 NASB)

One of the criminals on a cross next to **Jesus** recognized and **obeyed** the message of “**The Keys of The Kingdom of Heaven.**” **The other criminal did not.**

Will You Obey The Message?

If you will, you will be loosed from your sins and The Kingdom of Heaven will open for you!

The foolish criminal was thinking only of maintaining his earthly life. However, the wise criminal recognized his impending death and humbled himself.

HE: Feared God. Acknowledged his guilt. Acknowledged his deeds were sinful. Acknowledged that his punishment of death was just and deserved.

HE: Recognized that **Jesus** was guiltless, sinless and that **Jesus'** suffering and death was undeserved.

HE: Believed that **Jesus** would live again and have His own Kingdom. Believed that **Jesus** was the **Christ** Who could forgive him and give him a new life.

In return, Jesus recognized the faith of the wise criminal and promised him eternal life that very day.

Will you NOW believe and trust in the deliverance -- salvation that JESUS has provided?

: Paul writes "Working together with Him, we also urge you ... for He says, 'At The Acceptable Time I Listened To You, And On The Day Of Salvation I Helped You'; behold, NOW is 'The Acceptable Time,' behold, NOW is 'The Day Of Salvation.'"
(2 Corinthians 6: 1-2 NASB)

The Simple Message Jesus gave in John 3:16 is proven true in His relationship with this wise criminal.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3: 16 KJV)

The wise criminal's comments indicate that **he recognized Jesus as the Christ**, the Son of the Living God and perhaps, unknowingly, **his comments point to Jesus as the ROCK upon which the Church would be built.** After all: **“Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today and forever.”** (Hebrews 13: 8 KJV)

Here are **the Wise Criminals comments** followed by one or more parallel Old Testament Scripture:

: **“Do you not even fear God ...?”**

“For who is God besides the LORD? And **who is the ROCK except our God.**” (2 Samuel 22: 32 NIV)

: **“We are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.”**

“The LORD is upright; He is my **ROCK** and there is no unrighteousness in Him.” (Psalm 92: 15 KJV)

“He is the **ROCK**, His works are perfect, and all His ways are just. **A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is He.**” (Deut. 32: 4 NIV)

: **“Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!”**

“Rescue me and deliver me in Your righteousness; turn Your ear to me and save me. **Be my ROCK of refuge**, to which I can always go; give the command to save me, for **You are my ROCK** and my fortress.” (Psalm 71: 2, 3 NIV)

“**To you I call, O LORD my ROCK;** do not turn a deaf ear to me.” (Psalm 28: 1 NIV)

“Deliver me speedily; **be my ROCK of refuge**, a fortress of defense to save me ... **Into Your hand I commit my spirit;** You have redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.” (Psalm 31: 2, 5 NKJV)

: Jesus responded to the wise criminal

“Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.”

These next Old Testament Scriptures help us to see THE JOY the wise criminal must have **Experienced That Day:**

“The LORD lives, and **blessed be my ROCK**; and exalted be God, the **ROCK of my salvation.**” (2 Samuel 22: 47 NASB)

“The LORD is my **ROCK** and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust ...” (Psalm 18: 2 NKJV)

“Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the **ROCK** of our salvation ... come ... with thanksgiving ... music and song. For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods.” (Psalm 95: 1-3 NIV)

Is Jesus Your ROCK Of Salvation?

What KEYS Are You Trying To Use To Enter The Kingdom of Heaven?

: Jesus said “The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage (wedding feast) for his son ... And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he said unto him, Friend, **how came thou in here not having a wedding garment?** And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.” (Matthew 22: 2, 11-14 KJV)

: Apostle John saw a vision of heaven “A great multitude ... of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, **stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes** ... one of the elders ... saying unto me, **What (Who) are these which are arrayed**

in white robes? ... And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said ... **they ... have washed their robes, and made them white in THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB.**" (Revelation 7: 9, 13-14 KJV)

: **Jesus said** "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs ... and everyone who loves and practices falsehood." (Revelation 22: 14-15 NIV)

The Psalmist shares His Thanksgiving for God's Salvation. When You trust in Jesus You can too.

"From my distress I called upon the LORD; The LORD answered me and set me in a large place. ... It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man. ... The LORD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation. ... I shall not die but live, And tell of the works of the LORD. The LORD has disciplined me severely, but He has not given me over to death. Open to me the gates of righteousness; I shall enter through them, I shall give thanks to the LORD. This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous will enter through it. I shall give thanks to Thee, for Thou hast answered me; And Thou hast become my salvation. The STONE which the builders rejected has become the CHIEF CORNER STONE." (Psalm 118: 5, 8, 14, 17-22 NASB)

HAVE YOU ENTERED IN? ARE YOU STANDING ON THE ROCK?

: **Jesus said** "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way {"He that finds his life shall lose it: and he that loses his life for My sake shall find it." Matthew 11: 39 KJV} **which leads to life, and there are few who find it. Beware of false prophets.**" (Matthew 7: 13-15 NKJV)

"I tell you the truth, I am the gate ... whoever enters through Me will be saved." (John 10: 7, 9 NIV)

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, unbelieving ... and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” (Revelation 21: 6-8 NKJV)

: The Scriptures express that “The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against Him.”

(Daniel 9: 9 NIV)

“God fulfilled what He foretold ... His CHRIST would Suffer. Repent ... turn to God ... that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that He may send the CHRIST ... even Jesus. He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as He promised ...”

(Peter in Acts 3: 18-21 NIV)

“If anyone does not love the Lord – a curse be on him. Come, O Lord!”

(Paul in 1 Corinthians 16: 22 NIV)

**“Come now, and let us reason together,”
says the LORD.**

**“Though Your Sins be as scarlet,
they Shall Be as White As Snow.”**

(Isaiah 1: 18 KJV)

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