

UNITY, PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY

In **Matthew 16:13-19**, Jesus had a conversation with his disciples, and asked them "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" The way they responded to his question was what they had heard other people saying. Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah.... etc, Jesus asked them a second time; "But who do you say I am?" Peter answered and said "You are the Christ the Son of the living God."

When Jesus heard Peter's response, He began to explain to them that this was God's ability; to reveal to Peter who He truly was. In **1Cor 3:7** the scripture says that one plants one waters, but it's God who gives the increase. (the out showing of what was planted) Peter right at that moment, was revealed from God, who Jesus really was; "the Christ". Not Jesus in his humanity, but "Christ" in His eternal deity. What a revelation for Peter to be in the presence of the eternal son of God.

Notice **verse 17**, Jesus defines that because God was able to reveal to Peter who Jesus was, Jesus said to him...in other words, you're now a part of me, because flesh and blood, (a human being) did not reveal this to you, but it was MY FATHER in heaven who showed you....This is how I am able to build my church in such a way that gates or government structure of Satan cannot overpower it. My church will have authority; the keys of the Kingdom.

In ancient times the steward of a wealthy family, especially of the royal household, was given a key in recognition of his office. Therefore the phrase referring to giving a person "the keys" was an expression of raising him to great power. Because Peter and Jesus now have the same mind and purpose, Jesus is able to build His church so that the government structure of the church in the earth will work in complete harmony with him when the church "is seated in heavenly places with Christ" with him. This is what Jesus meant when he told Peter in **verse 17** you're now a part of me.

The seven churches in the Book of Revelation give us a clear depiction of what can take place in any church and at any time. It also presents the spiritual antidote for any wrong condition that may come about in a local church. The information given accurately describes the local and historical surroundings of each of them in John's day. The admonitions and warnings given also serve as guidelines for local churches down through the ages.

The prophetic component was also given to the seven churches, providing a picture of the whole church age from John's day, up until the rapture. The church was to bring together a fellowship of believers who would promote the kingdom of God through the witness of Jesus Christ. (**Acts 1:6-8**)

Paul, the apostle said the believers in **1 Cor 1:10** "that you speak the same thing, having a uniform testimony and no divisions, dissensions, among you, perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment or opinion." Denominations are groups formed through differences of interpretations headed by a person or persons in full agreement with them. Denominations are not going away, but they are still included as members of the body of Christ. If we choose to ignore churches and pastors that we do not agree with, just so we can have a personal relationship with God is not right. We were also called (set apart) and saved for the purpose of having a fellowship with God's family; the entire body of Christ in the earth.

When I look back at my early stages as a new believer, I knew that I needed not only a spiritual father, (**1 Cor 4:15**) but I also needed to learn what true fellowship is in the Lord with other church members. Even though my first pastor was not in agreement with the teaching I was listening to and ultimately, the direction I was going in. In spite of our differences, it challenged me to grow in the love of God for others.

Please read through **1 John 3:10-16**. When pastors deliver the word of God, we are to receive it respectfully as long as the pastor is providing godly, biblical leadership. When the church is not following Christ, you are no longer obligated to remain or be involved. God will provide you a good church and good pastor. (**2 Thes 3:9**)

I pray you have a Happy Thanksgiving filled with love and gratefulness.

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