

**It's Exciting to See Jesus Build His Church**

- Isn't it exciting watch ch being built? Esp if own ch, cong moved from planning phase to building. I bet some you remem when this ch being built, 79. Some you told me remem: skid steers, dirt, sanctuary; being at design studio, windows prepd. Some: here for groundbrkng cermny; watched as pallets bricks arrived by train, & as bricklayers built these walls; saw bells removed old ch, lifted into this bell tower by crane. That was exciting, wasn't it! Been over 40 yrs now; but bet more you remem 3 yrs ago, watching sanctuary renovated; or this past winter, new steeple installed. It's exciting see ch being built!
- Well today J isn't renovtng sanctuary or building ch building. But is building his ch; that's exciting watch!
- In this psg for today, J has taken discs way up N, to CP, 25 miles N Sea Gal; one furthest places from Jrslm J travels to during minstry. So not bothrd by Jewish leaders here; just alone w/discs for some quiet time before making long journey S to Jrslm to suff/die. And up here in CP, J asks **vs. 13b**. What ppl saying re me; do they undstnd what I've come do, who really am? **Vs. 14** – JB (Herod put JB death; but some thought J: JB raised life); Elijah (carried hvn chariot fire; but very end Mal, last book OT, Lord: send prophnt Elijah; so ppl wonderd: J Elijah come back); Jer/prphts (certainly J rebuked sins of ppl, like Jer/others). So all kinds ppl had diff opins who J really was.
- Same thing true today. J: contrvrsl figure; ppl have diff opins re him. Some list among great rel tchrs in history: Confucius, Muhammad, Buddha, Dalai Lama. Some think J: imp story kids learn; teaches morals, be kind; want kids learn this. Some terrified of J; wrathful, vengeful God, angry at you; what ppl thought of J in Mid Ages; wall of Sistine Chapel depicts muscular, angry J sending ppl hell; why so many ppl prayed Mary; saw her as more approachable than J. And some think J myth, story; doesn't matter whether believe or not.
- So w/all these diffng opins re J circltng around discs & us, J asks this incrdibly persnl, poignant Q: **vs. 15**. What you have say re J? What J mean you? That is the Q of Xianity! Is J: Creator/Sav, or myth/fairy tale? Light/wrld, or another relgs tchr? Does death cross, res dead have any bearing on your life, or is that just another story some ppl like believe true? **Vs. 15**.
- Pt, here, in one finest momnts, gives pwrfl answer, bold statmnt/conf of faith. **Vs. 16**. Break down. Mes, title, same as Xp – God's anointed one, the Sav God promsd send thruout OT to deliver ppl from sin/death. J: that Xp, Mes. Also God's Son: reminds God's triune nature: Fr,S,HS. J: Son/God, born VM, but begtn Fr etrnty. And Son lvng God: not dead God, stone statue, but God who lives/reigns in hvn, governs wrld in wisdom; raised J from dead, brought back life. Who is J? **Vs. 16**. That Pt's answer, and our confsn of faith, as well.
- And J highly praises him. **Vs. 17**. God taught Pt to know/bel this. Same true us. We may've had prnts, prs, trs, flesh/bld Xians, who taught us re J at home, ch, school, SS – and we thank God for them! But thru them, God himself teaches us know Xp; God sends Spirit to work faith in hrts, just like worked faith in Pt's hrt. And when Pt confsd **vs. 16**, and when we & all Xians make that same confsn of faith, that's how J builds ch!
- Then comes this: **vs. 18ab**. Really imp psg! For one thing, J giving Pt new name; up til now, only known as Simon; birth name. But from here on out, J calls Pt. Intrstng: apparently before this, Pt not even a name; no record in history of anyone being called Pt until now; just wasn't name parents gave baby boys. So J sort of invents name/nickname; and based on word for rock. Petros: rock/stone – could be little pebble, hold hand, carry in arms – that's what name Pt means: rock. So J says, you Pt are a rock.
- But then there's play on words. **Vs. 18b**; and this rock on which ch built, diff word (petra) – similar, but this word means mnt cliff; rock formation; huge, massive stone; immovable bedrock – think Grand Canyon, Mt. Rushmore, Rocky Mnts in CO – that's petra, that's rock on which Xp builds ch. Let me add this: (remem, taking place in CP) – I've been there before, to ruins CP. Town sat at foot Mt. Hermon, tallest mnt in Israel; peaks covered snow; when snow melts, water runs down mnt, forms Jordan R. So when you're in CP, towering above you are the steep rock cliffs of Mt. Hermon; under feet is rocky gravel. And I can picture J picking up stone: Simon, I'm call you Peter; you're like a rock (petros), bec of your strong confsn/faith (Mes Son lvng God). And that confsn/faith is the rock (petra), mnt, massive bedrock foundtn upon which I'll build my ch. So when Xians put faith in me as Sav from sin, when build house on this rock (remem parbl J told re house built on sand collapsed during storm, but house built on rock withstood storm,) and make me (J) rock solid foundtn upon which their faith is built, and confess same faith you're confssng, Pt (that I'm: Mes Son lvng God) – that is how I will build my church!

- Lots can be said here! RCC for centuries has intrprtd this psg to mean that here J estblshng papacy, making Pt first pope, and that rock on which J builds ch is not Pt's confsn but Pt himself. Here's smwhr else I've been in my travels: I've been Rome, St Pt's Baslc at Vatican in Rome; one largest chs in wrld. Talk re building ch: this ch being built during ML's lifetime w/\$ raised by Jn Tetzel thru sale of indlgncs, which L so strongly oppsd, and which really sparked beginng Luth Ref. St Pt's Baslca shaped like †; where †beams meet, huge altar; beneath, catacombs where (said) Pt's remains are buried; high above altar at ceiling, gigantic dome; around dome, in large ornate letters, is this psg in Latin, Tu es Petrus... All this to say: RCC undrstnds this psg to be J estblshng papacy, making Pt 1<sup>st</sup> pope.
- But remem play on words – Pt's a rock bec what confesses; and what he confesses is rock on which J builds ch. Here, we see Pt w/ pretty rock solid faith. Plenty other times Pt's faith quite rocky; think when: walking on water, took eyes off J, sank; (next Sun) J: suff/die, Pt: no/never, J: Satan; in courtyard, denies. Pt can be rock, smtms; also sinner just like you/me, w/ a faith/behvr smtms pretty rocky. J didn't come build his ch on Pt; builds ch on the Xian truth/confsn that J is Mes Son lvng God. That's how J builds his church!
- That's really exciting/imp, bec we are ch! J not talking re buildings/denomtns. Talking re HCC, Com/Snts, invisible commnty of bels who love/trust in J. So by faith, we are ch. And J: **vs. 18c**. J's ch will endure forever; it'll withstand all attacks of Satan/hell that try dethrone J, destroy his work. Our enemy Satan, roaring lion, looking devour us. But J has already defeated our enemy! On cross J shed blood to bear full punishment of our sins; he gave up his holy life to save us and give us eternal life, in hvn; now he's risen fr dead, and he's champ over gates/hell. There's nothing Satan can do that can undo what J has done. Satan cannot rob us of redmptn Xp won for us; he's defeated; he's judged, deed done; **vs. 18bc**.
- Furthermore, **vs. 19**. Keys lock/un doors; meant let ppl in, keep out. J, of course, wants everyone be w/him in hvn. But only way get hvn: trusting in J as Sav from sin. So when J gives his ch keys kingdom/hvn, giving us charge to proclaim L/G. Law: binding/locking key; says, you've sinned vs God, don't deserve go hvn. Law shows us our need for Sav. But Gos, loosing/unlocking key, says, J has paid for your sins, died/rose for you, forgives you; trust in him. And we need both keys: warned by Law, comforted by Gos. World needs these keys, too, bec w/o Law, ppl don't know need for Sav; and w/o Gos, they don't know who that Sav is. So J wants us, his ch, to use keys and proclaim L&G, to point sinners to J, show them path to hvn. J once: **"If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven"** (Jn 20:23). That's using keys. And in Luth Cat, one of 6 chief parts: Keys/Conf. Cat says: *"The use of the keys is that special power and right which Xp gave to his ch on earth: to forgive the sins of penitent sinners but refuse forgiveness to the impenitent as long as they do not repent."*
- And so, while ch work can smtms be difficult, discouraging, at same time it's also very exciting see J building his church. J builds ch when sinners turn to him in repentance, and he uses loosing key to forgive them. J builds church when unbels hear Gos of Xp cruc/risen, Spirit works faith in hrts, they come to bel in J, and hvn opend to them. J builds ch when humble Xians, who are constantly under attack by Satan & gates/hell, gather tog for worship around W&S – when fed w/J's body/blood, washed/renewed in Bap, strngthnd in faith thru Word. J builds ch when the faithful confess their faith, like Pt did, and build house on rock of Xp.
- **Vs. 15**, asks J today. That is the Q of Xianity! Pt: **vs. 16**. Dear fellow Xians, that's our confsn too; that's the rock on which we stand; and that's the foundation on which Xp is building his church – which he's busy doing right now, all over world – and it's exciting to see!

### Matthew 16:13-20

<sup>13</sup> When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" <sup>14</sup> They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." <sup>15</sup> "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" <sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

<sup>17</sup> Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. <sup>18</sup> And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. <sup>19</sup> 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." <sup>20</sup> Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.