

Prayer List

Sierra
Gene
Veda
Judy
The Williams' Family
Ophelia

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 9:50 a.m.
Assembly 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Pinole Tidings

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Matthew 16:18: "Upon This Rock"

Harry Osborne

ON THE SOUTHERN SLOPES OF MOUNT HERMON, Peter made a confession which declared greater strength and glory than the mountain itself could ever boast. From the rocky soil which surrounded Caesarea Philippi, one can imagine Jesus looking to the north up the slope of the mountain and seeing the massive rock formation which formed creation's visual aid for the spiritual truth to be declared. The reality of the confession by Peter—"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"—formed a foundation so solid and secure that the vast strata above seemed feeble in comparison. The church of our Lord and Savior stands not upon the vacillating base of man or human invention, but upon the sure, solid, and majestic foundation of the Divine Messiah. No flood of trial or turmoil nor even the hand of death can sweep away that blood-bought body of the glorious Savior.

The confession of Peter declared two essential realities. First, Jesus is the Christ. The student of the old covenant understood the Christ to be the Messiah of promise who would establish His kingdom of righteousness. Second, Jesus is the Son of the living God. In other words, He

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This Week's Question:

Who was the only king of Israel to kill both a king of Judah and a king of Israel?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

Vashti - Esther 1:11

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partakes of the nature of God and is, therefore, divine. Peter may have had problems with impetuosity and weakness, but he had no trouble seeing the conclusion to the clear evidence. The disciples affirmed a fact attested by the glory of heaven, not a fantasy. That reality is the rock of this passage.

Some have mistakenly identified Peter as the rock upon which the church would be built. The words “Peter” and “rock” in the original language of the Bible differ in meaning and gender. The word “rock” had reference to a mass of rock or a foundation, not a stone suggested by the word “Peter.” A papacy with Peter as the original pope is not taught in this passage or any other. Jesus, the Divine Christ, is the only one qualified to be the source of strength upon which the church is founded. To suggest that any man or group of men could provide such strength is blasphemous! The rock is the reality that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

But what does it mean that the Divine Messiah is the foundation of the church? Certainly when Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:11, “For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ,” he does not mean Jesus’ physical body formed a physical foundation for a physical structure. The context makes clear that the writer is speaking of a spiritual foundation for the temple of God which is God’s people. Very simply, that’s what the church is —people whose lives are based upon the sanctification and sustenance of the Divine Christ. The apostle says such in addressing one letter “unto the church of God which is at Corinth, even them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place” (1 Corinthians 1:2). The “church” according to the Bible is not a super hierarchy comprised of conferences, boards, and committees, but the people who have been sanctified by the Savior’s blood and are directed by calling on Him for authority in all they do.

The Divine Messiah is, therefore, the foundation of the church in that He has saved His people by His own blood and directs them through His word revealed through the apostles and prophets.

Having said all that, do we really appreciate what it means to us personally? We are committed to a Lord of whom we can be sure. Paul affirmed, “I know him in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Timothy 1:12). He goes on to tell Timothy he can be sure also. Peter recalls the voice of the Majestic Glory proclaiming Jesus as the Son of God on the mount of transfiguration when he fervently declares, “For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty” (2 Peter 1:16–18).

Brethren, though the world may belittle us, we know the power behind our faith. We are the disciples of the Divine One of promise! When one confesses his faith in Jesus, he makes the same confession which the Almighty God of heaven declared to be so—Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Young people, never be ashamed of your Lord, but declare Him with surety. Brother in Christ consumed in your job, remember your priority must be on the Divine Savior who gave His life for you and serve Him with all your might. Sister in Christ wondering if there is light at the end of the tunnel, there is and, oh, what a glorious light! At the death of his wife and two children, one preacher doubted his ability to continue his work. Upon his return, one brother asked him why he came back. His reply was, “I hit the bottom and I found out it was solid.” Death or trial did not stop Jesus from establishing the church because neither could diminish the transcendent strength and surety of the Divine Christ.