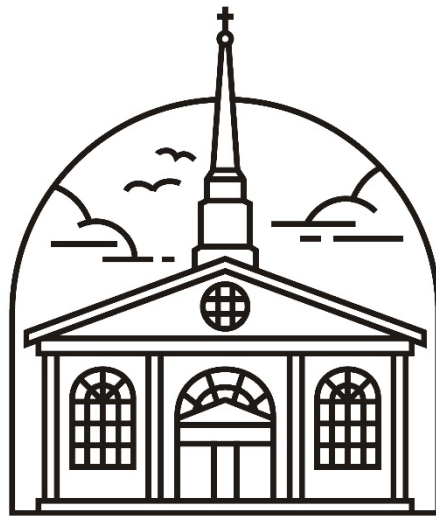


Origin of



the Church

Lesson One

Inauguration of the New Testament Church

Overview

The conversation between Peter, the student disciple, and the Son of God (God actively present on earth) is the centerpiece of the “Ecclesia” in New Testament scripture. The divine revelation is the highlight that will be used to inaugurate the continuation of the Church that began in the wilderness of Sinai.

Understanding the background of the Church in the wilderness is important to correctly defining the identity and purpose of the New Testament Church or the Church of the Apostles.

God’s work among mankind is renewed, but the concept of the Church, a called-out body or congregation, is not new. A new work would signal the end of a previous work or, at the very least, make the previous work less significant. To indicate that the New Testament Church is a “new” version or an improved attempt by God to connect with man is an inaccurate explanation.

God’s work toward humanity is constant and ongoing, encompassing both the present moment and the future that lies ahead.

The Church is the *called-out* witness that God has chosen to represent Him in the world of man. The Church reflects people who have been rescued from the captivity of sin and drawn to the gathering place to receive the living words of God and to experience the glory of His presence.

The Church is synonymous with the reference of people who follow the way of God. The “ecclesia” is the congregation separated from the common path of life to be consecrated to follow a new and living way. (Hebrews 10:20)

Matt 16:13 – When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

Matt 16:14 – And they said, Some *say that thou art* John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

Matt 16:15 – He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

Matt 16:16 – And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Matt 16:17 – And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

Matt 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.

Matt 16:19 – And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Matt 16:20 – Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

(Matthew 16:13) – The Teacher-Rabbi tested the accountability of his disciples by asking them to rehearse what they heard others say about the Messiah. He places a partial answer within the question, by referencing Himself as the Son of man. He wanted to know if people only knew him as the son of a natural man or if His disciples had convinced others that He was actually something more.

(Matthew 16:14) – The replies from the Rabbi's students are mixed, yet they all have one thing in common. The opinions from populous considered him to be a reincarnation of a natural man, either John the Baptist, a recent peer of the Rabbi, or an older incarnation of a well-known prophet. All verdicts assigned Him to a mortal status.

(Matthew 16:15-16) – The query was turned inward and away from the populous and pointed directly at each student disciple. He asked pointedly, what they say when referring to His identity.

A single spokesperson responded. Peter answered with a double definitive statement: "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God." The word Christos (Christ) refers to a man anointed with oil, and more specifically, it refers to the Messiah, the "Anointed One."

This term applied to a natural man consecrated for a divine assignment. Priests and Levites were anointed for such assignments. The reference alone would still limit the Rabbi to being a natural man but with a great divine assignment.

The second part of Peter's response declares that "he is the son of the living God". This declaration sets the Rabbi apart from all other natural men anointed to do God's work. He is more than the natural man's son; He is the son of the living God; the creator specifically worshipped by the Jews.

As the son of God, His anointing is elevated above all Priests and Levites, or any others anointed for God's work. He is set apart to do work that cannot be performed by any natural man. He is anointed, consecrated to do only what God has the power fulfill.

(Matthew 16:17) – The Rabbi-Teacher first declares a blessing upon Peter, who at the time is known as Simon the son of Jonas (Barjona), a natural man. He reviews the student-disciple's answer and clarifies that the reply does not belong to Peter. The response did not originate from flesh and blood, meaning from a natural man. The ability to understand the identity of God in His son is not available to the natural senses. A direct encounter with God is required to know Him.

The Rabbi clarifies that God in Heaven revealed the identity of the Son of God (God actively present on Earth) to Peter. The revelation removed the veil, making it impossible for men to see His divine stature and nature.

We see the same principle applied in Apostle Paul's writing to the Church in Corinth, explaining the inability to discern God with the natural senses, eyes have not seen, and ears have not heard, the things God has prepared for those that love Him. (I Corinthians 2:9)

(Matthew 16:18) – The revelation personally impacts the student disciple. His name is transformed from "Simon/Shimon," which means "*to hear*," to Peter/Petros, which means "*a piece of rock*," infusing his name with reinforced foundation strength.

As Simon, he had the capacity to hear the voice of God, and Simon-Peter, the natural man, will be transformed by the voice he hears to establish a foundation for his life.

The revelation received by Simon Peter becomes foundation material to inaugurate the New Testament Church. The Son of God (God actively present on Earth) says, "I will build my Church upon this rock" (Petra).

The Greek word "*petra*" means a solid mass of rock. The building of large, massive coliseums and monuments in that era would have required large rock beds of solid stones as foundation material to erect such edifices.

The architects and builders intended for their structures to last forever and be witnessed by future generations. The foundation they built upon was the most crucial aspect of their construction. A faulty foundation guaranteed limited longevity.

Building the Church upon a solid mass of rock was an intentional reference to the longevity of Messiah's work on earth. The very existence of the Church in the present day is a testament to the longevity of God's work on earth.

The inauguration message ends with a prophetic message about the longevity of the Church. The Son of God (God actively present on Earth) declares that the gates of "hell" shall not prevail against the Church. Gates are generally used to control or limit access. Hell is a symbol of death/loss of life, and its gates (fences/boundaries) will not be able to limit or control the expanse or influence of the Church.

The expansion of the Church worldwide during the lifetime of the first Apostles is a testimony to the early Church's overwhelming influence.

(Matthew 16:19) – The Rabbi-Teacher's response to the revelation also included expanded authority that would be passed on to the student disciples. He gives His student disciples metaphoric keys to the kingdom. A key is a symbol of authority to oversee or give access. The student disciples are told that whatever they bind on earth will also be bound in heaven.

In that day the Rabbinic office had the legislative authority to create rules and regulations to protect and preserve the core 10 commandments given to Moses at Mt. Sinai. Over time 613 laws of the Torah have been accumulated and used to what is described as a fence to protect against offending or breaking the oracles of God. The Son of God (God actively present on Earth) gave the disciples a type of Rabbinic authority to protect Church doctrine. Because the disciples were under His governance their authority would be honored and certified in Heaven.

(Matthew 16:20) – The student disciples are charged to tell no others about the revelation that the Rabbi-Teacher is the Christos, the anointed Messiah. They are to withhold their revelation knowledge until after His resurrection. The resurrection would seal the truth about Him not being limited to the status of a natural man.

The student disciples were instructed to fully disclose His identity and work to all of Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth after the resurrection. (Acts 2:8)

The first message of Peter on the day of Pentecost is a litany of the life of the Messiah and closes with emphasis on His identity as the Christos, the anointed Messiah. (Acts 2:22-*36)

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