

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/The Church's Rock

"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 and 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)

Jesus shared 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 that He was referring to Himself as the ROCK when He warns His disciples: "Tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ." (Matthew 16:20 NKJV) And when He earlier taught: "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a ROCK." (Matthew 7:24 KJV)

This truth is clarified by the Apostle Paul on mentioning the Israelites exodus from Egypt: "They were drinking from a spiritual ROCK which followed them; and the ROCK was Christ." (1 Corinthians 10:4 NASB)

Some claim Peter is the Rock but Jesus' rebuke of Peter and Peter's description of Jesus proves otherwise: "'The LIVING STONE – rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to Him' ... scripture ... says: 'See I lay in Zion, a chosen and precious CORNERSTONE, and the one who trusts in Him will never be put to shame ... a STONE that causes men to stumble and a ROCK that makes them fall.' They stumble because they disobey **THE MESSAGE**.'" (1 Peter 2:4, 6, 8 NIV)

This MESSAGE, which Peter said "This shall never happen to you." and Jesus rebuked him and said "Get behind me Satan!" are **The Keys of Heaven**. Faith in **Jesus suffering/death, burial and resurrection** for the full payment of your sin and the full victory over sin and death will give you everlasting life. With your own free will, repent and turn from your sin and surrender your life to Jesus. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3:16, 17, 18 KJV)

The Gospel of Matthew records these **keys**:

"Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and **suffer** many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be **killed**, and **raised** the third day." (Matthew 16:21 NKJV)

The Apostle Paul used these **keys**:

"Brethren, I declare to you, **the gospel** which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you – unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that **Christ died** for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was **buried**, and that He **rose** again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas (Peter), then by the twelve ... by over five hundred brethren at once ... by James ... by all the apostles ... last of all ... by me." (1 Corinthians 15:1-8 NKJV)

The Apostle Peter used these **keys** with the Jews at Pentecost:

"Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene ... delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you **nailed to a cross** by the hands of godless men and put Him to **death**. And God **raised** Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power ... 'He was neither abandoned to hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay'. This Jesus God **raised** up again, to which we are all witnesses." (Acts 2:22-24, 31, 32 NASB)

The Apostle Peter used these **keys** with the Gentiles:

"Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him. The word which God sent ... And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they **slew** and hanged on a tree: Him God **raised** up the third day, and shewed Him openly ... He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins. (Acts 10:34-36, 39, 40, 42, 43 KJV)

The Apostle John shares why Jesus came: "He that comitteth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." (1 John 3:8 KJV)

The Book of Hebrews reveals why Jesus was victorious: "One who has become a priest ... on the basis of the power of an indestructible life (endless KJV)". (Hebrews 7:16 NASB) "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been **tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.**" (Hebrews 4:15 NASB)

The sinless Jesus could not be overcome by death and hades. The hell bound repentant sinner who believes in Jesus and the message of His suffering/death, burial and resurrection as payment for their sins will be victorious through Jesus.

Jesus rebukes and warns those who do not believe: "And He said unto them ... ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *He*, ye shall die in your sins ... When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am *He*, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things." (John 8:8:24, 28 KJV)

The Apostle Paul wrote about Jesus' sacrifice and victory: "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 ... God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe ... we preach **Christ Crucified** ... who has become for us wisdom from God – that is our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: 'Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.'" (1 Corinthians 1:18, 23, 30, 31 NIV)

"For since by man came death, by Man also came the **resurrection** of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be **made alive** ... The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 15:21, 22, 56, 57 KJV)

The Old Testament Patriarch, Abraham: "His faith was 'counted to him as righteousness.' ... It will be counted to us who believe in Him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification. Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 4:22, 24, 25; 5:1 ESV)

The Book of Acts records Peter using The Keys of Heaven.

To the Onlookers: "Men of Israel ... the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus. You handed Him over to be **Killed** ... You disowned the Holy and Righteous One ... You **Killed** the author of life, but God **Raised** Him from the dead ... You acted in ignorance ... But this is how God fulfilled what He had foretold through all the prophets, saying that His Christ would **Suffer**." (Acts 3:12-15, 17, 18 NIV)

To the Rulers and the Elders of the people: "It is by the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom you **Crucified** but whom God **Raised** from the dead ... He is 'the Stone you builders rejected, which has become the Capstone'. Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:10-12 NIV)

To the Sanhedrin: "An angel of the Lord ... 'Go stand in the temple courts ... and tell the people **The Full Message of This New Life**' ... 'We must obey God rather than men! The God of our fathers **Raised** Jesus from the dead – whom you had **Killed** by hanging Him on a tree. God exalted Him to His own right hand as Prince and Savior that He might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him' ... The apostles ... Day after day, in the temple

courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming **The Good News that Jesus is the Christ.**" (Acts 5:18-20, 27, 29-32, 41, 42 NIV)

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

The Apostle Paul's Statement of Faith.

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ Liveth in Me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I Live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for Me."
(Galatians 2:20 KJV)

"I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then **Christ died** for no purpose." (Galatians 2:21 ESV)

Jesus Is Now Seated At The Right Hand of God the Father. Jesus' Work of Redemption Has Been Accepted as Full Payment. His Resurrection Proves that He Was Sinless and That No Other Sacrifice is needed.

"For Christ has entered ... into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was it to offer Himself repeatedly ... for then He would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, **He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.** And just as it is appointed for man to die once and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him." (Hebrews 9:24-28 ESV)

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever. Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings ... Through Him then, 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)

Are You Ready To Enter Heaven?

Jesus said: "The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son ... But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' For many are called but few are chosen." (Matthew 22:2, 11-14 NKJV)

The Apostle John Saw A Vision of Heaven: "A great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes ... and crying out ... **'Salvation belongs to our God ... and to the Lamb (Jesus)!' ...** one of the elders answered ... 'Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?' And I said to him, 'Sir, you know.' So he said to me, 'These are the ones who ... washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.'" (Revelation 7:9, 10, 13, 14 NKJV)

John wrote: "Blessed are those who (do His commandments KJV, NKJV) wash their robes (ESV, NKJV) so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city gates. Outside are the ... immoral ... and everyone who loves and practices falsehood." (Revelation 22:14, 15 ESV)

The Psalmist Shares His Thanksgiving for God's Salvation.

"In my anguish I cried to the LORD, and He answered by setting me free ... It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man ... The LORD is my strength and my song, He has become my salvation ... The LORD has chastened me severely., but He has not given me over to death. Open for me the gates of righteousness; I will enter and give thanks to the LORD. This is the gate of the LORD through which the righteous may enter. I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation." (Psalm 118:5, 8, 14, 17-21 NIV)

Jesus said: "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life and few are those who find it. Beware of the false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing ..." (Matthew 7:13-15 NASB)

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6 NASB)

"I am ... the Beginning and the End ... **Drink without cost from the spring of the water of life.** He who overcomes ... I will be his God and he will be my son. But ... the unbelieving ... and all liars will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur." (Revelation 21:6-8 NIV)

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep ... by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved ..." (John 10:7, 9 KJV)

The Scriptures Express That: "To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against Him." (Daniel 9:9 KJV)

"God fulfilled what He had foretold ... His **Christ would suffer.** Repent ... turn to God, so 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)

Jesus said: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." (Matthew 10:28-30 KJV)

Jesus gave Peter and the disciples the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven for loosing repentant sinners from their sin debt, those who believe shall be loosed on earth and in heaven, those who do not will still be bound in their sin on earth and in heaven.

"Then said Jesus unto His disciples, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it ... For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according his works.'" (Matthew 16:24, 25, 27 KJV)

{Use the keys of heaven to enter put your faith in and give your life to Jesus.} Love and good deeds glorify God and will be rewarded; however, they do not earn salvation.