

## I Don't Go to Church, I Am the Church!

**Matthew 16:13-20** – When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, *“Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?”* <sup>14</sup> So they said, *“Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”* <sup>15</sup> He said to them, *“But who do you say that I am?”* <sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered and said, *“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”* <sup>17</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, *“Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.”* <sup>18</sup> *“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”* <sup>19</sup> *“And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and 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 commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.

- **Who is Jesus to you?**
- **He is the Christ** – the Messiah, the Anointed One and His anointing.
- **“revealed”** – disclose what before was unknown; an internal disclosure, to the thinking believer, and abiding.
- **“Peter”** – a small throwable stone.
- **“rock”** – an immovable ledge of rock.
- **“build”** – to erect; restore; establish.
- **“church”** – a chosen or called-out assembly.
- **Note:** the mention of **“the gates of Hades”** probably refers to Jesus, knowing He would go there for us, still assuring us that wouldn't stop the establishing of the church. [**Prevail** carries the idea of being stronger than.]

**Church** – a chosen or called out assembly.

### Called out from what?

- **II Corinthians 6:17, 18** – Therefore *“Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.”* <sup>18</sup> *“I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty.”* [To **“come out”** means to go forth from one's power, escape from it in safety.]
- **Philippians 3:8-11** – Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; <sup>10</sup> that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, <sup>11</sup> if, by any means, I may attain to the **resurrection from the dead.** [**vs. 11** **[AMP]** – That if possible I may attain to the [spiritual and moral] resurrection [that lifts me] out from among the dead [even while in the body].
- **Note:** we – the church – are called out from among those (spiritually) dead and from under the power (authority) of this world and its system.

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**Ephesians 1:22, 23 [AMP]** – And He has put all things under His feet and has appointed Him the universal and supreme Head of the church [a headship exercised throughout the church], <sup>23</sup> Which is His body, the fullness of Him Who fills all in all [for in that body lives the full measure of Him Who makes everything complete, and Who fills everything everywhere with Himself].

### **What does it mean to be the Body of Christ?**

- **KJV Bible Commentary** – The church is a living organism, not a dead organization. The union of Christ and His church is a real, mystical, perfect, and permanent union. The head directs the body's activities. The church is a living expression of Christ; it is the means by which He effects His plan and purpose; it is the agent through which He accomplishes His work.

## **INFLUENCE**

**Jeremiah 15:15-21 [NLT]** – Then I said, “LORD, you know I am suffering for your sake. Punish my persecutors! Don't let them kill me! Be merciful to me and give them what they deserve!” <sup>16</sup> Your words are what sustain me. They bring me great joy and are my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O LORD God Almighty. <sup>17</sup> I never joined the people in their merry feasts. I sat alone because your hand was on me. I burst with indignation at their sins. <sup>18</sup> Why then does my suffering continue? Why is my wound so incurable? Your help seems as uncertain as a seasonal brook. It is like a spring that has gone dry.”

<sup>19</sup> The LORD replied, “If you return to me, I will restore you so you can continue to serve me. If you speak words that are worthy, you will be my spokesman. **You are to influence them; do not let them influence you!**” <sup>20</sup> They will fight against you like an attacking army, but I will make you as secure as a fortified wall. They will not conquer you, for I will protect and deliver you. I, the LORD, have spoken! <sup>21</sup> Yes, I will certainly keep you safe from these wicked men. I will rescue you from their cruel hands.”

- **Jeremiah's complaint** – he was lonely and he was disappointed with his lot in life.
- **God's response** – you are to influence those around you, not let them influence you!

**Proverbs 4:23 [NLT]** – Above all else, guard your heart, for it affects everything you do. [**LB:** For they influence everything else in your life.]

- Everyone is an influencer!
- Our influence is based on what's in our heart.
- What's in your heart?

### **“I don't go to church, I am the church.”**

- If I merely GO to church, then I'm only the church while in this building.
- If I AM the church, then I'm “on duty” wherever I am!
- As the church we should have positive influence wherever we are.