

SEED & BREAD

FOR THE SOWER (SA. 55: 10) FOR THE EATER
BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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I WILL BUILD OF ME

The words that form the subject of this study were spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ when He came into Cesarea Phillipi with His twelve disciples, the ones whom He had positioned as Apostles (Luke 6: 13). He asked them, not one at a time, but the twelve together: **"Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?"** (Matt. 16: 13). Following this question we are told by Matthew: **"And they said."** There can be no doubt but that the pronoun "they" refers to the twelve. Are we to infer from this that they formed a voice-speaking choir and gave the answer in unison? Of course not! One of the twelve, we know not which one, became the spokesman and answered: **"Some say you are John the Baptist, some say you are Elijah, and others say you are Jeremiah, or one of the other prophets."**

All the twelve could assent to this reply, for all of them had heard such opinions expressed. However, it is plain that the Lord was simply preparing their minds for a more important question. He then said to them: **"But whom say ye that I am?"** ("Ye" is the plural of the pronoun "you," so this question is put to the twelve). Again someone must become the spokesman and give the answer. This time we know it was Peter who replied for the company saying: **"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"** (Matt. 16:16). This was a direct assertion of their faith in Him. It declared what they believed Him to be. However, the question we must now face is whether all the twelve assented to this declaration made by Peter? Did they concur in heart, in mind, and in soul? Did they reveal their agreement by the glad expressions upon their faces, by the nodding of their heads, or, maybe, by a fervently breathed "Amen"?

From the body of truth that can be produced from other portions of Scripture we can say with assurance that ten others among the twelve fully agreed with the declaration made by Peter, and anyone of them would have said the same thing had he been the spokesman that day. However, there was one, Judas Iscariot, who deep within himself did not agree. This was not his confession of faith. And in view of this the reply of the Lord is made in an especially guarded manner. He speaks directly to Peter, but each

man can include himself in or count himself out. He answers Peter by saying: **"Blessed are you, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven"** (Matt. 16: 17).

From these words we learn that the great truth that Peter declared as the mouthpiece for the apostles did not come to them from any human source, previous learning, aptitude, or personal ability. Neither did it arise out of race or nationality. It had come to them from the Father in heaven, even as John later would say: **"He that believeth that Jesus is the Christ is generated of God"** (1 John 5:1). Divine generation must be the power back of the comprehension and reception of such truth.

The word "blessed" here means to be fortunate in the highest degree. And if this is true of Peter, it was also true of the ten others standing there. His expression was also their confession, and they were not one whit behind Peter in this blessing. They can count themselves in. But, the Lord has more to say to them, and this also will be said by directing the message to Peter. This is done so as not to force it upon Judas. To Peter He says: **"And I say also unto you, that you are rock."**

This statement, translated as it is above, will come as a surprise to many and a shock to some. Nevertheless, it is true to the Greek and true to the truth. Some will reject it at once and others will close their eyes to it. However, let them answer these questions: Why would the Lord tell Peter that he was Peter? Why would He reply to Peter's glorious confession with a meaningless statement? And, what would Peter know from this that he did not know before? If anyone should say to me in the midst of a serious conversation, "You are Otis!" I would probably reply: "Thanks for a very useless bit of information. But why tell me something I have known since the age of two?"

The Greek word *petros* means rock, and that is the way it should be translated. This statement of the Lord will not seem strange at all to those who have learned how the word "rock" is used in the Old Testament. In all that God has said about Himself He probably uses the word rock more than any other to set forth His character. Consider the passages listed below:

*Deu. 32:4 **"He is the Rock, His work is perfect."**

*Deu. 32:15 **"Jeshurun waxed fat, he forsook the God that made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation."**

*Deu. 32: 18 **"Of the Rock that begat thee thou art mindful."**

*Deu. 32:31 **"For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges."**

*1 Sam. 2:2 **"There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside Thee: neither is there any rock like our God."**

*2 Sam. 22:2, 3 **"The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; the**

God of my rock; in Him will I trust."

*2 Sam. 22:32 **"For who is God, save our LORD, and who is a rock, save our God."**

*Psa. 18:46 **"The LORD liveth; and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted."**

*Psa. 40:2 **"He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock."**

*Psa. 61:2 **"Lead me to the rock that is higher than I."**

*Psa. 95:1 **"O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation."**

Many more passages could be cited, but these are sufficient to show that the word *rock* is used to present an exceedingly important aspect of the character of our great God. He is the Rock on whom alone we can build. Therefore, when the Lord said to His apostles, **"I say unto you that you are rock,"** He was telling these simple men that they had been given a measure of the character inherent in God, yes, even in Himself. Thus, they were made partakers of the divine nature, and that as "rock," they were a foundation upon which a superstructure would be erected. This fact is enlightened when we realize that *petros* is the Greek translation of the Chaldee word *cephas*, and that *cephas* means "bedrock."

Following this the Lord declared: **"And upon this the rock I will build of Me the ekklesia** (Matt. 16:18). This translation is in perfect harmony with the Greek: **"*Kai epi taute te petra oikodemeso mou ten ekklesian.*"** In the previous passage the word *petros* is masculine, but here it is feminine, being preceded by a feminine article, a fact that makes it impossible to say that the Lord was to build the ekklesia on Peter. The change to the feminine denotes that it was the company of apostles upon which the Lord is to build. It is at this point that this small body of men, who had been His ekklesia since they were positioned as apostles in Luke 6:13, are now declared to be a foundation on which He would erect the greater ekklesia. The word *mou* does not mean "my." The word "my" would be the Greek word *emos*. *Mou* is the genitive singular form of *ego*, and it means "of me."

I am sure that most of my readers know the story of the three little pigs, and their individual declarations that they would build their houses of brick, of wood, and of straw. It would be good if they also knew that the Lord declared He would build the ekklesia of Himself. He would take of His God-bestowed glories and give these to others so that they might become what He is in such measure as He determined. By so doing He would be building up His body (substance or essence) upon the earth, even as declared in Eph. 4: 12. This is why He constituted some apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers. If we consider each one of the eighteen gifts (offices, functions, and characteristics) listed by Paul in his epistles, we will see that

everyone of these were first inherent in Jesus Christ before He gave of Himself to others. In doing this He demonstrated: "**There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth**" (Prov. 11:24). Truly, "**Jesus Christ loved the ekklesia, and gave Himself for it.**" Eph. 5:25.

In 1 Corinthians, Paul, speaking to the ekklesia company in that place, declares of them that they are Christ's body, His very essence, and members of a part (a member is a partaker or participant). He then says that God had placed in the ecclesia, first, apostles, second, prophets, third, teachers, thereupon, works of power, then graces of healing, supports, pilots, species of languages (12:27, 28). All these positions, functions, abilities, and characteristics were inherent in Christ, and their manifestation in Corinth was the result of Jesus Christ giving to believing men something of His substance, even His body. Thus, in Corinth was seen the fulfillment of His words: "**I in them, and Thou in Me**" (John 17:24).

The Lord well knew that the powers of malignant forces would be hurled at those who had a position out of Him, that Satan would try to defeat His announced purpose to build of Himself the ekklesia. The ekklesia men became marked men so far as evil principalities and powers were concerned. They would stamp them out one by one. James was the first to go (Acts 12: 1,2). But it was the promise of the Lord that the gates (powers) of hades (the state of death) would not prevail against His ekklesia. Their real service was to be in the kingdom of God. When God assumes sovereignty He will speak their names and they will come forth to be living, working, serving ekklesia once again. They will already have been equipped and trained to take their places in that great ekklesia that shall be the cohesive element and the chief characteristic of the government of God.

Our Lord further promised that He would give to this band of ekklesia men the power and authority of the kingdom of heaven; that whatever they might bind on earth would be bound in heaven, and whatever they might loose on earth would be loosed in heaven. This power was not limited to Peter. It belongs to the twelve, and they will yet use it to its fullest extent (Matt. 19:27, 28).

The word *ekklesia* has nothing to do with anything on earth today. No man has an official position out of Christ. No company of men can claim rightfully to be the ekklesia of God. The religious monstrosity that travels under the name "church" today was not what Christ meant when He said: "**I will build of Me the ekklesia.**"

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