

Who Is THE ROCK OF THE CHURCH?

David Halbrook

In Matthew 16:16 Peter said to Jesus, *You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.* Jesus' agreed and said, *And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church* (Matthew 16:18). What, or who, is "this rock" upon which "My church" is built?

The Catholic Church follows the lead of a man they call "Holy Father" because they believe Jesus made Peter the rock of the church. (Read John 17:11 to identify the only Holy Father).

Are the saved built upon a man who rebuked and denied Jesus (Matthew 16:22; 26:74), sometimes was a hypocrite (Galatians 2:11-13), and died and is not risen (Jn. 21:19)? Peter later repented but lacked the traits necessary to be the rock of the church.

Are the saved built upon the fact that Jesus is the Christ—the King of centuries of prophecy? Are men saved because Jesus was God in the flesh, the One who died but lives (1 Timothy 3:16; Romans 8:34)? Yes! Peter confessed and Jesus confirmed this. These facts are the foundation of salvation and prove Jesus is the rock of the church.

-- *Editor's Note:* Are you staying busy trying to teach the lost, with the fair booth or SBS now past? Clipping and handing our articles in the *Arkansas Weekly* is one way that you can avoid *lagging in diligence* (Rom. 12:11).

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

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GOD EXPECTS MAN TO UNDERSTAND HIS WILL

Aude McKee

In Matthew's account of the Great Commission, Jesus said, *Go ye therefore and teach all nations.* Why would Jesus, the Son of God, tell his apostles to go and teach people if what they were going to teach could not be understood?

Did not Jesus, in the command, necessarily imply that the material to be taught was simple enough to be understood and that those to be taught were capable of understanding?

One of the answers to our present-day situation was given by Jesus a long time ago in Matt. 13:15: *For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.* Jesus placed the blame for not understanding squarely at the feet of those who heard the teaching. They closed their own eyes, stopped their own ears, and hardened their own hearts so that they did not understand!

Incidentally, had you thought about the fact that if a thing is understood by two individuals, they necessarily will understand it alike? If two people disagree on something, one or the other (or both) did not understand!

If one person understands baptism to be sprinkling, and another understands it to be pouring, then neither of the two really understands what the New Testament teaches. Even the Greek word for baptism means immersion.

In other words, it is impossible to understand baptism incorrectly. So if you and I disagree over something the Bible teaches, we both need to keep studying. When we both really understand, we will agree.

A UNIQUE COMMAND

Bobby Thompson (Speaking Truth In Love, p18-20)

“And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing.” (Exodus 36:6). This portion of Scripture refers to the matter of building the tabernacle. Construction of the tabernacle was being financed by the Lord’s people and they were bringing such an abundance that the wise men “that wrought all the work of the sanctuary” came to Moses telling him that they “bring much more than enough for the service of the work.” In view of this, Moses gave the command that neither man nor woman was to make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary.” “So the people were restrained from bringing.”

Unique means “being without a like or equal; single ink kind of excellence; unequalled matchless.” This is a unique command for, with a slight exception in 2 Corinthians 8:3-5, there is nothing like it in the Scriptures. It is unique in that people are restrained in their bringing to the Lord or his work. Most of the commands are to encourage bringing rather than to restrain it. Is it particularly excellent in that people had to be restrained from bringing. The common and less desirable trait is that they be constrained to bring. Another unique factor is that they would have superabundance at the end. So often abundance might exist in the beginning and then the zeal burns out, toward the end there is a lack.

What did the command restrain them from bringing? It was not what was left over and undesirable. Such would have not been unique (Mal. 1:7-9; 3:8). These people were not bringing the scraps to God. Exodus 35:5-9 reveals what they were bringing: An offering unto the Lord of a willing heart.

What prompted them to bring so superabundantly that they were restrained from bringing? It was a noble effort. The offering was to be used in a grand endeavor—that of constructing the tabernacle of God. The people recognized that this was to be used for the glory of God and their religious endeavors. There was no question concerning right or wrong. This was an endeavor approved of God and in keeping with his will. There was clear, concise teaching in preparation for these offerings to be brought. Moses spoke unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, “This is the thing which the Lord commanded.” The project was not undertaken in secret. All of the people were given an opportunity and an incentive to bring. Their heart was in the work. They wanted the tabernacle to be built. When people’s hearts are in something, the cause will prosper. Nehemiah and his workmen had a mind to work and the walls

of Jerusalem were built in fifty-two days. The offering was possible. They possessed what was needed and they made such available. When one does not have it, he can’t give it. You certainly can’t get blood out of a turnip! It’s just not there! “For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not” (2 Cor. 8:12). So many cry hard times when such usually doesn’t exist. It is hard for some to give up anything!

Lessons To Be Derived From This Unique Command

Example. If these wanderers in the desert could be so generous to give more than was needed, can’t we give enough to reach what is required or expected of us? There has never been a nobler effort than that of supporting the preaching of the gospel, the foremost work of the Lord’s church.

A Surplus is Not Desirable. Enough to complete the project was the objective. Too much was constituting a hindrance. Congregations that boast of how much they have in the treasury are not commendable. There is work to be done in spreading the gospel that could take care of such “fat treasuries.” Large sums in the treasury have a tendency to create complacency and that feeling of “at ease in Zion” which is a detriment to the Lord’s cause.

The Lord’s People Can Accomplish the Lord’s Work. It was a free will offering from the people of God. There was no solicitation from outsiders. There was no high-powered schemes of great pressure places on the people. They had been taught and they responded to the teaching.

Scriptural Work Creates an Incentive For People to Give. It was scriptural. No one can scripturally contribute to something that is not scriptural. An active congregation keeps a program constantly before the members that gives them an added incentive in giving.

Let us bring God the best and find our lives enriched by his blessings (2 Cor. 9:6-7). --*Editor’s Note:* Note that Israel was restrained from bringing free will offerings “for the offering of the sanctuary” (Ex. 36:6). In this specific work, no more need existed so no more giving was needed. In the churches of Christ today, are all needs met? Are saints in need in any place? Do evangelists have all the funds they need to go into all the world and to provide for their families? Have churches exhausted every effort to evangelize and equip? Unless the answer is “Yes,” Paul ordered “each one of you” to give consistent with your purpose [pre-determined decision; Dan. 1:8] and prosperity [when prosperity goes up or down, so ought our giving] (1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:7).

And MEN, we need you in the business meeting to help ensure that the church stays focused in using what is given. Do you have no such duty here? Come next month!