

Matthew 16:18 The Foundation Rock on Which Christ Built His Church

Introduction: Back in Matthew 7:24-25 Jesus pointed out that a wise man builds his house on a rock. It is only by doing so that his house can weather the storms. Jesus is wise. He built His church on a rock. In verse 17 Jesus addressed Peter and commended him. In verse 18 Jesus still addresses Peter but intends the lesson for all the disciples.

I. The meaning of the word, Peter.

- A. Peter was only a nickname: Simon was his name. Matthew 10:2
- B. The Greek word means a rock, a stone.
 - 1. It means a relatively small rock such as a pebble or a building stone.
 - 2. But it never meant a cliff rock, boulder rock or foundation rock.
- C. Jesus is the one who nicknamed Simon “Peter” and He is the one in our text who calls Simon a rock.
 - 1. Jesus meant this as a compliment pointing out his strength of character, spiritually.
 - 2. But He never called him the foundation rock.

II. The meaning of the word “rock”.

- A. In contrast to the word, “Peter”, Jesus used a second word which means rock. (“this rock”.)
- B. This word means a huge rock such as a cliff rock, boulder rock or foundation rock.
 - 1. It is a rock that is big enough to build a house on.
 - 2. You cannot build a house on a pebble or building stone.
 - 3. This is the word Jesus used in Matthew 7:24-25.
- C. Paul used this word in 1 Corinthians 10:1-4 to refer to Christ .
 - 1. Christ was not literally a rock, but spiritually.
 - 2. He was not spiritually a pebble or a spiritual building stone, but a huge boulder rock: a Foundation Rock.

III. Christ, the Foundation Rock on which the church was founded.

- A. Jesus used a play on the word “rock” to catch attention and emphasize what He was about to say. (To paraphrase: Simon you are a rock. You are a little rock, but you are a rock. And speaking of rocks, I am going to build my church on a Rock. Only it will not be a little rock. I am going to build my church on myself, a giant Foundation Rock.”)
- B. Our Roman Catholic friends say that Peter is the foundation of the church. (This I must deny.)
- C. I cite the following proof:
 - 1. The two Greek words have altogether different meanings. (Peter means a small stone and you cannot build a house on a small stone. The second word means a large foundation stone.)
 - 2. Peter had too many weaknesses to be the foundation of the New Testament church. (In verses 22-23 Jesus strongly rebuked Peter. Does that sound like the man on whom the church was founded? Later Peter denied Christ three times. Does that sound like the man on whom Christ founded His church?)
 - 3. Jesus Christ is later identified by Paul as the Boulder Rock, the Foundation. 1 Corinthians 10:4.
 - 4. Jesus promised that the gates of hell would not prevail against it. (If it were founded on any mere man, He could not make that promise.)
- D. Because it is founded on Christ it will stand. (Like the house in the parable, His church is built on a Rock and it will weather all storms.

IV. Some important observations about the church.

- A. The New Testament church is not some kind of social club; it was founded by Jesus Christ, it belongs to Him and it's purpose is to do the work He has assigned.
- B. The New Testament church is not some unimportant organization that a man can afford to ignore.
 - 1. He cannot afford to ignore the gospel message which she preaches.
 - 2. Once he is saved he should be a member.
 - 3. As a member he should support it with his presence, his prayers, his time, his energies, and his money.
 - 4. It is a lot more important than most of us Christians make it in our own lives.

Conclusion: Are you saved? Are you a member of one of His churches: Are you faithful to Christ and to His church?

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