

Meaningful Membership

What it Means to be the Church

The Church's Charter

Matthew 16:15-20; 18:18-20

¹⁵ He *said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."
¹⁷ And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

¹⁸ I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven." ²⁰ Then He warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ.

(Matthew 16:15-20)

The Church's Charter

1. Jesus' Promise

- "My church" – the end-time assembly of those who by faith belong to Jesus Messiah
- death will be unable to swallow up this new, messianic assembly

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2. Peter's (Apostles') Authority

- Peter is given "keys" for the building of this assembly of people (church)
- Peter admits or excludes people from God's rule (kingdom) based on right beliefs
- this is a declarative authority on earth that affirms heaven's judgment

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2. Peter's (Apostles') Authority

- *"To act as God's official representative on earth for affirming true gospel confessions and confessors"* (J. Leeman)

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3. The Local, Apostolic Church

➤ *Matthew 18:15-20*

- this authority of binding and loosing people is extended to the local assembly of disciples
- the local church has heaven's authority for declaring on earth who is a kingdom citizen

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➤ What is a Local Church?

"A group of Christians who regularly gather in Christ's name to officially affirm and oversee one another's membership in Christ Jesus and His kingdom through gospel preaching and gospel ordinances."

(J. Leeman)