

Basic Training Lesson 4.1
The New Testament New Birth Experience:
Look for the Keys

Matt 16:18-19

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

I. Introduction

A. Where We Stand Series

1. We are in our series called “Basic Training.”
2. The topics in this series are part of a Christian’s foundational understanding of what it means to be a Christian.
3. You could call this series, Christianity 101, Where We Stand, How Did it Begin? Or as we are calling it this year, Basic Training.
4. The topics we have studied and will study are: **[slide]**
 - a. Basic Training 1: The Importance of Truth
 - b. Basic Training 2: Love and Marriage were God’s Ideas (2 lessons)
 - c. Basic Training 3: Prayer & Prayer Warfare (4 Lessons)
 - d. Basic Training 4: New Testament New Birth and the New Life
 - e. Basic Training 5: The Bible
5. This series will establish and root a child of God in an understanding of scripture that will provide them an anchor for their faith and their walk with God.

6. This study of scripture called Basic Training, is seeking to avoid an approach of some to look at the scriptures as something like a Bible Buffet, where we pick only what we like and avoid the rest.
 7. The goal is to make a more complete study, getting a healthy portion of all the essentials spiritual “nutrients.”
- B. One message
1. Our study this morning will examine the original fires of revival from the first century that crossed geographic, racial, and cultural barriers.
 2. It was during that time, that the Lord added thousands of souls to His church within a very short period.
 3. When we look at those places where the gospel first expanded from, it is possible to see a common salvation message that the apostles preached.

4. That message is called the **Apostle's Doctrine** in Acts, and **the Doctrine of Christ** in Hebrews and **the Gospel** in 1 Corinthians.
5. But it is all one message—the message of salvation—the New Testament message of new birth.

II. Keys to the kingdom

1. To launch this new birth message into the world, Jesus saw in Peter a keen spiritual insight (he understood Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God), and gave him a special spiritual authority called the **keys of the kingdom**:

Matt 16:18-19

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in

heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

2. In the Book of Acts, we will see that Peter used those keys to loose in earth, or open three important doors of salvation: in **Jerusalem for the Jews**, in **Samaria for the Samaritans**, a biracial group who were a mix of Jews and Gentiles, and finally in **Caesarea for the Gentiles**.
3. Jesus' final command to the apostles gave a roadmap for Peter to follow to use these keys:
Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea [to the Jews], and in Samaria [to the Samaritans], and unto the uttermost part of the earth [to the Gentiles].
4. Jerusalem was the city where it all began. Judaea was the region, or Roman province

that Jerusalem was in, something like their state.

5. Next was Samaria. This was the adjacent province just north of Judaea, but represented a major movement across a significant ethnicity boundary.
6. After moving from Samaria, they took the message to Gentiles in the uttermost part of the earth in foreign provinces and continents.
7. As the apostles spread the gospel across their world, the Book of Acts records the history of their travels and how they used the Keys of the Kingdom to spread the message of New Testament salvation wherever they went.
8. That is why we look at the Book of Acts as our own inspiration for what we want to be and see in our church.

III. Key #1, Jerusalem

1. The Jews were the people God made a covenant with in the Old Testament, and they were also the focus of Jesus' earthly ministry.
2. We begin with a focus on something important that happened in Jerusalem on a special Jewish holiday, the Day of Pentecost.
 - A. The Day of Pentecost
 1. Jesus' last word to His apostles was to go to Jerusalem and wait for a promise from heaven. They found an upper room to wait and pray in.
 2. Simultaneously, crowds of thousands of people filled Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost, an important Jewish holiday.
 3. But there in that upper room, Jesus' disciples had gathered for one purpose—to obey Jesus' command to await the

promised¹ outpouring of power from on high.

Luke 24:49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued [clothed or filled] with power from on high.

B. The Holy Ghost promise

1. There were 120 Jesus followers gathered together in that upper room.

Acts 1:14-15

14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

2. Their intense prayer was interrupted as the Spirit filled all 120 of them. As the Spirit fell,

¹ John the Baptist had foretold in Luke 3:15-18, and Jeremiah in 31:31, and Ezekiel in 36:26.

the recipients began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Acts 2:1-4

1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance [the ability].

3. This was the starting point of Jesus' church. This Holy Ghost outpouring caused a rowdy, noisy stirring heard even in the neighborhood.
4. As result, a large crowd gathered outside to inquire. Someone in the crowd even called

them drunks because of how people were behaving inside.

5. So Peter, now full of the Holy Ghost, pulled out the keys of the kingdom and preached **the gospel message** to the gathering crowd.
6. With that first key, Peter loosed in earth, and opened the door of salvation to the Jews. He told the crowd that this outpouring of the Holy Ghost was foretold in Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28-29).
7. He reminded them of recent events regarding the life of Jesus Christ, including His crucifixion at their hands, and His resurrection from death as mentioned in the Book of Psalms.
8. Many in the crowd were very familiar with those recent events, they believed the gospel message, and were pierced to the heart (felt conviction) and wanted to know how to respond to the gospel message:

Acts 2:37-39

37 Now when they heard this, they were

*pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, **what shall we do?** [1st time question asked after 1st preaching of gospel in the 1st church]*

38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

9. Here in these verses is a very important truth. In fact, in verse 42 this message is called “**the Apostles’ Doctrine.**”
10. As Peter used his first key, you see the New Testament’s plan of salvation revealed in God’s brand new church.
11. That crowd had expressed belief in Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection as a sacrifice for their sin and then responded in faith.

12. By faith, they would, (1) repent of their sins, (2) be baptized in Jesus' name for the remission of sins, and (3) be filled with the Holy Ghost that was accompanied by the evidence of speaking in tongues.
13. Peter went on to say that the promise was not only for them and their children, but also for those afar off.
14. 3000 souls gladly received that message and obeyed the gospel plan of salvation that day.
*Acts 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about **three thousand souls**.*
15. Jerusalem would never be the same again. The world would never be the same again! Why? Peter, empowered by Jesus, had used the first key to open the door to the Jews to a new relationship with Jesus.

16. It was no longer just God with them, but now it was God in them by the power of the Holy Ghost.

IV. Key #2 Samaria

1. Next, we move to Samaria, where Peter used the 2nd key of the kingdom.
2. Historically, there was religious and ethnic conflict between the Jews and Samaritans, and between Jerusalem and Samaria.
3. For the Jews, the division goes back to 2 Kings 17 when the Assyrian conquered Israel, brought foreigners into the land and intermarried with the Israelites. These were the group identified as Samaritans.
4. Jews of the south despised the Samaritans of the north as they saw them as culturally different and refused to speak with them.
5. Jesus had reached out to the Samaritans when He met the woman at the well in John 4. That was very uncharacteristic for a Jewish man. But Jesus was more than just a

Jewish Man. He was God in flesh paving the way for all to hear the gospel message.

- A. Persecution of the Jerusalem Church
 - 1. That open door paved the way for the next use of the keys of the kingdom,. The church in Jerusalem had experienced explosive growth but seemed comfortable just keeping the gospel in Jerusalem.
 - 2. However, in time, great persecution hit the church in Jerusalem (led by Saul of Tarsus) and many fled Jerusalem and took the gospel message with them to neighboring regions of Judea and Samaria.
 - 3. God used the persecution of His church to fulfil His promise of expanding it.
- B. Philip and Peter in Samaria
 - 1. Philip (later called “the evangelist” Acts 21:8), fled Jerusalem because of the persecution, and traveled north to Samaria. There he began to preach Christ.

2. As he preached to the crowds, the people responded joyously to the Word.

Acts 8:5-8

5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.

6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.

8 And there was great joy in that city.

3. Just as it happened in Jerusalem, preaching Christ led to a demonstration of God's power.
4. Fulfilling the great commission that Jesus gave to the disciples, Philip baptized the Samaritans.
5. Acts 8:16 reveals that Philip baptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus.

*Acts 8:16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were **baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.**)*

6. Philip repeated in Samaria what had been done in Jerusalem. He preached the same Apostles Doctrine of Acts 2:38, and Samaritans believed the gospel message and they were baptized.
7. You see, obeying the gospel is more than believing it—it is obeying too.
8. And more importantly, although the Samaritans were now baptized believers, they had still not yet received the Holy Ghost. Like me in 1976.
9. But that is when the man with keys showed up:

Acts 8:14-17

14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:

15 Who, when they were come down,

prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:

16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) [it was important to duplicate Acts 2]

17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

10. The message of salvation included both baptism in Jesus' name and receiving the Holy Ghost—it was the same message for Jews and Samaritans.
- v. Key #3, Gentiles
 1. And now finally, it was time for the Gentiles to benefit from the keys of the kingdom. In the biblical picture, we are included in this group.
 2. Although the first great revival was exclusively for Jews, and the second was for the Samaritans, God's ultimate plan was for

the gospel to be preached unto the world of the Gentiles as well.

A. Caesarea

1. As we just saw with Samaria, it was persecution that had taken the Apostles' Doctrine 40 miles north. The same persecution also brought the gospel 65 miles north to Caesarea Maritima, which was the Roman capital of Judea and had a major military base.
2. As a Roman capital, the city had many beautiful public buildings, an amphitheater, roads, an aqueduct, and a large man-made harbor².

B. Peter

1. And once again, God specifically called Peter, the man with the keys, to this Roman city to open the door of salvation to the Gentiles.

² The Archaeology Study Bible, p. 1615.

2. This was an unlikely thing. They had already seen the unlikely thing of Jews bringing the gospel to the Samaritans, people they wouldn't even speak to.
3. And Jews didn't have any dealings with Gentiles either. So, in this case, God started working behind the scenes to make this happen.
4. A Gentile man, the Roman military man, a centurion named Cornelius, had a vision telling him to call for Peter. So he sent servants to bring Peter.
5. Separately, Peter had a vision convincing him to go with the Gentiles. So obeying the voice of God, Peter left with the men and preached the same gospel message of Jesus to Cornelius' whole household.
6. Then it happened:
Acts 10:44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

7. The entire household of Cornelius received the precious gift of the Holy Ghost!
8. It is important to note a few things.
9. First, we will see the similarity between the salvation experience for the Jews and Gentiles. Both groups spoke with tongues when they received the Holy Ghost:

Acts 10:45-46

45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. ...

10. Speaking in tongues was the common sign that demonstrated to all that the new believers had received the Holy Ghost.
11. Another thing to note is that although they were believers and they were filled with the Spirit, there was still part of the Apostles

Doctrine they had not obeyed yet. They had not been baptized.

12. So the same Apostles' Doctrine that was preached to the Jews in Acts 2, and the Samaritans in Acts 8, was now preached and obeyed among the Gentiles in Acts 10:
Acts 10:47-48

47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.

vi. The New Birth message

1. It is important to note that the early church had a consistent message of a common salvation that was preached in the early days of the church.
2. The Apostle's Doctrine message is also called the "Gospel" in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. There it is described as the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

3. Once we know what Jesus did to save us from our sins, how He died, He was buried, and He rose again, we express our belief and faith in that truth by obeying the gospel. What do I mean?
4. **Faith leads us to repent.** That is where we turn from or **die** to our sin. We choose to forsake our sin and ask Jesus for forgiveness.
5. **Faith also leads us to be baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. This is where we are **buried** with Jesus.
6. **Then by faith, we receive the Holy Ghost.** Like the resurrection of Jesus, when we are **raised** to walk in a new life by the Spirit in us.
7. That will be our subject Wednesday night—the New Life.
8. Do you want to experience the New Testament new birth experience? It is still available today.