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"The Churches of God Outreach Ministries provides leadership, information, and biblical teaching in spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Matthew 28:19-20"

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Mini Study

THE KEY OF DAVID

"And the key of the house of David will I lay upon His shoulder; so He shall open, and none shall shut; and He shall shut, and none shall open" (Isaiah 22:22).

"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia, write: These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth" (Revelation 3:7).

Towards the end of the first Christian century, the quoted words were addressed by Jesus to His church in the town of Philadelphia in Asia Minor - present-day Turkey. As with all He says to that church, the message is applicable to all Christians, and indeed all government, of all time and in every place. What is the "key of David?" What role does it have in both church and state?

- The "Key of David" refers to a passage in Isaiah *ch 22 v.22*. Eliakim was prophesied to become the Chief Steward of the royal household - in fact, the "Prime Minister" of the House of Judah - an office disgraced by the previous holder of the Office, Shebna. As "Keyholder" he wields full governing authority, appointing others to subordinate office, responsible, as a "father," for the welfare of the entire nation and for the wise and fair use of the national treasures. Shebna had misused the Office of Prime Minister for self-aggrandisement, dipping into the national Treasury for his personal use, besmirching this high office and undermining state security. He has clear parallels in twenty-first century government - secular and religious. [The insignia of the Key is said to have been embroidered on the shoulder of the occupant's official State robe.]
- We view "change at the top" of government as the outcome of a coup or democratic choice or natural succession. But in reality it is the Eternal God who "pulls the strings" deposing and installing leadership at His will and for His benign purpose. "...*You control human events-- You give rulers their power and take it away...*" (Daniel 2:21 CEV).
- Jesus - the "*Lion of the Tribe of Judah*" Revelation 5:5 - carries the Key of David. He is the direct descendant of David (Hebrews 7:14). Jesus is "...*the Root and Offspring of David*" (Revelation 2:16), existing "*from everlasting to everlasting*" (Psalm 90:2). He wields "*all authority in heaven and on earth*" (Matthew 28:18). Isaiah wrote of the predicted Messiah: "*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace; Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever...*" (Isaiah 9:6-7).

THE KEY OF DAVID

- The Emperor Nebuchadnezzar experienced this divine authority over mankind. He records for us: *“I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me. How great [are] His signs! And how mighty [are] His wonders! His kingdom [is] an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion [is] from generation to generation”* (Daniel 4: 2-3). Daniel tells us: *“...And He changeth the times and the seasons: He removeth kings, and setteth up kings...”* (Daniel 2:21). Jesus told the apostles: *“...It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power”* (Acts 1:7). Jesus executes the Father’s will.
- John wrote of the time following the return of Messiah as *“...King of kings and Lord of lords”* (I Timothy 6:15) - with political and religious authority: *“...the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord [ie the Father], and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever”* (Revelation 11:15). We rest assured that whatever befalls our world, Jesus is always in control. His authority is not confined only to the church.
- The church of God, however, is also in the safe hands of Jesus the Christ. He wields the authority symbolized by *“the key of David”* in the governance of the church. *He* is in sole charge. He is *“...the Apostle and High Priest of our confession...”* (Hebrews 3:1). He *“walks in the midst”* of the church of God, guides it, encourages it in accord with His perfect wisdom. His decisions are irrevocable: *“...He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth”* (Revelation 3:7). And Jesus corrects us individually: *“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten...”* (Revelation 3:19).
- It is Jesus who determines when and where His message is presented, effectively locking or unlocking a “door of opportunity” for preaching the Word (Colossians 4:3) as in Bithynia (Acts 16:7), at Troas (II Corinthians 2:12), but not always without opposition, as at Ephesus (I Corinthians 16:9). Luke records: *“And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them”* (Acts 16:9-10). He is the sovereign Lord. It should not therefore surprise us should our traditional outreach methods be blocked; or when new media doors are “unlocked,” for example, the Internet, or when a new field of mission presents itself. Jesus holds the Key. It is for the church ever to be sensitive to his lead.

(All Scripture references are KJV unless otherwise noted.)

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