

Turn Your World Upside Down!

“These who have turned the world upside down have come here too” (Acts 17:6 NKJV).

“These men who have upset the world have come here also” (Acts 17:6 NASB).

“These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here” (Acts 17:6 NIV).

#387 *anastatoo*; to stir up, unsettle, excite

What made Paul and Silas so different from others that they were accused of turning the world upside down? Three things:

1. They understood and used **the keys** that were given to Peter (Matt.16:19).
2. They lived continually filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph.5:15-20).
3. They knew God’s voice and were led by the Holy Spirit (Acts 16:6-10).

The story of Saul’s Conversion

How many of you enjoy reading historical novels? Or an adventure story where the good guys win? The Bible records many such stories, but these are not fiction. They are real life stories. They are historical records of how God worked in and through the lives of ordinary people. Ordinary people who entered the kingdom of God, were continually filled with the Holy Spirit, and were led by the Spirit became extraordinary people. They turned the world upside down. Tonight we will look at Saul, later called Paul, to see if we can discover what made him so extraordinary – a man used by God! It all starts with how he entered the kingdom. Let’s turn to Acts chapter 9:1-19. How did Paul enter the kingdom of God?

1. He had an encounter with the Jesus Christ that left him humbled before God
2. Hands were laid on him; he was healed and filled with the Holy Spirit
3. He was water baptized

Peter was given the Keys of the Kingdom

Let’s turn to Matthew 16:13-20. Here we have the record of Jesus giving the **keys of the kingdom** to Peter. What are keys used for? To lock and unlock doors. Peter was entrusted with the privilege and responsibility of opening and closing the way into the kingdom of God.

In the book of Acts Luke recorded Peter using the keys – first with the Jews in Acts 2:14-42, then the Samaritans in Acts 8:4-24, and finally the Gentiles in Acts 10:1-48. These three were the recognized people groups – Jews; Samaritans who were a mixture of Jew and Gentile, and Gentiles. Later we have the record of Paul using the keys in Acts 19:1-10. As we look at these Scriptures we will discover what the keys of the kingdom are and how to use them.

A People Slow to Learn the Ways of God

Before we look at the historical record of how the keys were used, let's first turn to Hebrews 5:11-6:3. These Jewish Christians had been disciples for about twenty five years. By that time they should have become mature followers of Jesus Christ. They were tempted to turn back from following Jesus because they were being persecuted. This portion of Scripture is a rebuke from God through the writer to the Hebrews, therefore we may find ourselves reluctant to apply these truths to our own lives. Let's pick up the story in Hebrews 5:11-14.

"Concerning him [Melchizedek] we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the **elementary principles** [the ABC's] of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil."

These people were dull of hearing. They were slow to grasp spiritual truth. They had not made it a habit of meditating in the Scriptures. After twenty five years, they were still spiritual babies. They did not understand the ABC's of our life in Christ Jesus and therefore could not teach others these foundational truths. So let's look at these truths in Hebrews 6:1-3.

Understanding the Keys of the Kingdom

"Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a **foundation** of repentance from dead works and faith toward God, of instructions about baptisms and laying on of hands, and resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits."

Here we have the ABC's, the foundational truths concerning our life in Christ Jesus. They are given in three couplets; three pairs:

1. **Repentance & Faith**
2. **Baptism & the Laying on of Hands**
3. **Resurrection & Judgment**

When we return to the book of Acts, we will discover the first four foundational teachings are the keys that Peter used to open the door into the kingdom of God. The final two have application to both our present walk with God and what takes place at the end of this age. In these notes I will give a brief explanation of each of the four keys. I encourage you to purchase a copy of my book, [The Transforming Power of the Keys of the Kingdom](#). There you will find a more detailed and complete explanation of both the teaching and practice of using the keys of the kingdom.

1. **Repentance:** to turn around and change direction; to see things from God's perspective, to change one's mind, and agree with His conviction regarding our sins. Our mind is exposed to truth, revelation is received, and finally a change of thinking takes place. Our heart is convicted and we accept both our accountability to God and responsibility for our sins. We chose to forsake our sinful behavior.
2. **Faith:** to trust in and rely on Jesus Christ's finished work on the cross takes faith. Where does the faith come from? "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God; not by works so that no one can boast" (Eph.2:8-9). In other words, it is the work of the Holy Spirit that leads us to repentance and imparts a measure of faith to each of us. See Ro.12:3. We grow in our faith as we meditate in the word of God and respond to the voice of God. Ro.10:17.
3. **Water Baptism:** notice that it says "instruction about baptisms." This is for three reasons: to explain baptism is not an Old Testament cleansing ritual performed in obedience to the Law (Ro.7:4), to clarify that John's baptism is no longer valid (Acts 19:4-5); and to prepare the candidate to enter by faith into the powerful work the Holy Spirit does in water baptism - He engrafts us into union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Ro.6:3-5). From the Day of Pentecost onward, water baptism was administered to every person as they entered the Kingdom of God.
4. **Laying on of Hands:** As part of the conversion process, the gift of the Holy Spirit was imparted through the laying on of hands (Acts 8:14-17; 9:17; 19:6). At the time of the baptism with the Holy Spirit, it was normal for there to be manifestations such as speaking in tongues and prophesying (Acts 2:4; 8:18; 10:44-48; 19:6). In addition, Jesus often laid His hands on those He was healing (Mk.5:3; Lk.4:40). The laying of hands was a means of setting apart disciples for specific ministries (Acts 6:6; 13:3), and spiritual gifts were imparted through the laying on of hands (1 Tim.4:12).

The process of entering the kingdom of God using the four keys is the biblical pattern for how a repentant sinner enters through the narrow gate that leads to life and there are few that find it! Contrast this with using the "sinner's prayer" where the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction and there are many who enter through it (Matt.7:13-14). The use of the four keys establishes a solid foundation on the Rock who is Christ Jesus (Lk.6:46-49).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. When someone enters the kingdom of God, is it important to lay a solid foundation on the Rock who is Christ Jesus? If so, how is this accomplished?
2. Now that you understand the first four elementary teachings, the ABC's of our life in Christ Jesus, how would you explain these truths to an unconverted person?

The Use of the Keys Recorded in Acts

Peter's first use of the keys of the kingdom was on the Day of Pentecost. After about 120 disciples were baptized with the Holy Spirit, Peter proclaimed to the Jews gathered for the Feast that God had made Jesus both Lord and Christ, i.e. Messiah (Acts 2:14-36). When the Jews heard they had crucified the promised Messiah, they came under conviction and cried out, "What shall we do?" Peter declared, "**Repent** and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins; and you **shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**" They **received his word**, were **baptized**, and about three thousand were added to the Church.

Next we have the account of Philip proclaiming Christ in Samaria. The Samaritans heard and saw many attesting miracles – people were delivered from unclean spirits and many were healed. As Philip preached the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, many **believed** and were **baptized**. Since Peter was the one entrusted with the keys of the kingdom, the Holy Spirit did not fall on any of the new converts until Peter and John were sent from Jerusalem to lay hands on those who believed and were baptized. As they began laying hands on these who were a mixture of Jew and Gentile, they **received the Holy Spirit**.

In Acts 9:1-19 Saul, on his way to Damascus, encountered a bright light from heaven. He fell to the ground and heard the voice of the Lord, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" He called out, "Who are You, Lord?" He answered, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you **what you must do.**" He was struck blind for three days. Ananias, who was sent to him, entered the house, and after **laying his hands** on him said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road . . . sent me so that you may regain your sight and be **filled with the Holy Spirit**" . . . and he got up and was **baptized**.

In Acts 10:1-48 we have the account of the conversion of Cornelius, a **God-fearing** man, and his relatives and close friends. To make a long story short, as Peter proclaimed who Jesus Christ was, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. The Jews who had come with Peter were amazed because the **gift of the Holy Spirit** had been poured out on the Gentiles also, for they heard them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, "Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?" And he ordered them to be **baptized**.

The Acts 19:1-10 we have the record of the apostle Paul using the keys of the kingdom. He **re-baptized** those who had **believed** and **laid hands on them to receive the Holy Spirit**.

DISCUSSION QUESTION:

1. What should someone do who considers themselves to be a follower of Jesus Christ, yet they did not enter the kingdom through repentance, faith, water baptism and receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit? Please read the "Personal Application" section at the end of The Transforming Power of the Keys of the Kingdom.

