

What Does the Bible Say About the Office of the Keys and Confession?

1. What is the Office of the Keys?

THE BIBLE SAYS-

- (a) *Mark 16:15.* And He said to them, Go into all the world and **preach the gospel** to every creature.
- (a b) *Matthew 28:18-20.* And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **teaching** them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.
- (c) *John 20:22,23.* And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit. **If you forgive the sins of any**, they are forgiven them; **if you retain the sins of any**, they are retained.

FROM THIS WE LEARN-

The Office of the Keys is the power, or authority,

- (A) To preach the Gospel;
- (B) To administer the Sacraments;
- (C) To forgive and retain sins.

2. Why is this power called the Office of the Keys?

THE BIBLE SAYS-

Matthew 16:19. I will give you **the keys of the kingdom of heaven.**

FROM THIS WE LEARN-

It is called the Office of the Keys because it opens heaven by forgiving sins, or closes heaven by retaining sins.

3. Whose sins are to be forgiven, and whose sins are to be retained?

THE BIBLE SAYS-

Acts 3:19. **Repent** therefore and **be converted**, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.

Psalms 51:17. The sacrifices of God are a **broken spirit**, a broken and a **contrite heart**-- these, O God, You will not despise.

Acts 16:31. **Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ**, and you will be saved, you and your household.

FROM THIS WE LEARN-

The sins of penitent sinners, that is, of sinners who feel sorry for their sins and believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior, are to be forgiven, and the sins of impenitent sinners are to be retained.

4. To whom has Christ given this power?

THE BIBLE SAYS-

Matthew 16:19. Whatever **you** bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever **you** loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. (To Peter as the spokesman of all disciples.)

John 20:22,23. (Christ) breathed on them, and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit. **If you** forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; **if you** retain the sins of any, they are retained. (All disciples.)

1 Peter 2:9. But **you** are a ... **royal priesthood**...that **you** may proclaim the praises of Him who

called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. (All Christians.)

Matthew 18:17,18,20. And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to **the church**. But if he refuses even to hear **the church**, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. Assuredly, **I say to you**, whatever **you bind on earth** will be bound in heaven, and whatever **you loose on earth** will be loosed in heaven....For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them. (Groups of Christians.)

FROM THIS WE LEARN-

Christ has given this power to His Church on earth.

5. How does a group of Christians publicly administer the Office of the Keys?

THE BIBLE SAYS-

1 Corinthians 4:1. Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and **stewards of the mysteries of God**.

Acts 20:28. Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which **the Holy Spirit has made you overseers**.

2 Corinthians 2:10. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, **I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ**.

1 Corinthians 14:34,35. Let your **women keep silent** in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; .. for it is shameful for women to speak in church.

1 Tim. 2:12-14,3:1,2. And I do **not permit a woman to teach** or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression... This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach.

FROM THIS WE LEARN-

According to God's will a group of Christians chooses and calls men as ministers, who in the name of the group and in the name of Christ publicly perform the functions of the Office of the Keys. There are also other offices in the public ministry, such as professors, Christian day school teachers, and Sunday school teachers. In those cases where individuals are involved in teaching children a woman can be called to hold such an office.

6. What do the Scriptures teach of Church discipline and excommunication?

THE BIBLE SAYS-

*(a b) **Matthew 18:15-17.** Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and **tell him his fault between you and him alone**. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he **will not hear**, **take with you one or two more**, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' And if he **refuses to hear them**, **tell it to the church**. But if he **refuses even to hear the church**, **let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector**.

(b) **1 Corinthians 5:13.** **Put away from yourselves** the evil person.

(c) **Matthew 18:18.** Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be **bound in heaven**.

(d) **2 Corinthians 2:6-8,10.** This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man, so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to **forgive and comfort him**, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow. Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him. ...Now whom you forgive anything, I also forgive. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ.

(d) **James 5:19-20.** Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that **he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins**.

FROM THIS WE LEARN-

- (A) The sinner must be admonished privately; then, if this proves unsuccessful, by two or three fellow members; and finally, if he is still impenitent, by the congregation. (Church discipline.)
- (B) If he neglects to hear the congregation, either by refusing to appear or by otherwise remaining impenitent, he must be put out of the congregation, and the pastor must carry out the resolution of the congregation by excluding him from all the rights and privileges of a Christian, except from the right to hear the Word of God. (Excommunication.)
- (C) Such action of the congregation and pastor is as valid and certain, in heaven also, as if Christ, our Lord, acted and dealt with that person Himself.
- (D) Should the excommunicated person later confess his sin and ask for forgiveness, the congregation should through the pastor forgive his sin and receive him again as a brother.
(To make the sinner see the greatness of his sin and to bring him to repentance is the very purpose of excommunication.)

7. What do the Scriptures teach of Confession?

THE BIBLE SAYS-

- (a e) **2 Samuel 12:13.** So David said to Nathan, **I have sinned against the LORD.** And Nathan said to David, **The LORD also has put away your sin.**
- (b) **Luke 11:4.** And forgive us our sins.
- (b) **Psalms 19:12.** Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from **secret faults.**
- (c) **James 5:16.** Confess your trespasses **to one another.**
- (c) **Matthew 5:23,24.** Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that **your brother has something against you**, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. **First be reconciled to your brother**, and **then come** and offer your gift.
- (d) **Matthew 3:5,6.** Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptized by him in the Jordan, **confessing their sins.**
- * (e) **Matthew 9:2.** Son, be of good cheer; **your sins are forgiven you.**

FROM THIS WE LEARN-

- (A) Confession consists of two parts, namely the confession, or acknowledgment, of sin, and the absolution, or forgiveness, pronounced upon him that confesses.
- (B) We should daily confess all our sins, known and unknown, unto God. The absolution is pronounced in the general Gospel promise.
- (C) We should confess to our neighbor the sin with which we have offended him. The absolution is spoken by the neighbor when he forgives us.
- (D) We should confess our sins with the congregation in the General Confession in which we plead guilty before God of all sins and ask Him for complete forgiveness. The absolution is spoken by the pastor and is God's own absolution. (This confession is usually made at the beginning of the worship service.)
- (E) We MAY confess any particularly burdensome sin in private confession before the pastor, and receive the comfort of the individual absolution spoken over us by him.
(The pastor is under solemn obligation not to reveal anything confided to him in private confession.)

Before the Next Lesson

FILL OUT Work Sheet No. 20.

MEMORIZE the Bible passages marked with an asterisk (*).



READ Romans chapters 12-16; Ephesians, chapters 1 and 2.

Work Sheet No. 20

1.

(Supply the missing words.)

- (A) locks the door of heaven against us.
- (B) unlocks the door of heaven and lets us in.

2.

(Check whether true or false.)

- (A) Only God can forgive sins. True. False.
- (B) A Christian congregation can forgive sins. True. False.
- (C) The minister of a Christian congregation can forgive sins. True. False.

3.

(Supply the missing words.)

The sins of sinners are to be forgiven; the sins of sinners are to be retained.

4.

(Check whether true or false.)

- (A) The office of the ministry is a divine institution. True. False.
- (B) Women are barred from the public preaching ministry. True. False.

5.

Christ prescribes four steps, or grades, of admonition in dealing with an offending brother. They are:

- (A)
- (B)
- (C)
- (D)

6.

Mention two points of difference between the auricular confession of the Roman Catholic Church and the private confession of the Lutheran Church.

- (A)
.....
- (B)
.....