

Keys of the Kingdom: The Key of Suffering

Part 1

Introduction:

Keys. Ordinary objects. You probably have several on a key ring in your purse or pocket. We don't think about them very much, we just use them – to get into our car, into our home. Keys unlock things.

God has been speaking to Aglow about keys for some time now.

- In 2003, Chuck Pierce said God was giving keys into our hands. The following year, Chuck encouraged us to “Go through the door in 2004.”
- In 2004, we heard a message from Dutch Sheets at the U.S. Aglow Conference related to Isaiah 22:22.

At the end of his message, Dutch took a large key and began to pace back and forth across the platform, declaring: *Take the key! Take the key! Take the key! I release the Isaiah 22:22 anointing of government [to you, Aglow]! You'll take the key [of kingdom authority] and open doors that cannot be closed and close doors that no one can open!*

In an act of prophetic significance, he handed the key to Jane and she received it for the ministry, proclaiming: *This is the key of heaven. It is to unlock revelation and truth and courage and strength and power and passion for this hour! We say to you, Aglow, It is a new hour, it is a new day!*

It was a powerful moment when everyone felt the shift into the new place that occurred during those moments.

- In 2005, President Jane Hansen Hoyt spoke to us about one of the keys of the kingdom in her keynote address at the Aglow Worldwide Conference. We'll come back to that.

Our Study

Keys In Scripture

The Bible has much to say about keys. They are often used symbolically to represent authority or power. The one who holds the keys has the power to open and to shut, to allow access or deny access. When you purchase a new home, once the paperwork has been finalized, you are given the keys. You are now the only one who has the authority to unlock the door to your home. You have free access and can come and go as you please. You also determine who gets access and who doesn't.

When a Jewish man in biblical times had succeeded in becoming a “doctor of the law,” he was given a key. It was not just any key, but the key to the closet in the temple where the sacred books were kept. The act signified he was being given authority to teach and explain the Scriptures – to unlock, or open, the Scriptures to the people. It was into this background Jesus spoke when He accused the scribes and

Pharisees of taking away the “key of knowledge” from those who were trying to enter the kingdom (Luke 11:52, Matt 23:13).

He Who Opens and Shuts

The Scripture: Isaiah 22:22

The key of the house of David I will lay on his shoulder; So he shall open, and no one shall shut; And he shall shut, and no one shall open.

The context of this verse:

King Hezekiah is promoting one of his officers, Eliakim, to a high office of significant trust and influence, as indicated by giving him the “key of the house of David.” When Eliakim was given that key, it was a sign that he had been entrusted with the chief authority of the government, not unlike the role of prime minister today. He was given the authority to act in the king’s name.

The Scripture: Revelation 3:7

*"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write,
"These things says He who is holy, He who is true,
"He who has the key of David,
He who opens and no one shuts,
and shuts and no one opens."*

By referencing the key of David, Jesus is describing His power in the kingdom of heaven and His authority to administrate the affairs of His kingdom. His authority is complete and absolute.

The Scripture: Ephesians 1:22-23

God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. 23 And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself. NLT

We have been given delegated authority by our King:

The Scripture: Luke 10:19

*Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions,
and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.*

We are to administrate His kingdom here on earth until He returns. In the language of the book of Daniel, we are to “possess” – or hold on or occupy – the kingdom until He comes again (Daniel 7:18, 22). In the process of possessing, we will experience both victories and temporary defeats. However, we are assured of the final outcome because “*a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High.*” That judgment was the completed work of the Cross!

King of the Nations

Although Christ is King of the nations, we often relate to Him more as Savior, Redeemer, Friend, the Lamb of God, even the Risen Lord. And He is all those things. In this season, I sense Him saying:

I am revealing myself as King of the nations in this hour, for truly I do reign over the affairs of men and kingdoms in the earth. I hold every kingdom in my hand.

And I would have you see yourselves, not only as proclaimers and witnesses of my Gospel, but as my REGENTS on the earth. For you will come up to me and receive revelation of my kingdom and bring it down to earth. You will bring my purposes to bear on the lives of men in the earth. You will bring my kingdom to bear on the kingdoms of this world. For you are my regents and you go in the authority of my Kingdom.

I thought “regents” seemed an unusual word to use. In the U.S., that word is not as familiar it would be in Europe, where “regents” speak of monarchies and such. However, a trip to the dictionary gave me insight into what the Lord was wanting us to see.

“Regent” means: *A person appointed to rule while a king is absent; acting in the place of a king or ruler.*

The Lord wants us to grasp the authority He has given us. A regent acts with the authority of the king. Our King is, in a sense, “absent” from the earth, and He wants us to rule in His place until He returns. *Occupy till I come* (Luke 19:13). We don’t do this in our own strength. He has given us the Holy Spirit, both to reveal His will and to enable us to fulfill it. Therefore, we approach every situation with the mentality of the kingdom. We carry the government of Christ into each situation. We go in the “demonstration of the Spirit and of power” (1 Corinthians 2:1-5).

We have been given the **key of spiritual authority**.

Keys of the Kingdom

The Scripture: Matthew 16:13-19 The Message

When Jesus arrived in the villages of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "What are people saying about who the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some think he is John the Baptizer, some say Elijah, some Jeremiah or one of the other prophets. "He pressed them, "And how about you? Who do you say I am? "Simon Peter said, "You're the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus came back, "God bless you, Simon, son of Jonah! You didn't get that answer out of books or from teachers. My Father in heaven, God himself, let you in on this secret of who I really am. 18 And now I'm going to tell you who you are, really are. You are Peter, a rock. This is the rock on which I will put together my church, a church so expansive with energy that not even the gates of hell will be able to keep it out. And that's not all. You will have complete and free access to God's kingdom, keys to open any and every door: no more barriers between heaven and earth, earth and heaven. A yes on earth is yes in heaven. A no on earth is no in heaven.

What a powerful passage of Scripture!

Look at verse 18:

...a church so expansive with energy that not even the gates of hell will be able to keep it out.

How do you picture the gates of Hades? Do you think of them in terms of the ongoing attacks of the enemy against us? Do you see yourself on the defensive? In the Bible, “gates” referred to the entrance, or opening to a walled city, or a fortress. They are not offensive, but defensive. So the gates of the enemy’s kingdom are defensive...and they WILL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST THE OFFENSIVE ONSLAUGHT OF THE CHURCH! We are on the offensive, not the defensive!

SATAN IS NOT OUR ENEMY AS MUCH AS WE ARE HIS ENEMY!

Jesus Himself took back the keys of Hades and Death:

The Scripture: Revelation 1:18

I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.

Or as it reads The Message: ...*See these keys in my hand? They open and lock Death's doors, they open and lock Hell's gates.*

Jesus has given us the ***keys of the kingdom!***

As this translation so clearly reminds us, keys symbolize the authority to open and unlock. In Matthew 16, Peter was given the keys to unlock the truth of the kingdom first to the Jews (Acts 2:41) and then to the Gentiles (Acts 10:44-47; 11:1; 15:7). Thus, he opened the door of faith to them and unlocked access to God's kingdom. We, too, have been given keys to unlock the kingdom of Heaven to those who are still locked up in the enemy's realm.

There are many keys of the kingdom we could consider.

- Faith is a key of the kingdom (Matt 21:20-22, Mark 11:22-24).
- Unity is a key (Mark 3:24, Psalm 133).
- Childlike trust is a key (Mark 10:14-15).
- The qualities Jesus spoke of in the Sermon on the Mount are also keys of the kingdom.

In Part 2, we will consider the key that was mentioned at the beginning of this article: the key of suffering.

Personal Questions

1. Look up the above references to keys in Scripture and ask God how each applies to your personal life. Journal your answer, or, if you are in a group, share your responses.
2. Can you find other "keys" in Scripture? What are they?
3. How might you approach situations differently if you saw yourself as a "regent" of the kingdom of God? How would you describe a kingdom mentality?