

# The WildBranch Ministry

*...thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Romans 11:18*

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## On This Rock I Will Rebuild My Church

### Introduction

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I pondered for awhile as to whether I wanted to put this teaching on our teaching tapes or to post it on the web site. The answer soon became clear to me. I believe that traditional church people need to come to terms with the full context of the teaching of their Messiah. It seems that Mattityahu 16 and Acts 2 have flowed together so very well in Christian thinking, that these foundational verses are never questioned with respect to the peripheral doctrines they spawn. When one is quoted right after the other, a logical flow is created by the English translations that combined with a general ignorance of the theology of the Tenakh, draws an erroneous conclusion.

Mattityahu 16:18

*"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."*

When this verse is followed by the events of Acts chapter two, the knee jerk reaction is that the events of Acts are the beginning of the church that Y'shua proclaimed in the book of Mattityahu. After all, Y'shua did say in the future tense, "... I **will** build my church". Based upon an assumed truth that the building of the church is a future event, there have arisen several interpretations of these comments that are prevalent in the church. In other words, as it is with most other doctrinal areas, the laity gets to choose from among these 'chosen' interpretations. Once an interpretation has been chosen, then the destiny of the good student of scripture is bound up in defending that position against the other well thought out views. The three commonly accepted views are as follows:

- 1. Since Kefa's name is taken from the Greek word *petros*, which is in the masculine, the true church of God is to be built upon a succession of

apostles and popes from the line of Kefa or Peter, and that it is actually Peter that is being referred to in Y'shua's comments.

- 2. The next interpretation is that since the 'rock' that the church is to be built upon is actually the Greek words *taute te petra*, which speaks specifically of 'this rock', rather than *petros*, which speaks to 'a stone', then the conclusion is that the rock the church is to be built upon is Messiah Himself.
- 3. The third common interpretation is that the 'rock' Y'shua is referring to represents the correct confession of Peter as to the identity of the true Rock, the Messiah.

So who or what is the 'rock' that the church is to be built upon? I am going to take a little contextual journey on the background and events leading up to these remarks made by Messiah before we identify this rock. As it is with many church doctrines, we have here another example of the church media deciding for the masses where the focus of attention and reporting will lie. I would, however, like to state my conclusion at the beginning and then turn our attention to the prophecies in scripture and events surrounding this well known verse. According to the Brad Scott translation, taken through the Tenakh and the Hebrew roots, it should read something like this: "... and upon the Word of God, the living waters, I will rebuild my assembly ..." Now, if you are the kind of student of scripture that needs only to be told what to believe and how to behave, then you can skip the rest of this teaching and come back later when I am addressing something else. However, if you are the kind of student who wants scripture to be based upon scripture, I would ask that you bear with me while we search out the set-up for these remarks, and why the focus is always on the 'rock' and rarely the building or the rebuilding.

It is commonly taught in nominal Christianity that Kefa is commended here because he correctly identified who Y'shua really was. It is my contention that while the identity of the nature of the Messiah is imperative and naturally follows, it is NOT the reason why Y'shua called Kefa blessed. Before we take a journey through the background of this event, I would like to address the issue of the biases that have traditionally led to the debate of the identity of the 'rock'. Would it be reasonable to say that if a person approaches the scriptures with the presupposed bias that the 'church' began at the observance of Pentecost in

Acts chapter 2, that this presupposition may color or distort most other references to the 'church'? Would it be reasonable to conclude that anyone reading Mattityahu 16:18 with that bias may also conclude that, without research, the church is a future entity that, as opposed to the Jews and the Old Testament, is founded upon the Messiah and grace? Would I be out of line by suggesting that these conclusions have also led to another unresearched assumption that Israel is Israel and the Church is the Church?

### **The Context**

Y'shua indeed had twelve disciples. But of those twelve, He had three that were especially close to him. These men were even given the title of pillars.

Galatians 2:9

*"And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision."*

These three men of the inner circle of Y'shua experience much more than the other disciples. We remember that they were also the three that were given the vision of the transfiguration. Kefa was one of the first two brethren that Messiah saw and took with Him (Mattityahu 4:18). Kefa had been with Y'shua the longest. Kefa had seen virtually all of His miracles, witnessed life from the dead, and heard all of His parables, including the most important parable, the parable of the sower. Why is this parable so important? Because this parable is the only one in which the Messiah states that if you understand this parable, you understand them all (Mark 4:13-14). Kefa watched Y'shua explain the meaning of the parable to those who would have an ear to hear. He heard Messiah tell the multitudes, not the Jewish leadership, but the gentiles, that the seed the sower sows is the Word of God. He listened while Y'shua explained to His followers that these parables spoken to the Gentiles (multitudes) whose heart had become gross, whose ears were dull of hearing, and whose eyes were closed, were fulfilling the words of the prophets spoken to the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

Yesha'yahu 42:18-22

*Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see. Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as YHVH's servant? Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not. YHVH is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable. But this is a people robbed and spoiled; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses: they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore.*

Kefa looks on as Y'shua, the Good Shepherd, speaks of two folds that will become one, all hearing the voice of the one true Shepherd. Kefa would have been reminded of the words of the prophet Yechezk'el speaking against the shepherds of Israel.

Yechezk'el 34:11-13

*"For thus saith YHVH 'Elohiym; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country.*

Yechezk'el 34:22-23

*"Therefore will I save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle. And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd."*

Yechezk'el 34:30-31

*"Thus shall they know that I YHVH their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, saith YHVH 'Elohiym. And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith YHVH 'Elohiym."*

These words would have reverberated in Kefa's ears, as he listened to Y'shua in Yochanan 10:14-16:

*I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.*

Mattityahu 9:36

*"But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd."*

These are but two examples of the teaching of Messiah that Kefa listened to, likely more than once. The language and terminology surrounding the prophecies of the scattered houses of Kefa's ancestors this man, who claimed to be the Messiah, was using in reference to 'another' fold. Now either Y'shua was ignorant of the use of *remez* and was improperly associating His ministry with these prophecies, OR, He meant exactly what He said. Kefa has heard Y'shua directly associate Himself with the 'shepherd' spoken of in the prophets that would come to reunite the house of Israel with the house of Judah.

The parable of the tares in the field, as told by Y'shua in Mattityahu 13:37-43, would have also rung familiar with Kefa, as this parable spoke of the righteous and wicked seeds as well, and that the prophets foretold that YHVH would destroy the wicked seed.

Mizmor 21:9-10

*"Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: YHVH shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them. Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men."*

Mizmor 37:28

*"For YHVH loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off."*

Mattityahu 13:37-42

*"He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but*

*the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."*

Can you imagine the emotions going on in Kefa's heart as He heard these words being spoken by this man he was following? Next time we will continue to follow the events that Kefa witnessed before making the famous claim that Y'shua was the Messiah, the Son of the living God, and what that confession meant to Y'shua.

Shalom Alecheim!

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