

Visions and Revelations

Message 17: The Apostle Peter (6, Part Two)

Note: This is a lightly edited transcript meant to aid saints in personal and small group fellowship and pursuing.

God desired to be with His created man. In God's creation, it was so: "Let them have dominion." God desires a kingdom. How can He have a kingdom? God created the vegetables, then the animals, then the birds, then all the creatures, and then He finally created man. When He created man, He made it clear, "This matches my ruling in the kingdom of heaven. I will make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over this, over this, and over this." So God made us in His likeness, and we're after his image, outwardly and inwardly. We all are like God. God was very happy. God says "This is the kingdom of God. Not only do I rule, I also have co-rulers. These co-rulers were under my ruling and also rule, let them have dominion over all things, but especially over Satan, over the creeping things that creepth upon the earth (Satan and the fallen angels)." But most of all, after He made all of this, He brought man to the garden and told the man, "There's one tree called the tree of knowledge of good and evil, don't eat it. Here's a tree of life." Then he said "All the fruit you can eat," pointing to the tree of life. Alas, man took the tree of knowledge of good and evil, then fell.

Sometimes you think, "man fell, so what?!" No, man fell, and then everything God had done in His wisdom and power, became confined. Due to man's fall, God was confined in the heavenly realm. Can you believe in that? For at least four thousand years, God said "I would like to abide in Adam." No! "I would like to be with David." No! "I want to live in Abraham." No! "I want to be one with Isaac to a point we're totally incorporated." No! Why? Because sin blocked it. The kingdom of heaven became something remote in the heavenlies. Eventually God, the ruler of the universe, could only be an outward God to man. Man fell, so God was confined in the heavenly realm. Don't look down on the word confined. For at least four thousand years, God was patiently there looking at man. He looked at man said "I love them." He looked at man, "I want to be with them." He looked at man, "I want to be one with them." He looked at man, "I want this man to enjoy 'my very God as the eternal life!'"

There is an eternal supporting power, but God says "I can't." He looked at Abraham. He may have said "I love you so much. Look, I led you all the way in your life." But eventually, when Abraham died, God just sighed, "Wow, my kingdom, in reality, failed. I have kings ruling with this man. He's under my ruling. But, I'm not in him!" He looked unto something so good, and marvelous, but it was not His. You know brothers, God was confined. If you ask me "is God frustrated with anything?" I would say no. But one thing I would say is that for some reason God had to wait. There was a long period of time, at least four thousand years, where God said "I'm the God of Abraham, I'm the God of Isaac, and I'm the God of Jacob." He could say all this. "I'm God OF." He could not say, "Abraham's one with Me, I'm in him, and he's in Me." He couldn't because He was confined. Think about how sad the situation was. Even when I talk like this, I have a feeling, how sad. Abraham would say "Titus, how blessed you are. God has been so much with me. I have been so faithful to Him, but He is only my God outwardly. Hey Titus, you're a naughty man, much weaker than me, much less faith than me. But for some reason, now God has a kingdom, and His domain is not just outside, but also inside of you. How marvelous that is."

So in these four thousand years, in this sad situation, one day the great news came. When the angel appeared to Mary, he said, "Great good news! Great good news! Even the heaven and the earth should really see it. God will finally get the first God-man, Man of God. God and man can totally be one." Who

is that one? Jesus Christ. He was not born by man, not by the flesh, but by the Spirit. *Christ – the firstborn and the prototype of the reality of the kingdom of heaven.* Outwardly you look at him, he's a man. In reality, God would be very happy. I didn't get mankind yet, but I got one prototype! I got one prototype! Oh, this one is marvelous, you know that? I am in this man! God can joyfully and satisfyingly sigh, "Wow I made it. Wow, I made it. All these years after my creation and creating of man, I couldn't make it. But now in Jesus, you see He's a man, but He's also God. You see He's God, but He's also a man. He is the reality of the kingdom." He's a prototype of the king's domain in full. He's the firstborn prototype of the reality of the kingdom of heaven. Through him, the heavens rule. The heavens can say, "Now I have a rule with man. A little over two 2000 years ago, at least there was ONE man, THIS man, in whom I have a full ruling. The king has full domain." This is the reality of the kingdom.

C. Christ – the firstborn and the prototype of reality of kingdom of heaven. Through Him, the heavens rule. 1) The reality of the kingdom of heaven is where Christ's life rules. Now we understand right? Christ on this earth had the divine life of God. In His resurrection, he became eternal life in the Spirit and gave life to us so now we can have the reality of the kingdom. Why? Christ now rules through life in us. The realm of the kingdom of heaven is the church today. Do you realize that? Think about what is the church. I know brother Tong, I know brother Wang, I know brother James, I know brother John, I know all these brothers. Brothers, this is outwardly. Do you know that in everyone, God desires to rule? In everyone, Christ as life in them CAN rule. I have been saved close to 70 years. In these close to 70 years, let me tell you, Christ rules. Sometimes in a good way: the more he ruled the more prevailing I became. Sometimes, in a way I didn't like: when He rules, I lose all my freedom. I want to do this, I want to do that, I want this future, I want that future. But because Christ rules, everything I planned has to be put aside. This is the church. Christ in me and Christ in you. Together, Christ rules over me and Christ rules over you. Through me, or through you, Christ rules over all of us. This is a marvelous Church life.

When you consider the church, don't think about the building. Don't even think about the congregation. Think, "Oh this is one born of Zion, in whom Christ rules. Oh that one is born of Zion, in him Christ rules. Oh myself, oh I'm just a young brother, a new brother, a fallen brother, a brother full of my opinions in the church life. But, I am under the ruling of Christ! In the beginning, a tiny little bit. More and more, Christ rules more. I grow, and this very growth causes me to have the reality of the building of the body of Christ." How good is this? Christ has ruled in me 67 years. You say "WOW! You must be marvelous at it." Don't talk about it. We are all fallen, we all have limitations. But let me tell you the difference. Christ's rule over me is more automatic and more easy than it was 50 years ago. 50 years ago, Christ tried to rule in me and I argued a lot. I tried to push him away a lot. I tried to make my own decisions a lot. But now I'm old. In my old age, I can tell the Lord, Lord thank you, you rule. I welcome your ruling. I appreciate your ruling. Let me tell you, without your ruling, I don't even know how to live because I'm in the kingdom life, a life with the kingdom of heaven. Christ rules. More than that, Christ died and resurrected, releasing and loosing the reality of the kingdom of heaven. How could this be? Because he died. It was one prototype, just Jesus Christ. He's fully under the divine ruling. He's the exhibition of the kingdom. So that's why he can declare to us, the kingdom of heaven is NEAR! Why, can he say this? Jesus would say, "Look: the kingdom of heaven is *here*. I'm ready to die for you. I'm ready for you to repent. I'm ready for you to receive Me."

How can we receive Him? One day, He died on the cross. Then, when He resurrected, He released life. After this life was released, you needed a person like Peter to open the door so that we can all be brought into salvation and so that the body can be builded up. So, through Peter's opening of the door to both the Jews and to the Gentiles, God was able to be organically united with man. Peter did it, and the Lord commanded Peter to do it. The Lord said to him, "You are Peter and I will give you the keys of the

kingdom of heaven. Now you can bind and you can loose, just as I have done. Remember, Peter, I died on the cross, I resurrected, I bound the strong man, then I released my life. I loosed all those who were under captivity back to Christ himself.” Praise the Lord for this.

Prior to Peter’s opening of the doors, we believers were unable to participate in the reality of the kingdom of heaven, but now we find the kingdom of heaven is at hand. This was the declaration of both Jesus and of John the Baptist. Christ testified, “I am the kingdom of heaven.” *The kingdom of heaven is at hand* means “I am right here for you to repent.” The kingdom of heaven was introduced by John the Baptist. When John the Baptist preached, he knew who Christ was. He knew that the kingdom of heaven is with Christ and that Christ is the kingdom of heaven. So when John began his ministry he boldly declared, “Repent! For the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Then Jesus continued with the same message. You should say, “Lord Jesus, You are at hand. You are the kingdom of heaven, and I as a man should repent. When I repent, I can be one with you.”

This declaration, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand,” indicated that the day for God and man to be united and mingled was at hand. It meant that salvation is at hand. When salvation comes, you are united with God; you are mingled with God. Now the Lord Jesus can come into your spirit and rule over you. Now He was a prototype. Now we have the reality: I’m saved, the Lord is in me, so the kingdom of heaven is right here with me. When we are all together we can say, “This is the church. Not only Christ is the kingdom of heaven; Not only are we Christians one by one the kingdom of heaven, but eventually the whole congregation—the Church—is the kingdom of heaven. The body of Christ becomes the reality of the kingdom of heaven. When Christ died and resurrected He became not only the Savior of one, but the Savior of all Christians for the body of Christ—the church. We should be very happy that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Why? Because He’s here; Because we believe in Him; Because we can all believe in Him. Because He’s here, I can be saved. Because He’s here, you can be saved. We can all be saved. There are three steps: Number one, Christ: the prototype of the kingdom of heaven. Number two, we can be part of the kingdom of heaven by being united with the Christ; by believing in Jesus Christ. Number three, we all, one by one together, can be one with Christ. Therefore, we are the body of Christ. Praise the lord for this.

The term *the keys of the kingdom of heaven* bothers both you and me. We are simple Christians. To us, believe in Jesus Christ and get saved—that’s good enough. We know that we eventually go to the new Jerusalem and not to heaven. For sure we are not going to Hades. But, for some reason, the Lord Jesus likes to bother you. Do you know why? He keeps on trying to tell you, “Wake up! Elevate yourself. Enlarge yourself. Know something more.” Just consider this one verse. This verse covers many points: “I also say,” “you are Peter,” “upon this rock,” then, “I will build,” “My church,” then, “the gates of Hades cannot prevail against it,” then, “I also” and so on. I bother you with so much, and I know you cannot even take it. You feel tired of these messages. Why? Because we are not desperate after Christ. Christ is burdened, but we are not burdened. What Christ is after, we may not be after. What Christ says is so crucial, yet we feel “Why must it be that complicated? Didn’t You tell me to just believe in Jesus and I will be saved? Didn’t You tell me, if I confess my sin, then You are faithful and just and will forgive my sin and I will become righteous? Didn’t you say all these things? Why did you have to make it so complicated?”

Do you know why I say all this? Because you live for yourself. God also lives for Himself. You might say, "Wow! You mean God is selfish?" Well, I would rather God be selfish, than you be selfish because when you're selfish, everything becomes nothing. Sorry, with God, I shouldn't use the word selfish, because He does love the world. Instead, I will say God has a center as a focus. Maybe He says, "Only when I gain what I want will I be totally satisfied." This is why I personally would even pray, "Lord Jesus, can you be for yourself? Even with me, can you be for Yourself? I don't like to have a God for me. I like to have myself be for God."

The Lord would say even more, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven." Remember last time we spent some time discussing what the kingdom of heaven is. Now, it's getting even more romantic: there's a key. Please, use your imagination to think about how beautiful that key should become; how weighty that key should become. That is the very key which opened up the kingdom of heaven. *I will give you the keys to open up the kingdom of heaven.* We used to say, "Peter got the key." My question would be, "Yes, Peter got the key, but who wants it opened?" Peter even has no idea: "What does that mean, I have a key to open up the kingdom of heaven? I don't even know what that is!" But the Lord says "I will." The Lord Himself is the One who desires to open the door and provide the key. "I will give you the key! I will give you the keys so you will open up the kingdom of heavens."

Who is the one who opened? Let's say I want to get into my house. I'm 85 years old, so I'm at the door and I want to open it. I pick up the key and a young brother beside me says, "Titus, let me open up for you." Wouldn't I appreciate it? Wouldn't I say, "Thank you, Brother. For me to find the hole and for me to stick the key in is not easy." That brother gets the key, opens the door, gets in the house, and says, "The house is mine because I have the key, I opened it!" Isn't that stupid? I'm the one who has the key, that's why I gave you the key! I'm the one desired to open the house, that's why I gave you the key to open the door. So, brothers, many times Christians will say, "Peter is the only one that has the key." No, the Lord Jesus had the key and committed Peter to open it. "I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heavens." So Peter opened it.

How did Peter open it? It is surprising. Peter should have asked, "Hey, Lord, where is the key? Give me the key. I'm ready to open it. Where's the key?" The Lord would reply, "The key is a spiritual key. It is not a physical key or some golden key. Do you know what the key is? The key is myself, as the Spirit, which I will pour down and baptize you into the body. Once I baptize you, now you have the key." Do you remember that? When 120 of them were praying together and eventually the Holy Spirit, on the day of Pentecost, poured upon them. Upon this, Peter became united with Christ. The Lord would say, "Peter you can't open anything unless you're one with me."

After this, Peter would say, "When the Spirit came, when I was baptized on the day of Pentecost with 120 others, for some reason, I became very clear about what is the kingdom of God. I got the key. Then I became the one who held the key to the door." Then he opened the overall door. What is the overall door? For instance there is one house, physical and real. That house has a key. You must have the key to enter into the house. That key is held by brother Yen. He can take you to the first floor, second floor, or the third floor. Then there's another apartment with another key. That key, brother Yen wouldn't give to anyone but me. So, you see, in that house there's one key to get in and another key to open up another realm. You may use the key to open the house and I will use another key to open my apartment.

So what is the “overall door”? It means there’s a door which brings you into a huge realm. In that field, there are so many doors to be opened. With Africa, there are many, many doors. With Orientals, there are many, many doors. With Caucasians, there are many, many doors. Yellow, white, black, with different cultures, different races, there are many, many doors. But there’s an “overall door.” Until that door is open, nobody can get in. Nobody can do anything. Peter’s the one who opened the overall door.

Then Peter began to preach. So you have two things: the opening of the door, and the preaching. After he was filled in Spirit, let me ask you, who actually opened the door? The Spirit opened the door! But who did the preaching? Peter did the preaching. When they were speaking in tongues, like thunders, many people crowded over. Then Peter stood up and strongly preached the gospel. “The Jesus who you crucified, the Lord has made Him both Lord and Christ!” (Acts 2:36). Marvelous! At that time, their hearts were pricked and they asked the question, “What should we do?” So Peter told them, “First, repent and be baptized for the remission of sins! And receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” So they all were baptized into one body. How many at that time? Three thousand. You say, “Wow, what a big number!” No. Consider two thousand years. That door was opened, and is still open. How many multi-millions of Jews are baptized into this one body? But remember, that is only one key. That only means God’s chosen people have the right to come into the salvation of Jesus Christ, to be the body of Christ.

Then Peter went to Cornelius. Again, he gave a message. While he was giving the message, right in the middle, he was interrupted. The Spirit just came down. Then Cornelius and his family and the people who were there all begin to speak in tongues again. What is that? That is another key, opening up the door of Gentiles. They all spoke in tongues. In the house of Cornelius, Peter was preaching, and the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Gentiles. Peter was really a solid rock. If he was a piece of mud, he would get so upset, “Hey, Lord Jesus, wait till I finish my preaching! I’m doing my job! I’m supposed to preach, right? I’m preaching!” Then the Lord would say, “I don’t care. I’m so desperate. I want to bring the Gentiles into My salvation! I want to baptize them into the body of Christ!” You know, these two great baptisms come in through Peter. First, through Peter’s preaching, the Jews were baptized into one body. Then, through Peter’s preaching, the Gentiles were baptized into one body. The door, the big door, the major door, the real door, was opened. One body came into being. You and I, today — I am yellow, you may be white; I am old, you may be young, but it makes no difference. We all were baptized into this one body because Peter opened this overall door.

In this, you can say, “Oh, Lord Jesus, marvelous! Peter opened the door!” Wait a minute, Paul began to say something. Paul began to say, “When I came to Troas to preach Christ’s gospel, a door was opened to me by the Lord.” Hey, did you realize there’s another door? This is a door for a city, a door for Troas. “When I was in Troas, a door was opened to me.” Which indicates when Peter opened the overall door, that means the gospel can be preached to the Jews, the gospel can be preached to the Gentiles, the gospel can be preached to the Greeks, the gospel can be preached to the white, the gospel can be preached to the blacks, the gospel can be preached to the yellow, the gospel can be preached to high quality educated PhDs, the gospel can also preached to those more valuable common people like you and me. The gospel door is opened!

I’m so happy, I tell you, brothers. Paul’s testimony was, “When I was in Troas, the door was opened to me,” but remember his testimony, he didn’t get into that. He was unrestful because he wanted to see Titus, so he just left. But it shows, you know what’s precious with Christians? The door’s open! Hey, brother, let me tell you, your neighbor’s door is open, that street’s door is open, that neighborhood’s door is open, that city’s door is open. Brother, for some reason with all the doors, we declare, “He’s not ready,

he's a Jew, he's a Chinese, he's yellow or black, or he's white, none of them want Jesus!" Brother, you know why? Because you never know the door is already open. If we know the door is open, the church in Cleveland will be so vital with preaching the gospel. Every neighborhood, there's an open door! Every street, there can be open doors! Your neighbor can be an open door to you, your relatives can be open doors to you!

So eventually, this indicates, when Paul was preaching, he used the gospel as the key to open the door of salvation. Then, remember, pay attention to this: for two thousand years, many servants of the Lord have opened the doors to many races, nations, continents, in many localities throughout the earth. I say this, brother, these are still too big. If every brother learned, "Thank you Lord, Peter is a member of the body. I'm also a member in the body. Peter's a great, grand, useful member in the body, but I am at least a portion, at least a muscle. I can have some blessing." Brothers, then you can say, "Lord, open the door. Don't just open the door for Peter! Don't just open the door for Paul!" Even Watchman Nee in his publication, one of his journals is called "Open Doors," just "Open Doors." Brother, can we also say, "Lord, I like to have a door open."

You know what is my dream? I'm talking about the church in Cleveland. My dream is that there can be groups of 5, 6, 7. Everyone in the church can pray with 4 or 5. I tell you, elders don't have to come together to discuss the church. There's not much to be discussed anyway! You want to discuss it, 20 minutes, it's done! But every elder has a team, we pray for an open door. I pray with three families, two families, four families, five families, but not more than that. But this small group, our name is called "Open Door Team 1," "Open Door Team 2." Some work with young people, open doors. Some work with older people, open doors. Some work in this neighborhood, open doors. Some work in far away, remote neighborhoods, open doors. The door must be open, and the door has been opened already by Peter, through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Today, we all were baptized into this one body. We can say, "Door is open." How good is this? An open door.

You just think about today, if all the good brothers—those brothers who are experienced, who are in the lead, they have no desire to care about practical matters, like, this window needs to be repaired. This is deacon's work. They just say, "My burden is work with three, work with four, we pray together, every morning we pray together, every day a few times, every week a few times we preach together. And then, we fellowship with one another, we strengthen one another, we preach gospel, we take this street, 'Lord, in this month, we take these three streets.' We want to knock on every door in these three streets. We don't talk about it. We do it." Let's exercise, with a small group of brothers, an open door.

I'm not able to be in, on one hand, I'm 85. On the other hand, I'm not in Cleveland all the time. But if I were in, I'd like to have a little team. Five of us. I'd like to work with them, "Let's pray together, let's read the Bible together, let's study with one another together, let's go out preach the gospel together, let's pick up 50 houses and tell the Lord, 'Lord, give us two months. In these 50 houses, could you get one? One household can be gained by You?'" Brother, you go out, because the door's open! There is an open door! Overall door is opened by Peter, then Paul testified, "I'm in some place, there's an open door for the gospel." Then, I tell you, Watchman Nee says, "What is my work for the local churches? It's an open door. It's open door."

You know, brother, from here, we come to the next part. What can constitute an open door? I'm sorry, when I preach like that, I feel this "open door" is too hard for you. Maybe we should stop here. You had a very good meeting, and you should begin to pray a lot and say, "Lord Jesus, we don't want to know more.

This edited transcript has not been reviewed by the speaker.

We want to be in that open door, we want to be the executor. Wherever we are, door's open. We go!
Door's open!"

May the Lord have mercy, we stop here.