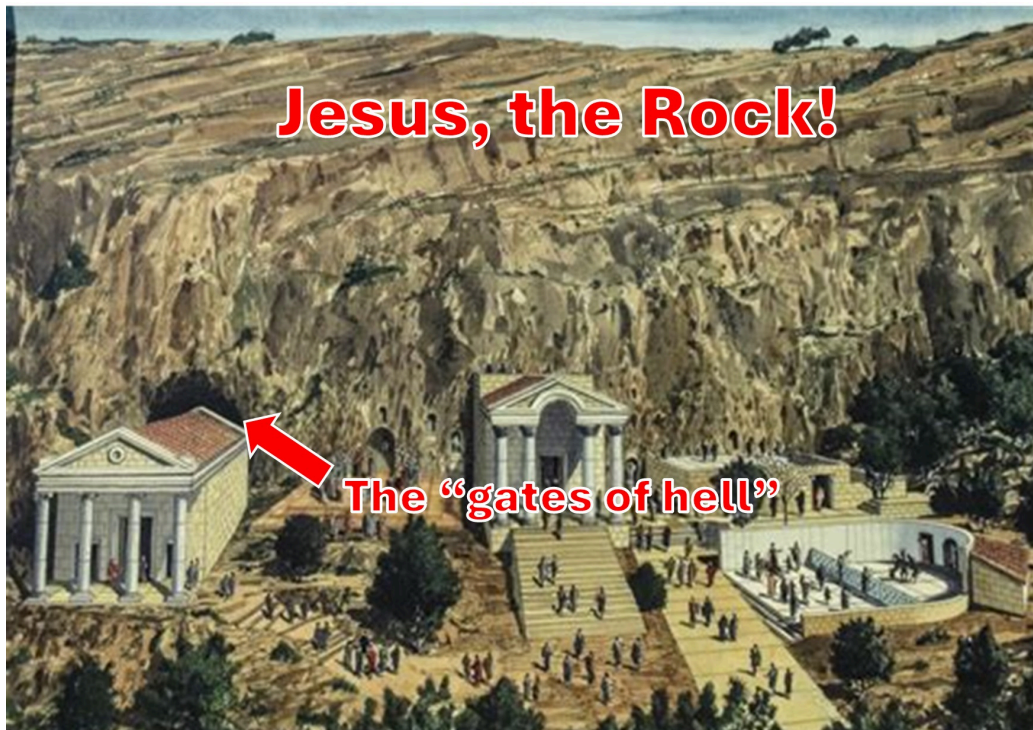
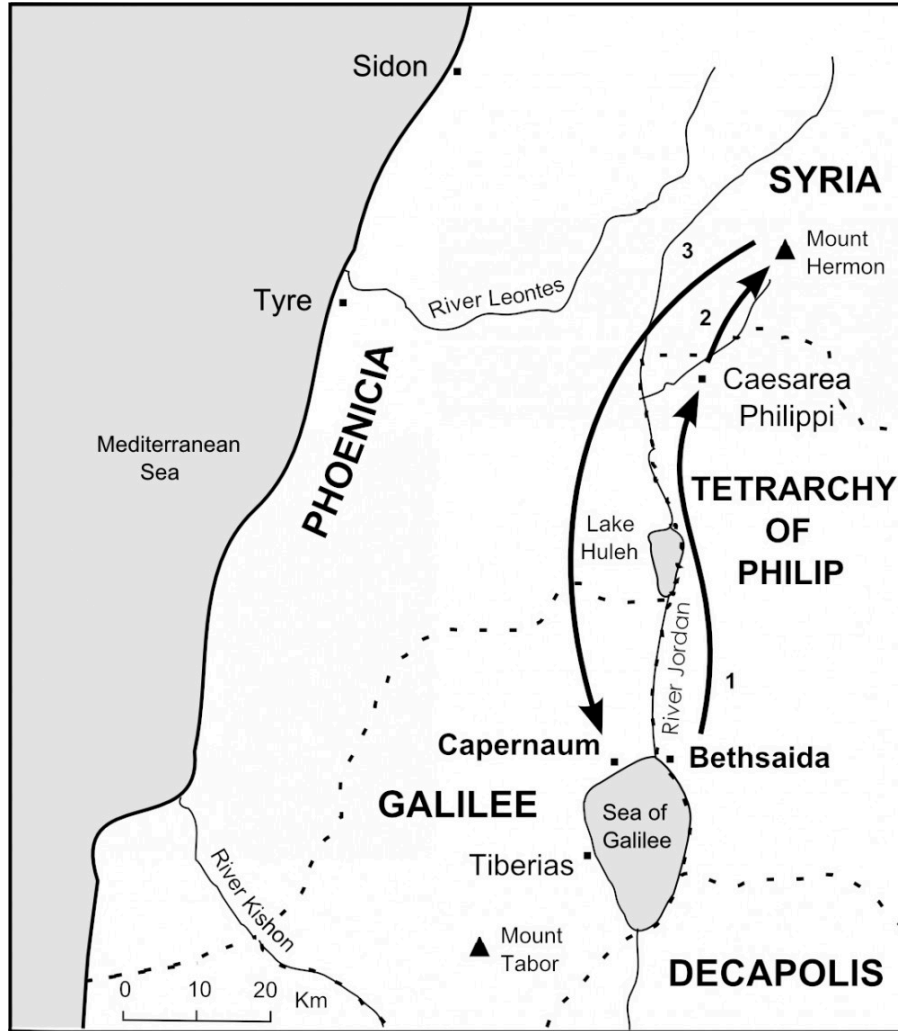


Peter's Confession



First Century Sanctuary of Pan in Caesarea Philippi

Peter's Confession

Matthew 16:18–19 is a key passage where Jesus responds to Peter's confession that He is the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Here's the passage:

"And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." (*Matthew 16:18–19, NIV*)

Breakdown of the Passage

Phrase	Explanation
"You are Peter (Greek: Petros)"	Jesus renames Simon as "Peter," which means "rock." This signals a new role and identity.
"On this rock I will build my church"	There's a play on words in Greek: <i>Petros</i> (Peter) and <i>petra</i> (rock). Interpretations differ on whether the "rock" refers to Peter himself, his confession, or Christ. See below for views.
"I will build my church"	Jesus uses the word <i>ekklesia</i> (assembly), referring to the community of believers — a new covenant people.
"The gates of Hades will not overcome it"	Hades symbolizes death and the realm of the dead. Jesus promises that death or hellish powers will not destroy the church.
"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven"	Keys represent authority — to open or close access. Peter is given a special role in opening the kingdom (e.g., Acts 2 for Jews, Acts 10 for Gentiles).
"Whatever you bind... / loose..."	Common Jewish idiom meaning to forbid or permit , or to enforce or release something spiritually or legally. This likely includes teaching authority and forgiveness. In Matthew 18:18, this power is later extended to all the disciples.

Major Interpretations of "On this rock"

View	Explanation
Peter himself	Many early church fathers and the Roman Catholic Church believe Peter is the foundational "rock" of the church (see also Ephesians 2:20).
Peter's confession	Many Protestants interpret "the rock" as Peter's statement: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."
Jesus Himself	Some argue the "rock" refers to Christ (see 1 Corinthians 10:4), and Peter is being associated with Him.

"Keys of the Kingdom" in Action

Peter exercises this symbolic authority:

- **Acts 2** – Opens the kingdom to the Jews (Pentecost).
- **Acts 10** – Opens the kingdom to the Gentiles (Cornelius).
- **Acts 15** – Takes a leading role at the Jerusalem Council.

Peter's Confession

The "rock" in **Matthew 7** and in **Matthew 16** are both rich in meaning, and comparing them reveals deep connections in Jesus' teaching.

Key Passages with "Rock"

Reference	Text	Context
Matthew 7:24–25	"Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock . The rain came down, the streams rose... yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock."	End of the Sermon on the Mount — Jesus contrasts wise and foolish builders.
Matthew 16:18	"You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."	After Peter's confession of Jesus as the Messiah. Jesus promises to build His Church.

Comparison Chart: The "Rock" in Matthew 7 vs. Matthew 16

Feature	Matthew 7:24–25	Matthew 16:18
Greek Word	<i>petra</i> (rock, bedrock)	<i>petra</i> (rock), play on <i>Petros</i> (Peter)
Meaning of Rock	Foundation for a life built on obeying Jesus' words	Foundation for the church
Who builds?	A wise man builds his life on the rock (obedience)	Jesus builds His church on the rock (Peter or his confession)
What is built?	A house (representing a person's life)	The Church (community of believers)
What threatens it?	Storms, floods, winds (life's trials and judgment)	Gates of Hades (death, evil, opposition)
What happens to it?	It stands firm	It prevails and is not overcome

Theological Connection

- In **Matthew 7**, the rock symbolizes **obedience to Jesus' teaching** — a stable life.
- In **Matthew 16**, the rock may symbolize **Peter**, his **confession**, or **Christ** Himself — the stable foundation for the **Church**.

The connection? In both cases:

- **The rock is immovable, trustworthy, and enduring.**
- Whether it's your **life** (Matt 7) or the **Church** (Matt 16), what is built on the solid truth and obedience to Christ will **withstand pressure and survive**.

Peter's Confession

The Bible contains multiple verses, both Old and New Testament, that identify **Jesus as the Rock**, either explicitly or by connecting Him to "the Rock" imagery used for God in the Old Testament. Here's a list of key verses:

Old Testament Foundations (God as the Rock)

Reference	Text	Note
Deuteronomy 32:4	"He is the Rock, His works are perfect..."	God is called "the Rock" — firm, faithful, and unchanging.
Psalms 18:2	"The LORD is my rock, my fortress..."	God as refuge and stronghold.
Isaiah 28:16	"Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation..."	A prophecy fulfilled in Christ (see 1 Peter 2:6).

New Testament Verses Identifying Jesus as the Rock

Reference	Text	Note
1 Corinthians 10:4	"...they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. "	Paul clearly identifies Christ as the Rock that provided for Israel.
Romans 9:33 (quoting Isaiah)	"See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes people to stumble... and the one who believes in Him will never be put to shame."	Jesus is the "stone" — firm for believers, stumbling for rejecters.
1 Peter 2:6–8	"...a cornerstone chosen and precious... 'The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone'"	Peter describes Jesus as both cornerstone and stumbling stone.
Matthew 21:42	"The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone..."	Jesus applies Psalm 118:22 to Himself.
Ephesians 2:20	"Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone."	The Church is built on Christ, the cornerstone.

Summary Chart

Theme	Verse(s)	How Jesus is the Rock
Spiritual foundation	1 Cor. 10:4; Eph. 2:20	Jesus is the spiritual Rock and cornerstone of faith and the Church
Stability and security	Isa. 28:16; Ps. 18:2	Christ offers a sure foundation for life and salvation
Judgment or refuge	Rom. 9:33; 1 Pet. 2:7–8	Those who believe are safe; those who reject stumble on Him

Peter's Confession

What “the rock” in **Matthew 16:18** really means. Let's explore it thoughtfully, with everything in view:



The Verse Again

“You are Peter [Petros], and on this rock [petra] I will build my church.” – *Matthew 16:18*



3 Major Interpretations

View	Summary	Strengths	Weaknesses
Peter as the rock	Jesus is giving Peter a foundational leadership role	Fits the wordplay (<i>Petros/petra</i>), aligns with Peter's later leadership (Acts 2, Acts 10)	Seems to place too much on a man; tension with broader NT teaching
Peter's confession as the rock	The church is built on the truth that Jesus is the Messiah, Son of God	Theologically consistent with rest of Scripture; makes Jesus the ultimate foundation	Doesn't fully account for Jesus directly naming Peter “rock”
Jesus as the rock	Jesus is referring to Himself as the foundation of the Church	Fits OT and NT imagery (1 Cor. 10:4, Eph. 2:20)	Feels less natural in the flow of this particular verse's grammar



My Reasoned View: A Layered Interpretation

I think the best understanding is a **both/and** — not either/or:

Jesus is building His Church **on the rock of Peter's confession** — that He is the Christ — and **using Peter as the foundational leader** to launch that Church, **with Christ Himself as the true cornerstone**.

Here's how it all fits together:

- **Peter is the first stone**, laid by Christ, a leader with the “keys.”
- **Peter's confession** is the theological foundation: Jesus as Messiah and Son of God.
- **Jesus Himself** is the ultimate Rock, Cornerstone, and Builder.



Supporting Verses to Tie It Together

Concept	Verse	Relevance
Jesus = Cornerstone	<i>Eph. 2:20</i>	Christ is the foundation; apostles are supporting stones
Peter's confession = saving truth	<i>Rom. 10:9</i>	“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord...”
Peter's role = leadership, not supremacy	<i>Acts 2, Acts 10</i>	Peter opens the Kingdom — but doesn't retain exclusive authority
All believers = living stones	<i>1 Peter 2:5</i>	Peter himself says we are all part of the structure



Conclusion

Jesus builds His Church on:

- **the truth of who He is (the Christ),**
- **with Peter as the initial rock-like leader** proclaiming that truth,
- **and Jesus as the true Cornerstone who holds it all together.**

This is a **Trinitarian, Christ-centered** understanding that honors the text, the broader New Testament, and the Old Testament imagery.

Peter's Confession

"**Binding and loosing**" is a key phrase Jesus uses in **Matthew 16:19** (to Peter) and again in **Matthew 18:18** (to all the disciples). Understanding this phrase requires a bit of background in **Jewish rabbinic language**, **Scripture context**, and **Church authority**.

The Verses

Matthew 16:19 (to Peter):

*"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you **bind on earth** will be bound in heaven, and whatever you **loose on earth** will be loosed in heaven."*

Matthew 18:18 (to all disciples):

"Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

What "Binding and Loosing" Meant in Jewish Context

Term	Meaning in Jewish Rabbinic Use
Bind (<i>asar</i>)	To forbid , restrict, or declare something unlawful
Loose (<i>hitir</i>)	To permit , release, or declare something lawful

Example: A rabbi might "bind" certain behavior (forbid it under the Law) or "loose" it (permit it), based on their interpretation of the Torah.

What Jesus Means in Matthew

 **Contextual Meaning in Matthew 16:19**

Jesus gives **Peter** authority to:

- **Teach and apply God's Word**
- **Declare what is permitted or forbidden**
- **Represent heaven's judgment on earth**

 **Extended Meaning in Matthew 18:18**

He later gives **all the apostles** this authority — particularly in the context of:

- **Church discipline**
- **Forgiveness**
- **Spiritual guidance**

"Keys of the Kingdom" + "Binding and Loosing"

These phrases go together. In Jewish culture:

- **Keys = authority** to admit or exclude from a house or city.
- **Binding/loosing = interpretive authority** over moral/spiritual matters.

Isaiah 22:22 is a background verse:

"I will place on his shoulder the key to the house of David; what he opens no one can shut..."

Jesus is giving **spiritual leadership authority** to the apostles, starting with Peter.

Peter's Confession

Biblical Examples of Binding/Loosing in Action

Action	Scripture	Description
Peter opens kingdom to Jews	Acts 2	Preaches at Pentecost — “looses” the gospel to Israel
Peter opens kingdom to Gentiles	Acts 10	Shares gospel with Cornelius
Church discipline	Matthew 18:15–17	Discerning who is in or out of fellowship
Paul’s moral instructions	1 Corinthians 5–6	He binds certain sins, looses repentant sinners

Summary Table

Term	Literal Meaning	Spiritual Application
Bind	Tie up, restrict	Forbid, discipline, correct
Loose	Release, free	Permit, forgive, restore
Keys	Authority to open/close	Authority to preach, teach, judge rightly

Final Thought

Binding and loosing represents the **delegated authority of Jesus** to His followers — first to Peter, then to the whole Church — to act as **heaven’s representatives** in matters of:

- **Doctrine**
- **Discipline**
- **Forgiveness**
- **Witness to the world**