

# **The Myth:**

  

# **Saint Peter Guards the Pearly Gates**

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## The Myth

*“The Apostle Peter Guards the Gates of Heaven and from a Book he decides who can enter therein.”*

The myth goes something like this. To get into heaven when we die we just need to front up to the Pearly Gates and convince Saint Peter that we want in. We would perhaps regale him with a funny story, or perhaps spin a risqué yarn, and if he thought that he had been suitably regaled he would throw open the gates to eternal life in bliss where every possible want will be provided.

Now as myths go, this is possibly one of the best when it comes to containing very little or no truth at all. This little scenario above might have some amusing elements in it and we hear it regularly time and time again to the point where very obviously a lot of people out there in the general society don't know any better. If they knew God, they would not be so cavalier about their death and the heaven issue.

I became interested to try and discover the logic that went from fisherman Simon Barjonas (aka Peter the Apostle) to Saint Peter at the Pearly Gates. It's a bit of a jump, and then I also thought why do we say in business circles about being promoted via the Peter Principle. All pretty screwed up really, but stick with me it all becomes clear in due course. To start with, apart from Peter's name, none of the rest of this twisted story is in the Bible. And in fact we follow a trail of conspiratous intrigue as we delve into the ancient languages to sort out what is actually true.

To put this in a nut shell, the whole mis-truth about Peter and this myth originates from how Matthew 16:15-19 is interpreted. The verses are as follows:

*He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?  
And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.  
And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.  
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.  
And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*

Now you might wonder how come the myth arose from these verses, and you would be correct in thinking that there must be something else going on. What we are hearing in this myth is an interpretation of the above passages that twists similar sounding words and then tries to convince us that they have the same meaning. But what is very clear is that this is just not true, and even with the promulgation of the myth and its mis-interpretation by a certain religious convocation, it still doesn't make it right or true.

Simon Barjonas (aka Apostle Peter) would be horrified and thoroughly disgusted with this abuse of his excellent name and the essential works that he and his eleven other disciples, plus Paul, did in the years following the crucifixion of our Lord and Saviour at the hand of the Roman Empire rulers. And I might add that Saint Peter was also put to death in Rome; also on a cross. But the shame to us today is that there are claims that the crowns of the crucified Messiah and the “vanquished” Apostle Peter are still ceremonially paraded before the world. So let's just understand what really is going on here.

To really identify the basis of the myth we need to look closely at the critical verse Matthew 16:18. To do this we break the passage down into critical information segments; ie

*“And I say also unto thee,”*

Here we pick up on Jesus (Yeshua) responding to Simon Peter’s comment identifying that Jesus was the Messiah, the son of God. This was a revelation by God to Simon and it is this mechanism that is the essence of discussion we are having. If we go right back to Genesis 1:1, we see that God has been revealing the nature of himself to mankind as the Creator of all things from the time of Adam and Eve. However this revelation in the Matthew passage signals an important paradigm shift away from the former law based relationship with God to a spiritual relationship where the Spirit of God would indwell faithful believers. In his reply to Jesus, Simon demonstrated through the mechanism of revelation from God that the new paradigm had come into effect. Therefore it is a great leap forward for mankind and God’s Redemption Plan.

We could discuss if this event came as a surprise to Jesus, and I guess there would be two views, as there often is, however I do think that Jesus was looking to see if God had commenced giving revelations to the disciples and maybe as a matter of interest to whom first. So when Simon Barjonas made the statement that Jesus (Yeshua) was the Messiah, Jesus identified that indeed his father in heaven had given this revelation as to who Jesus really was.

So all of a sudden the whole relationship the disciples had with Jesus (Yeshua son of the carpenter Joseph) instantly changed, and standing before them the disciples did not have “just” Yeshua, the son of Joseph, it was in fact the Son of God, the Messiah, Yeshua Ha Mashiach (Jesus Christ).

Returning to our first segment, the translation from the Greek, which would have been initially a translation from Hebrew that the disciples and Jesus (Yeshua) would have been speaking in, can and should have read: (in today’s vernacular) *“And I say likewise unto you”*, referring to the fact that Jesus is going to make an observation about Simon “likewise” as Simon had made of Jesus the carpenter, son of Joseph. The word that we read in English as “also” is an alternative of two words that could have been used, but I contend that it is not as accurate as it should have been expressed as by using the word “likewise”.

*“That thou art Peter,”*

This statement might otherwise just be accepted as it stands, however in behind it is a very powerful and rich meaning that we need to understand. Remember we are dealing with some trickery here so let’s get this right.

In fact the “thou” wasn’t referring to “Peter” the proper noun name of a person when taken in context with the fact that Jesus was having a collective chat to his disciples. But “thou” was referring to the man Simon, son of Jonas so we can legitimately ask, “What is going on?” The Greek script has not been dealt with fairly here. The word “Peter” from the Greek language is Petros, and Petros means a piece of rock, stone or pebble. This means that it is not a monolithic mass of rock, but a rock or stone that would perhaps be used with a number of others to build an altar. (Think about this as well)

So Jesus is saying, you are not “just” Simon the son of Jonas, you are a “rock”. We would see it better in context by saying God is building His house of rocks (or stones), remembering that the cornerstone that the builders rejected was Messiah. So in the translation from Greek to English, Petros became Peter and as with many passages coming across to English the true meaning is completely lost. For example, the word “Jesus” has to be the stand out mis-translation of all time. In this form of “Jesus” it is just a mere proper noun. But if we back-track to the Greek, it is “Iesous”

and this is the transliteration from the Hebrew word Y'shua or Yeshua – meaning “Jehovah-saved” or “Saviour” or “Salvation”. This is why if we speak to our Jewish cousins in God and refer to Jesus, they will throw up their arms and scratch their heads. But if we say Y'shua, they immediately recognise this word to mean “Jehovah-saved” or the “one who saves”.

Now from the script that we are discussing it is obvious that Jesus (Yeshua) is coining Simon's name to be Rock or Stone (ie petros), and so we see Jesus raising Simon up to be a rock in the house of God because he was the first that God revealed the true identity of Yeshua as the Messiah. What is unspoken but thoroughly understood is that Jesus is meaning that Simon is the “first” of what will be thirteen disciples to be gifted by God in this manner. For further thoughts about this refer to Revelation 21:14 where the twelve Apostle's names are written into the foundation of our eternal abode, the New Jerusalem.

And so we have Simon, now called Peter (Petros) the Apostle.

*“.....and upon this rock”*

Segment three is no less mysterious but we only have to consider the word “Rock” as the other words are clearly understood. Jesus has indicated in his dialogue with the disciples – and Simon in particular, that likewise to Simon recognising him by the revelation from God that Jesus was more than just Yeshua, son of Joseph the carpenter, but was the son of God, the Messiah. Jesus then states, *“and upon this rock.....etc”*. We can agree that the word “Upon” retains its common meaning which brings us to this seemingly same word “Rock”. But hang on here, this word “Rock” is translated from the Greek “Petra” and means a monolithic rock mass, ie a mountain of rock. It bears no resemblance to Petros, which as we have discussed is a stone or even a large pebble, apart from it being made of similar substances.

So the point here is that every Greek person would instantly see that these two words meant entirely different things and more particularly that this “Rock” is most definitely not the same as the “Rock” in the prior segment. And herein is the play on words that has many millions of souls lost in a myth.

The truth is that Jesus (Yeshua) is saying that because Simon has been raised up by God to be the first of the disciples to have seen the son of God through a revelation, that the revelation phenomenon is the foundation. The spiritual mechanism of God giving revelation to mankind not only signals the paradigm shift but is the foundational basis of man's relationship with God from that point onward. So we read, *“upon this rock”* and understand that this monolithic spiritual structure will have this monolithic “Rock” as its foundation; meaning that the new paradigm is to have spiritual revelation (thru the indwelling Holy Spirit) as its solid foundation.

To summarise this point, Jesus is saying likewise that God gave revelation to Simon that Yeshua was Messiah, Yeshua is saying that Simon is the first of the disciples to be given revelation of Messiah's identity and therefore has the right stuff (petros) to be an integral part of the House of God which is referred to as a monolithic rock (Petra) – of which Yeshua is the cornerstone that the builders rejected. Petros (rock) can be used either for foundations or wall construction, but by its meaning it is definitely not the complete house. Petros is only one rock of many that will build the spiritual House of God.

*“I will build my church;”*

Moving straight on, we see from this segment that the foundation from the prior segment is to support a community of faithful believers on Earth and saints in heaven. The word “Church” was translated from the Greek Ekklesia and is not meant to be restricted to just one philosophy of

religion. This word supports the true “church” of God that has no denomination, has no internal hierarchical structure of humans acting in the capacity of priests, high priests or religious ruling class. (See Rev 1:6) Its definition is;

*A popular meeting, especially a religious congregation (Jewish synagogue, or Christian community of members on earth or saints in heaven or both)*

It is my belief that Jesus would be very unhappy with the splintering of the faithful where there is a competition for gathering the greatest numbers of hearts and minds of mankind. Little do some convocations believe (or apparently care) that God sees all things and that He is seriously in the business of souls being saved. There is a severe penalty for leading His flock astray and that sits on the heads of those who perpetrate the offences through artificial incorporated structures.

So, Messiah, the only begotten son of God, the Last Adam, the Word of God and saviour to mankind stated that he, did you notice that, “he personally” will build his faithful believers into a single congregation by the mechanism of God’s indwelling Spirit by conferred revelations of Himself and His Messiah.

*“.... and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”*

Now this is interesting. We see that Messiah will build his congregation together and “*the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it*”. It is a pity that the translation into English has diluted the original message from the Greek scripts, and whilst translators made good attempts to keep the story line accurate, I am of the opinion that over the last six centuries the continuous movement and the transient nature of the English language to keep it contemporary with the world’s evolving modernity has symptomatically meant that much of it has been lost in our strive for common usage. It is probably a carry-over legacy from the languages roots as a tribal dialect that hit Engla-land’s Eastern shores from mainland Europe in the fifth century AD.

The word that has been translated “Hell”, which most people would suggest is the abode of the devil and his demons, is in fact simply the place of the dead. Or perhaps more accurately where our souls are held in death until faithful believers are either raised up by Messiah at the end of the Sixth Seal Period (Revelation 7:14) or if not believers, will be held in death until all are judged before God at his Great White Throne. The Place of the Dead is not a place where we will be tossed into a furnace-like deep cave and be tormented by all manner of evil things. It is merely a place where our souls will be retained. But come the day of our raising up, the gates of this place will not be able to withstand the exodus of the saints under the power of Salvation. The gates will, however, hold back those who are there without salvation until the great and terrible Day of Judgment at the Great White Throne of God. The difference between the two is that believers will appear before God with their Salvation whereas the other group will not.

The conclusion that we come to here is that Simon Barjonas, now the Apostle Petros, is the first of the disciples to whom God gave revelation concerning Jesus (Yeshua) being the Messiah from God. And from our scripts we can follow the dialogue between our Lord and the disciples where, referring to Simon, Jesus said he was a stone (petros) that would be part of the building of a congregation of like faithful believers and his name would be called Petros. And in the last segment we see that the faithful will be released from the place where the dead are held because the gates that hold them in this spiritual realm cannot hold back those under the powers of Salvation.

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The next verse from Matthew is as follows:

Matthew 16:19 *“And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven”*

This is where we need to be correctly dividing the word. This Verse is the stumbling block of great significance to the world today and one can only hope and pray to God our Father in heaven in the name of Salvation that He will confer revelation on the faithful believers of the world to correctly identify the Son of God and Messiah who paid a horrible price to be able to freely give us our salvation. “Let that revelation speak personally to all that will hear in the same manner as Simon, called Petros the Apostle, without any interference from an intermediary.”

This Verse follows directly on from our last discussion concerning the Apostle Peter. The Myth, as we are addressing it methodically, necessitates that the Apostle Peter has the say whether one gets into heaven or not, and this Verse 16:19 is where some theologians say the powers of Salvation are given to Peter to administer. To cut to the chase, this is not true and not in the bible.

The dialogue in Verse 19 is a continuation of the discussion between Jesus (Yeshua) and his disciples from Verse 18, and if we pick up the conversation from Verse 18 after Jesus announced that Simon should be called Petros because of the revelation he received, we see that Jesus is speaking to all of the disciples – not just Simon. In the face of much criticism about manipulating words for vested interests, some have taken the dialogue from Verse 19 to be a personal conferment of powers onto just Simon - and this is not correct. The powers that are referred to in the verse are conferred on all of the disciples and hence in my mind they all take on the persona, with great powers of an Apostle according to their calling.

But the whole story has still not been told, and your attention is paramount. All of the prophets were killed at the hand of anti-God forces, as was Messiah and reportedly as was the Apostle Peter. With the death of Jesus all mankind who had passed away up to that point in time were given opportunity to believe in him being the Son of God and Saviour to mankind. Those who believed were released from their graves after a great earthquake and walked the streets of Jerusalem on the day of Messiah’s death before they were taken up<sup>1</sup>. But for all those who died for the word of God according to the martyr’s decree (Revelation 6:9, 7:14, 20:4) these privileged saints were, and still are, taken directly before the throne of God. It is these saints who do not have to go through judgment before God on the Day of Judgment at the Great White Throne.

This means that, according to popular belief that if Peter was crucified in Rome, that he is now before the throne of God. But even if he were not crucified, he would still be held in the place of those souls whose bodies had ceased to live. Either way, the Apostle Peter is in heaven.

Now once you have died in this physical world, you are indeed dead to it. On death there is no conferral of any spiritual powers or gifts to anyone else, because under the new paradigm spiritual powers are conferred only to those who are faithful believers and the conferral comes from God – not man. Therefore the conferral is very personal. The powers cannot be assigned automatically through a continuum of hierarchical election nor can a vanquished crown bestow the powers of the divine office from which it was wrenched. So let’s absolutely understand that upon his death (either one way or the other) none of the spiritual powers that Apostle Peter had could be siphoned off by another party, whether they be rulers or otherwise. Any claim to the contrary is a complete falsehood.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 27:50-54

This brings us back to Matthew 16:19 where Jesus is saying to the disciples collectively, *“I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”* So we see from this examination that the Myth takes the point, albeit false, that Apostle Peter himself and none of the other disciples were given the keys to the kingdom. It is a point of order that indeed the four Gospels give witness to all of the Apostles having been conferred with spiritual gifts therefore this above erroneous claim that only Peter was empowered is exposed as a blatant lie.

With the death of Jesus, Simon Barjonas (Apostle Peter) and all of the other Apostles, no spiritual powers in any form were automatically, or rather by their own volition, passed on to any other living human being or ruling party on Earth. So in the parlance of good English slang, *“If’n God didn’t personally give ya spiritual gifts or powers then you ain’t got any.”* It is God, and only God who confers spiritual gifts (or powers) to humankind. The old military form of claiming the crown of their vanquished just does not have any relevance to matters spiritual, so if you think you have *“powers”* thru a mechanism of putting another human to death you urgently need to reassess what you think these powers are and from whence they came – because, as stated, *“It ain’t from God”*.

But we could perhaps ask the question whether Peter retained his powers in heaven and currently is performing the duties of the gate keeper at the Pearly Gates. Well, let’s have a look at what happens in these times when we die according to the bible.

There are four pathways that define what happens to us when we die.

1. Upon death, the souls of those who are faithful believers in the Messiah who believe in God and his Messiah (Jesus) are held in the place called *“the place of the dead”* until Jesus ascends his throne and raises up all those who died in salvation. This occurs at the end of the period of the Sixth Seal (Rev 7:14). The duration of time these souls are held in the Place of the Dead scripture refers to them being asleep<sup>2</sup>.

This marks the key point in time when all gentile saints from the Earth are in heaven in the period referred to as *“The Beginning of Sorrows”*. Following this event there are no believers remaining on Earth with the exception of the 144,000 Jewish Servants of God who have been sealed<sup>3</sup>.

But Judgment will not be for approximately seven years until the last week of Daniel’s prophecy has run its course. Judgement occurs on the Day of Judgement where we shall all stand before God and His Great White Throne. This is the last day that will ever occur on planet Earth as this is the start of times eternal in the New Jerusalem.

2. Martyrs who have been killed for The Word of God are privileged because they gave up their lives for the Word of God. These souls go directly to heaven before God’s throne and there wait until they reign with Messiah for one thousand years<sup>4</sup>. Because of their martyrdom they will not go to judgement before God.

3. Children are a special case and there is little scripture that helps our understanding about their pathway. We can take the words of our Lord *“suffer the little children and forbid them not to come unto me”*<sup>5</sup> and have comfort that their souls will be received into heaven, however because of their age and lack of maturity it is only God who can make a call. My opinion is that because this is a very

<sup>2</sup> 1Thessalonians 4:14-15, Matthew 27:52, 1Corinthians 15:51

<sup>3</sup> Revelation 7:4

<sup>4</sup> Revelation 6:9-11, Revelation 20:4-6

<sup>5</sup> Matthew 19:14, Mark 10:14, Luke 18:16

emotional subject for some that the scriptures are purposely scant on detail other than children hold a special place in Jesus' heart.

4. Those who do not believe in God or his Messiah are held in the place called "the place of the dead" until the Day of Judgment before God and the Great White Throne. They will be judged according to their works and from the Book of Life. Those whose names are not recorded in the Book of Life will perish.

Now here is a sobering thought. There are only these four pathways in which we die and through which we face our God on the last day.

It is important that we discuss the phenomenon referred to as the Rapture Theory as promoted by the proponents of Pentecostalism because of its growing popularity and because it is also very misleading and does not have a scriptural base. I have reviewed all of the "pet" verses quoted when any discussion on this subject arises and none of them in correct context support such a mass exodus of living people to heaven. Hebrews 9:27 is a double edged sword when it reads "*And it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.*" We all read this as we don't have reincarnation or the like, but we miss the fact that it is **appointed** unto man - to die. In the case of this theory, it also smacks in the face of 1 Cor 15:50-55. The living cannot get to heaven – full stop. For more detail on this subject refer to the appended study notes where we have identified a gross mis-reading of Matthew and Luke.

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So in relation to our myth of the Apostle Peter listening to a good yarn at the pearly gates and if he gets a good belly laugh out of it he flings open the gates.....well I am sorry but this and any variation of it is comic book fiction. For any every-day soul to get into the New Jerusalem, they will be held in death until the Day of Judgement before God and the Great White Throne. The books will be examined and every person will be judged according to their works and also if their name appears in the Lamb's Book of life. (The exception of course is martyrs for the Word of God)

In relation to only Peter having the keys to the Kingdom; this also is not true and only exists in unsupported (man-made) dogma, and to extract that particular interpretation against all other scholarly and academic teaching, words have to be twisted and purposely mis-read. All of the Apostles were given these keys to the Kingdom – that was the whole purpose of their special calling.

Now I wish to briefly mention the saying in business circles pertaining to the "Peter Principle" of promoting personnel into higher grade jobs. And you may not have realised this but it is connected to our myth in a twisted sort of a way.

The saying commonly means that a person is promoted into a position not for the reasons of deserving or competencies. In the Western world it was said that some were promoted to a higher position simply to get them out of the way – where they went was not relevant just so long as they went away and stopped interfering in the work place in question. For others it was that employers would inexplicably promote employees who were under qualified, under experienced and lacking competencies, but none-the-less they would be pushed up the line.

But the reality of this saying is that it reflects the fact that the Apostle Peter has been promoted into a position of being the deceased head of a church and after his death his powers have been claimed through a victory rite and paraded before mankind as him having an Earthly continuum of hierarchical election, ie a continuing Earthly representative. This is a position that Peter would never

want, nor would accept, and that is without looking at the mistreatment of his Gospel witness, ie he did not have the sole crown for ruling the Kingdom of God, was not the sole person whom was given the keys, and was not the sole person whom was given spiritual gifts by the hand of God.

In the eyes of most of the world's believers, Peter in this case has been promoted to a position where he would deem it to be heresy and more importantly should never have been forced (in absentia) to be made to appear as though it was a God-ordained promotion. Hence is the relevance to this article. He was promoted into a higher Earthly role to a position that he simply couldn't fulfil because it is in error.

So in summary, if you are on your death-bed and are trying to remember a good yarn with the express purpose to engage Peter so he will let you in through the Pearly Gates, forget it. You are not even close to the truth. And that is the truth!

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