

# What Are the Keys to the Kingdom in Matthew 16?

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"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 16:19](#)

In [Matthew 16](#), Jesus mentions keys and, more specifically, keys of the kingdom of heaven. While keys are mentioned in other parts of Scripture, to my knowledge, this is the only place that mentions this exact phrase, the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, a very logical question that I hope you are asking is what are the keys to the kingdom? To help you understand this better, I want to first look at what keys represent in a broader sense and then apply that idea to keys as it relates to the verse in [Matthew 16](#).

## What do keys signify?

In a broader sense, there are three things that keys signify:

### 1 - Keys signify access.

If you have a key, this means you have the ability to gain access. In a generic sense, this could be a building, a car, a safe deposit box, or anything else that uses a key to open it. If you have the key, you can access whatever area the key allows them. In our community, we have a pool that is available to the members of the community. However, in order to enter the pool area, you must have a key. This key is only given to members, and this is what unlocks or makes the pool available to them.

## **2 - Keys signify authority.**

The second thing about a key is having it gives you the authority to use it. Continuing with the pool analogy, when we moved here, they gave us the key to the pool. When they did, they were telling us not only do you have access, but you have the authority or the right to use the pool. This is not unlimited authority because there are hours when the pool is closed, but when it is open, we have the authority to use the key.

## **3 - Keys signify insight.**

The third thing keys signify is insight. This is a little bit different than the first two. Keys can mean information that you have that can help someone else. You have probably heard terms like the key to success or the key to accomplishing or doing something. In this instance, the key becomes a source of insight and knowledge that will help you achieve something you may not have been able to do without those keys.

Let's shift from this broader understanding of keys but use this framework to apply it to the verse here in Matthew.

### **What are the Keys to the Kingdom in [Matthew 16](#)?**

#### **The keys of the kingdom of heaven signify access.**

The first thing to understand is that the keys of the kingdom give access to the kingdom of heaven. Since this is true, then it is necessary for us to know what is the key that will give us access. We can find it in this same chapter just a few verses earlier. When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." – [Matthew 16:13-16](#)

The key that gives us access to the kingdom of heaven is recognizing that Jesus is the Messiah. The word Messiah here means the anointed one who came to redeem the world. When you recognize Jesus is the one anointed to redeem you from your sins, and you put your complete trust in him, then you gain access to the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven is open to you because Jesus is the key to entering the kingdom of heaven, as he said in [John 14](#).

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." – [John 14:6](#)

With access to the kingdom, there also comes access to kingdom resources that are available to address your earthly situations. This means the kingdom of heaven is ready to assist in every aspect of your life, and you have been granted access to this because of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the [faith](#) we profess.

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." – [Hebrews 4:14-16](#)

### **The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven signify authority.**

The second thing about the keys is they give authority to others to enter heaven. Does this mean we stand as judges over people? Absolutely not. However, we have the authority to go and proclaim Jesus is the Messiah, which will allow people to enter the kingdom of heaven. This is what the Great Commission is all about. Jesus giving us the right to go make disciples of all nations. This authority was not just given to Peter but to all believers. When you look at Peter's life, you will discover God used him to open the kingdom to both Jews and Gentiles. Peter preached the first gospel message to Jews at Pentecost, and he also was led to Cornelius' house, who was a Gentile, and he heard the gospel as well. In both instances, Jews and Gentiles entered the kingdom of heaven because Peter was using his authority keys to preach the gospel, thereby opening access to all who would believe.

In the second part of this verse, it mentions binding and loosing. This simply means the authority to tie up or set free. I won't get into an exhaustive definition here, but if you want to learn more about what binding and loosing are, I taught a session on this which you can access [here](#).

### **The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven signify insight.**

The last thing to recognize is the keys to the kingdom give insight. What is the insight it gives? Again, Jesus gives us the answer.

Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven." – [Matthew 16:17](#)

One of the revelations we receive when we understand the keys is the revelation that Jesus is the Messiah. It cannot be overlooked this revelation comes only from heaven. Many people can tell you every fact about Jesus' life yet still miss that he is the Messiah.

This is because they have not been given revelatory insight into who Jesus is. When you access the kingdom of God with the keys he has given us, then you also unlock the wisdom and insight of God. With this insight, you can see life from God's perspective because this is not insight that comes from earth, but divine insight that comes from heaven through the power of the Holy Spirit.

### **What do you do with these keys?**

The final thing to consider is what you do with these keys. I have one answer, use them. Use the keys to access heaven's resources for your earthly situations. Use the authority they give you to share the gospel and open the kingdom of heaven to others. Finally, use them to gain insight into God's perspective on all of life's situations. Since Jesus has given you the keys, he expects you to use them. I would even add you have a responsibility to use them because when you look closer, the keys are not just for you but those around you. I think you would agree there are a lot of people locked up right now who are looking for the key to get out. You have those keys, now go and use them.