

Kingdom Access Denied - How and Why?

by Stella Paterson

We are bombarded on every side with news of "signs and wonders," "moves of God," "the mark of the beast," "wars and rumors of war" - the list is endless. Everyone is looking for some visible manifestation around which they can wrap their minds in an attempt to grasp the reality of what God is doing in these last days. Portions of Scripture have been taken so far out of context that the truth is more and more obscured in man's attempt to interpret what God has spoken. Today we have strange doctrines and grand presentations of "what is to come." And in every case Scripture passages are used to "validate" what is being put forth by these creatures of flesh - mere men and women.

Who do we believe? How do we sort through the myriads of web pages, book pages, or emails flooding our inboxes on a daily basis? When and where will it all end? How did the apostasy reach such magnitude without our seeing it? Do we really need to occupy our minds with so much "news" and so much "prophetic discernment?" When all is said and done, what is the real issue? What is the main message in God's Word?

Over the past several weeks the Lord has been speaking to me about writing this article. He has been quickening various Scripture passages to my spirit. And a few days ago, when I looked at a word meaning in the Greek, the "go ahead" came loud and clear - it is time to write! I am excited to share what the precious Holy Spirit has shown me, and I pray that He will quicken to you these treasures found in the Bible. Now let us look at one thing that will deny access to the Kingdom. Although I use the words "one thing," could it be that it is the most important thing?

Kingdom of God

Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation... (Luke 17:20 EMTV) According to the Greek dictionary, "observation" means "ocular evidence." The Kingdom cannot be seen with the eye for ...the kingdom of God is inside you. (Luke 17:21) The kingdom of God is His "reign" and His work on the inside of man. The only thing that should be visible is Fruit of the Spirit because the man or woman is dead to SELF and hid with Christ in God. (Colossians 3:3)

With everything that is "out there" today, our focus is constantly being drawn to the external. The spirit of antichrist does not want us to hear with our ears and examine our hearts. He does not want us to be broken and humble before our God. The Word tells us in Isaiah 57:15, *For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place,*

*with him who has a **contrite and humble spirit**, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." (NKJV)*

Created in God's image

In the Old Testament, Israel was regarded as the "wife" of Jehovah. Then, in the New Testament, we have true believers in Jesus being called the "Bride of Christ." This gives us a mighty strong clue as to God's expectations for us. We also have Jesus' only commandment - "LOVE!"

If man was created a "relational" being to have communion with God, as did Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, what does all this other stuff have to do with anything? It all boils down to one thing - the serpent's insidious scheme to turn man's attention away from God to SELF, which is what the knowledge of good and evil did. Man's relationship with the Creator was severed, and ever since that time man's relationship with one another has also suffered. Our only hope is to put our trust in Christ's finished work on the Cross so that we might walk in Life, having turned from the (repented) flesh and begun to walk by the Spirit with LOVE abiding in us.

The revelation of who Jesus is was given to Peter, as we read in Matthew 16:16-17: *And Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, because **flesh and blood did not reveal this to you**, but My Father who is in heaven." (EMTV) We also learn this from Paul's words, "But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because **they are spiritually discerned**." (1 Corinthians 2:14 EMTV)*

Keys of the Kingdom

Jesus also spoke these words to Peter: *"And I will give you the **keys of the kingdom** of heaven, and whatever you bind on the earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on the earth will have been loosed in heaven."* (Matthew 16:19 EMTV) Jesus did not say "keys TO the kingdom." He said "keys OF the kingdom" - there is a big difference as we will soon see.

How many books have been written and sermons preached about "binding and loosing?" This is another one of those insidious things that have turned man's focus to things external where he is able to *control* with his words and *do* something *for* the Kingdom of God. How puffed up we have become! There is one overlooked word in the above passage that is the key to understanding what Jesus was saying. That "key" is the word "key."

First of all, let us look at the Greek word from which "key" was translated. The word "kleis" is defined as "a key (as shutting a lock), literally or figuratively" and

comes from "kleio" which means "to close (*literally or figuratively*)."

Notice that in each case it does not mean "to open" - a very significant point. "Kleio" was used in such verses as: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you shut up the kingdom of heaven before men; for you do not enter, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in." (Matthew 23:14 EMTV) "Woe" is described in Strong's Greek dictionary as "A primary exclamation of grief; 'woe'." How very grieved Jesus must have been at those "hypocrites," shutting up the kingdom of heaven against others! Do we think He would be any less grieved at us when we "shut up" the kingdom of heaven against our fellow man; not to mention ourselves?

Now let's look at the remainder of that verse, with word meanings to show the seriousness of Jesus' words to Peter.

Binding and loosing

"...and whatever you **bind** on the earth will have been **bound** in heaven, and whatever you **loose** on the earth will have been **loosed** in heaven." (Matthew 16:19 EMTV)

Strong's Greek dictionary defines the word (*deo*) for "bind/bound" as "to bind (*in various applications, literally or figuratively*)."

According to Strong, the definition of "loose" (*luo*) is "to 'loosen' (*literally or figuratively*)."

And Thayer puts one definition this way: "to loose one bound, i.e. to unbind, release from bonds, **set free**."

The question now is, "how do we bind and loose?" We must consider Jesus' words in Luke 6:37, where He said "And judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. **Forgive**, and you shall be **forgiven**." This particular Greek word (*apolo*) for "forgive/forgiveness" has its root in "*luo*," and actually means "**free fully**." Luke 6:37 is the only reference using this "forgive" and it carries a stronger meaning than "*luo*."

Where love comes in

It goes without saying that a true believer, born from above by the Spirit, would be one who walks in Love because God who is "LOVE" dwells within. If all the Law is fulfilled in Jesus' one commandment to "LOVE," we have a pretty strong indication of what God is looking for in the Bride of Christ. To walk in Love is to walk in forgiveness. If we look at the Fruit of the Spirit in Galatians, we will see that "longsuffering" is evidence of the Spirit's presence in us. The Greek word for "longsuffering" means "longanimity" and is defined as "*patient endurance of injuries*."

Have we truly died to SELF and fully surrendered to the work of the Spirit of Grace? Do we walk in forgiveness, exhibiting *patient endurance of injury* from others? Maybe we could even rephrase the definition to say "patient endurance of *perceived* injury?" Are we "binding" others to us through unforgiveness? And in those "bonds" do we "shut up" heaven to them through our "controlling" unforgiveness, thereby usurping control that belongs only to God? Or are we freeing (loosing) them so that our prayers will not be hindered and the Holy Spirit can freely do a work in them?

In Jesus' lesson on answered prayer, He said "*For this reason I say to you, all things whatsoever you ask for in prayer, believe that you will receive them, and they will be yours. And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, **forgive**, that your Father in heaven may **forgive** you your trespasses. But if you do not **forgive**, neither will your Father who is in heaven **forgive** your trespasses.*" (Mark 11:24-26 EMTV) This particular "forgive" is translated from "*aphiemi*" which means "to send forth" or "lay aside." This is the word Jesus used when He asked the Father to forgive those who had viciously beaten Him and nailed Him to a tree.

How many times do we hear only the 24th verse and think that if we simply "believe" we WILL have whatever we ask the Father? How many of us have never considered the remaining verses about forgiving others? The keys OF the kingdom are ours and the choice is given to us to bind others or to loose them. This solves the mystery of un-answered prayer. We shut the kingdom of heaven against ourselves through un-forgiveness - heaven responds to the pattern we set with our choices.

Choices are extremely difficult to make a lot of times. There are countless situations that many people face, but they may never consider the harm done when forgiveness is withheld. Forgiveness is a must, for our own good as well as those we need to forgive.

The final word

In Jesus' letters to the seven ekklesia of Revelation, there was only one in which He said that He found no fault. That was the letter to the ekklesia in Philadelphia. "Philadelphia" means "brotherly love" and this assembly of believers were walking in obedience to Jesus' commandment to "LOVE." Here is what He told them: "*And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, These things says the Holy One, the True One, He who has the **key of David**, He that opens and no man shuts, except He that opens, and **no man shall open**. I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, and no man can **shut it**; because you have a little strength and have kept My word, and you have not denied My name.*" (Revelation 3:8 EMTV)

The "**key**" of *David* and the word "**shut**" in the above verses are the same as those mentioned earlier. Only Jesus can open the door for He IS the Door. And as He said, "*no man can shut*" the door to those who walk in Love.

Have we forgiven the abusive parent, the unfaithful spouse, the violent husband, the willful and disobedient child, the rapist who violated, the business partner who cheated, the trusted one who lied, the preacher who misled, the one who unjustly accused, the relative who molested, etc., etc., and on and on? Let us search our hearts before God and ask Him to reveal whatever may stand between our selves and others, and ultimately Him. Maybe we need to forgive God for something we believe He has not done when we feel we have asked "in faith?"

However eloquently some may present their "take" on the *Book of Revelation*, I fully believe that the most important thing to remember is our personal relationship with the God of the ages. Our relationships with one another can only be "right" when He is the Source of our life. Only then will the Fruit of the Spirit be evident for all to see. Only then will heaven not be shut against us. The keys of the Kingdom have been given to us - do we handle them with fear and trembling? Could this be what the Apostle Paul had in mind when he said that we must "*...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is working in you, both to will and to do for His good pleasure.*"? (Philippians 2:12b-13 EMTV)