

# SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

## LESSON 11



### **The Great Commission**

## THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM

*Scripture Texts: Matthew 16:19; Luke 9:1-2; John 17:8; Matthew 28:19-20; John 20:21-23*

The keys of the kingdom are God's Word concerning salvation taught in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus gave the keys of the kingdom to be used always as He taught by Word and example. They were not to be mixed with other methods. The Apostles used no other methods because Jesus gave the best method. God told Ezekiel what the responsibility of the watchman was (**Ezekiel 33:1-9**). God-called pastors are God's watchmen who are looking out for the souls of His people today.

**MEMORY VERSE:** *And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.* —**Isaiah 22:22**

### Keys Promised

**Matthew 16:19** Jesus had just told His disciples that He would build His indestructible church. He expressed the foundation of truth on which it would be built. He expressed their being blessed because of the answer that Peter had given to the questions asked. He made plain the truth that HE would be the foundation of His church. A personal knowledge of Christ by His people and His knowledge of them would exist. After these answers He said, **I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.** Without the experience of salvation received only through Christ man can never be given the keys to unlock the chains which bind men in sin's bondage and help them to enter the kingdom.

Keys are means of entrance or of shutting out, of opening or closing. Jesus was soon to leave the earth. He was beginning to build His church and turning the keys over to His followers. On their shoulders, and on ours, rests the work of gathering people into it. The keys are the only tools for doing this. Those who enter are **loosed** from sin. Those who do not, remain **bound**. The destiny of souls is determined for eternity by the way they allow the keys to work in their lives. One's attitude to God's Word and God's Spirit here on earth will be the determining factor as to whether he is **bound** or **loosed in heaven**.

Jesus accused some false teachers of taking **away the key of knowledge** and thus preventing people from entering the kingdom (**Luke 11:52**). Here knowledge is called a key—knowledge of truth.

### Authority of Servants

**Mark 13:34** Jesus, in the form of a parable, speaks of His going away from earth and leaving His church in charge of His servants. He gave them **authority** and **work** and the command to **watch**.

**Luke 9:1-2** When Jesus sent His disciples to preach in the cities round about, He gave them the same—the authority to use the keys. The **AUTHORITY** was **over all devils, and to cure diseases**, The **WORK** was to **preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick**. The **WATCHING** was the faithfulness and care in which they were to obey. The work of the disciples brought results (**Mark 6:12-13; Luke 10:17**). The keys were working.

**John 17:8** In that great prayer of Jesus to His Father just before His death, He said, **I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me.** No one could better give to them the Word of God than the Son of God, sent to earth for that purpose. Jesus, the Word, was **in the beginning . . . and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us . . .** (**John 1:1-2, John 1:14**). Here then, we have found the key which was to open the kingdom to needy sinners—the **Word of God**.

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### Power of Servants

**Matthew 28:19-20** Some days later, after His death, and resurrection, as Jesus was preparing to leave the earth, He charged His disciples, **Go . . . teach all nations . . . to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.** The teaching they were to take to all nations was the teaching Jesus had given them. Teaching is the work. The authority and power is the **Lo, I am with you.** . . . The only way this power can be given one is through the infilling of the Holy Spirit. It is impossible to receive the **Holy Spirit** and turn down the **Word.**

Peter used the keys on the Day of Pentecost and opened the kingdom to three thousand souls. Later Paul carried the same message of repentance and the need of a personal acquaintance with Jesus. He passed on to Timothy the commission: **(2 Timothy 4:1-5) . . . Preach the word;** and the charge, **Watch thou in all things.**

**John 20:21-23** **As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.** No doubt Jesus included many things in these words, but from what immediately followed we are certain one of them was Spirit filling. He was sent from the Father and was given the Holy Spirit for His work. He gives His people the Holy Spirit for their work. **He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whosoever sins ye remit . . . retain. . . .** Would they personally decide, "I will remit this man's sins, and retain this one's sins"? No. They preached the Gospel in the power of the Spirit. Those who believed had their sins remitted. Those who would not believe had their sins retained. **They went forth, and preached . . . the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following (Mark 16:20).** The only preaching the Lord confirms is the Gospel, preached in the Spirit. Paul preached that the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life **(2 Corinthians 3:6).** The Gospel is still the key. It still has the same power when preached or taught in the Spirit.

**1 Peter 4:11** Spreading the Gospel in the power of the Spirit is the only way it can be effectively spread. **If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God . . . of the ability which God giveth.** Then God will be **glorified through Jesus Christ.**

There are men today who distort the Gospel and hinder people from entering the kingdom. Souls will be in hell because of their false teaching. Men preach that it is not necessary to live holy or even possible to please God here in this life. This is just one of the false teachings taught by those who hold the Word of God in their hands, but use it not. What is the best remedy we have against these evils? How did the Apostles use the keys? They preached and lived a full Gospel. So must we.

### JUST A THOUGHT

**Make the most of life before the most of life is gone.**

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