

Whose Church?

INTRO: *Today we begin our annual **Church in Training** (albeit a few months later than usual) and start by discussing the most basic of questions concerning the Church. Interpretations of Simon Peter's confession and Jesus' response in Matthew 16 has divided the Church throughout her history, but an honest and accurate interpretation consistent with Scripture is critical to appreciate **Whose Church it is.***

I. Jesus is the _____ (16:13-17). *The World cannot recognize Jesus as Messiah unless God blesses with sovereign grace.*

II. The _____ currently rules over a *spiritual* form of God's Kingdom known as the _____ (16:18). *The Messiah was promised in the OT to reign over a physical Kingdom. In His first coming, Jesus paid the price for that citizenship.*

III. The _____ grows as Believers proclaim the _____ (16:19-20). *A key is a simple tool to unlock or lock a door. The Gospel is the Church's key which, when accepted, opens the door to salvation, but when rejected, locks the door to salvation.*

A. _____. *The Gospel is a **treasure** entrusted to clay vessels! (2 Cor. 4:7).*

B. _____. *The power to **loose** or **bind** on earth is related to whatever has **already been decided** in heaven with regard to the Gospel's reception or rejection.*