

Ezekiel 2, 3; Lord's Day 31

THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM

- I. The concept.
 - A. The idea of the keys is that the church is as a kingdom or fortress with walls and gates.
 - B. Ezekiel 33:1-11 portrays the church as a city with watchmen who are to warn the inhabitants of dangers without and within.
 1. The church is in the midst of a world which hates her (Jn 17:14) and the devil seeks always to attack or to infiltrate her.
 2. Another danger is the citizens: they are in constant need of admonition, lest they leave off a holy walk.
 - C. The Presbyterian/Reformed form of church government is Christ's rule through elders (Acts 20:17,28; I Cor. 12:28; Heb. 13:17). All elders are equal in authority, with a plurality in each congregation (Acts 14:23; I Peter 5:1).
- II. Who exercises the keys? Who are the guardians of the Church?
 - A. Centrally and essentially this authority and ability belongs only to Christ (Rev. 1:18; 3:7,8).
 - B. Christ exercises the keys through the instrumentality of the Apostles and the elders (Matt. 18:18; John 20:23; Heb. 13:17).
 1. The apostles transferred this authority to the elders they ordained in every city.
 2. The authority of elders is implied in their names, their duties, and the calling to submit to them.
 - C. The keys are a spiritual (not a physical) power by pronouncing what the Bible teaches.
- III. There are three purposes for the exercise of the keys of the kingdom of heaven.
 - A. The glory of God.
 - B. The well-being of the church.
 - C. The salvation and spiritual well-being of the believer.