

The Keys of the House

Isaiah 22:15-25; Matthew 16:19

WHAT WE FOUND

The second seal is open: the job posting was hiding in **Isaiah**. We watched the royal steward's office, "over the household" of the house of David, change hands: Shebna deposed for pride, Eliakim invested with robe, authority, fatherhood ("a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem"), and "the key of the house of David; he shall open, and none shall shut" (Isaiah 22:22). One king, one steward, one key: the enduring pattern of David's kingdom, and this office is one we actually watch being handed on in the Old Testament.

Scripture itself certifies the link to Matthew 16: Revelation 3:7 quotes Isaiah 22:22 of the risen Christ, "who has the key of David." Christ holds the key forever and gives the keys to Peter: he delegates without abdicating, as the Davidic king did with his steward. So the pope is not Christ's successor, because Christ is not dead; he is Peter's successor and the living King's steward, a vicar. Joseph's appointment offers the perfect analogy for the limit: "only as regards the throne will I be greater than you" (Genesis 41:40). The steward's authority is real, but the throne is never his.

And the oracle's last word keeps everyone honest: even Eliakim's peg gives way (22:25). The office never deifies the man; the steward is judged by the King he serves. Hold onto that verse. We will need it soon.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Jerome *Commentary on Isaiah, on chapter 22*

Jerome reads the key of the house of David laid on Eliakim's shoulder as a figure fulfilled in Christ, who declares in the Apocalypse that he himself holds the key of David, opening what none can shut. What the steward carried in figure and for a time, Jerome teaches, the King owns in fullness and forever.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Ephrem the Syrian *Homily 4.1, as long handed down under his name*

In this homily Christ addresses Simon directly: I have made you the foundation of the holy Church, and I have given you the keys of my kingdom. Ephrem's Syriac tradition, praying in a tongue next door to Jesus' own Aramaic, heard in Kepha's keys the full weight of a royal appointment: the treasures of the King entrusted to his chosen servant.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Cyril of Jerusalem *Catechetical Lectures*

Instructing catechumens in the mid-fourth century, Cyril calls Peter the chief and foremost of the apostles, the bearer of the keys of the kingdom of heaven. For Cyril this is simply the Church's plain memory, taught to

beginners without argument: among the Twelve there is an order, and at its head stands the keybearer.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

1.

Read Isaiah 22:15-25 once more this week, then Revelation 3:7-8, and write in your own words, one sentence each: what the King keeps, and what the steward carries.

2.

Send a message this week to a spiritual father in your life, a priest, a grandfather, a mentor, thanking him specifically.

3.

Keep the daily Our Father for the pope, and this week add: "Lord, make your steward faithful, and your household one."

MEMORY VERSE

"And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David; he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open." (Isaiah 22:22, RSV2CE)

BEFORE NEXT SESSION

Read **Matthew 16:19** and **Matthew 18:15-20**, and notice carefully who is being addressed in each. Also read **Deuteronomy 17:8-13** cold, without commentary, and bring one observation about it. First blank stays sealed.

Catechism Connection: CCC 552; 553; 881