

Ezekiel 33; Lord's Day 31

THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM

1. The idea of the keys portrays the church as a kingdom or fortress with walls and gates.
1. The “keys” are the authority and power to determine what shall have a place within the walls of the Church.
2. Ezekiel 33:1-11 pictures the Church as a city with watchmen.
1. A danger: the Church exists in the midst of a sinful world which hates the Church (John 17:14).
2. Another danger is the citizens.
- Forms of church government or polity.
 1. State rules the church (Erastian).
 2. Hierarchical.
 3. Congregational or Independent.
 4. Presbyterian or Reformed, is that Christ rules His church through elders (Acts 20:17,28; I Cor. 12:28; Heb. 13:17).
- Who exercises the keys? Who are the guardians of the Church?
 1. Centrally and essentially this authority and ability belongs only to Christ.
 2. Christ is pleased to exercise the keys through the instrumentality of the Apostles and the elders (Matt. 16; Heb. 13:17).
 3. The keys exercise a spiritual , not physical, power by pronouncing what the Bible teaches.
1. Elders have Christ's promise that He will work through them.
2. God alone forgives and condemns, but the church has the right to make declaration of who is and is not forgiven.
- There are three purposes for the exercise of the keys of the kingdom of heaven?
 1. The glory of the ever-blessed God.
 2. The well-being of the church.

3. The salvation and spiritual well-being of the believer.
4. Conclusion.