

# The Gates of Hades Will Not Prevail

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Matthew 16:18

In this passage, Jesus asked His disciples what others said about Him and what they said (Matthew 16:13-15). Peter confessed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:16). This was the basis for Jesus' promise to build His church (Matthew 16:18). He then said that not even "the gates of Hades" would "overpower it" or "prevail against it" (KJV). Hades is the realm of departed spirits (cf. Luke 16:19-31). Jesus' point was this – death was not going to stop His plan for His church. In this lesson, we are going to notice four ways in which this is true.

## Death Would Not Stop the Establishment of His Church

- Jesus promised that He would build His church (Matthew 16:18) – not even death would prevent this; He even had this in mind when He made this promise (Matthew 16:21); at the time, Peter did not understand how this was possible (Matthew 16:22-23)
- Jesus was crucified, but He was also raised from the dead (Matthew 28:5-6; Acts 1:3) – death could not hold Him in its power (Acts 2:24); after His resurrection and ascension, His church was established (Acts 2:1-4, 37-38, 41, 47)

## Death Would Not Stop the Growth of His Church

- Not long after the church was established, it faced opposition – Peter and John were arrested (Acts 4:1-3); when they kept preaching, the apostles were arrested, threatened, and beaten (Acts 5:17-18, 40); not long after this, Stephen was killed (Acts 7:57-60)
- Despite all of this, the church continued to grow (Acts 2:41, 47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7; 8:4-5, 12; 9:31; et al.); the early disciples knew Jesus was raised from the dead (Acts 2:32; 3:15; 5:30-32; 1 Corinthians 15:4-8); His resurrection gives hope for our resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20), so they did not fear death (cf. Matthew 10:28)

## Death Would Not Stop the Continuity of His Church

- The apostles were tasked with carrying out the Great Commission (Mark 16:14-16) – they performed miracles to confirm their message (Matthew 16:19-20); they imparted miraculous gifts to others (Acts 8:14-17) in order to help establish the church (Romans 1:11)
- However, there are no living apostles today – we cannot establish an unbroken line back to the apostles, but we do not need to; we have the word they revealed (John 16:13; 2 Peter 1:12-15; 1 Corinthians 2:10-13); the seed of the kingdom is the word of

God (Luke 8:11; 1 Peter 1:23), which endures forever (1 Peter 1:25); because of this, even if every living Christian dies, the church has not been destroyed

### **Death Would Not Stop the Glorification of His Church**

- The church is described as the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:22-25) – the church is made up of those who are saved (Ephesians 5:23; cf. Acts 2:47); they have been sanctified and cleansed (Ephesians 5:26), set apart and forgiven of sins
- A time is coming when He will “present...the church in all her glory” (Ephesians 5:27) – one day, the Lord will return and receive us to the home He has prepared (John 14:2-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18); despite trials, suffering, and even death, we will be glorified with Him in that day (1 Peter 1:6-9)

### **Conclusion**

- Jesus promised His disciples that He would build His church – even though He died, He fulfilled His promise
- Even though disciples of every generation face death, the church would not be defeated – it would continue to grow, continue to stand, and will be glorified with Him in the end
- Knowing this, we need to make sure we are part of His church and are faithfully serving Him in it