

The gates of hell

Matthew 16:13 - 18

And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

“The gates of hell shall not prevail against it” is often taken to mean that any attempt of satan to mount an attack against the church of Jesus Christ will not succeed.

But that’s not the same as saying the gates of hell will not prevail. Gates are not offensive weapons, they’re used for defense.

Jesus was not saying hell will attack the church, He was saying the church will attack hell.

Psalms 9:13

Have mercy on me, O LORD! Consider my trouble from those who hate me, You who lift me up from the gates of death,

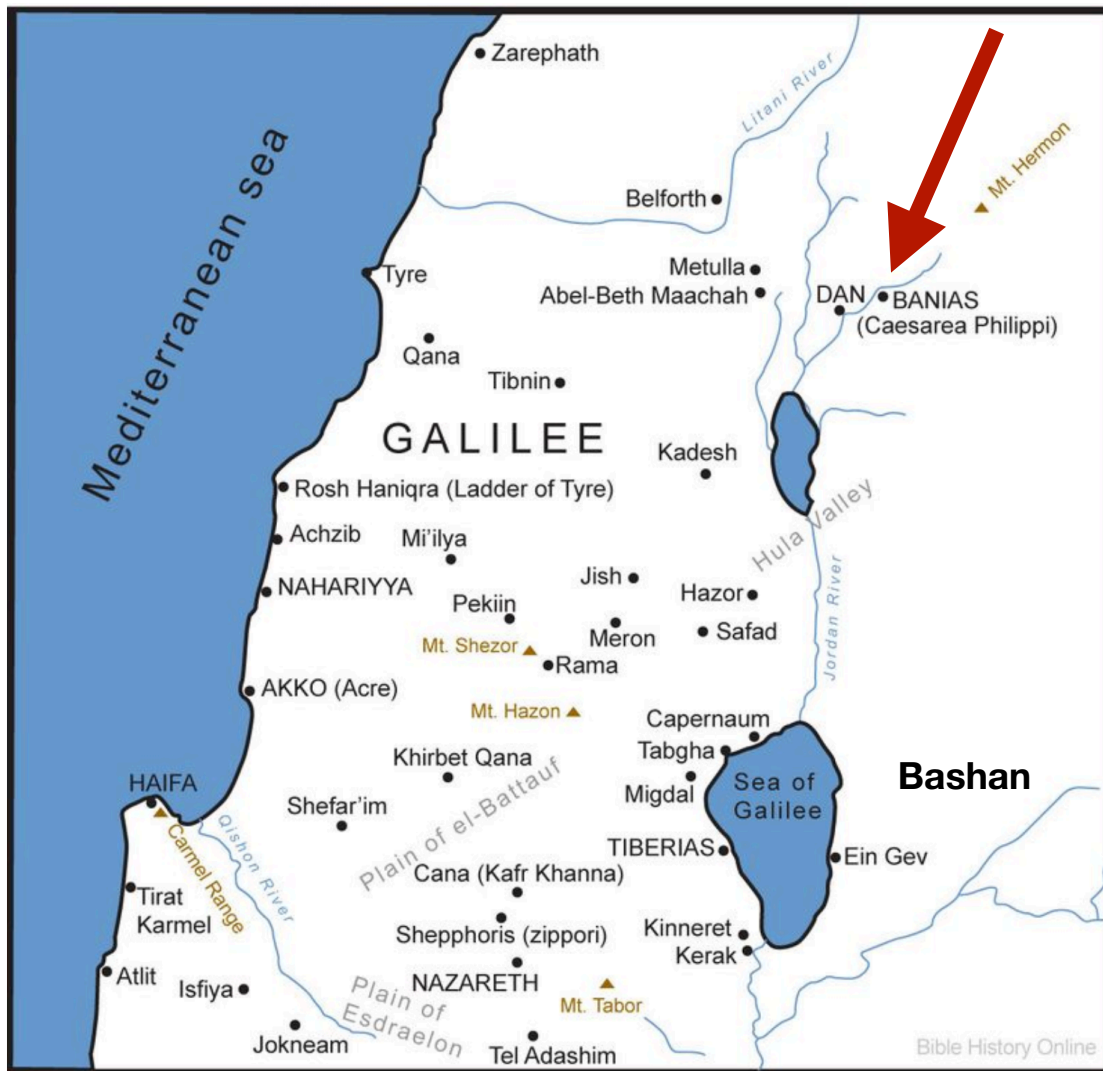
Job 38:17

Have the gates of death been revealed to you? Or have you seen the doors of the shadow of death?

Isaiah 38:10

I said, “In the prime of my life I shall go to the gates of Sheol; I am deprived of the remainder of my years.”

What we have here is a location of Caesarea Philippi. It's known by a number of names where the confession, the Peter rock passage occurs. It's also known as Banias or Panias, the Grotto of Pan, later on in Jesus day.



Adjacent to this was a Baal cult. Baal is lord of the dead, the underworld, this is Baal's role in Canaanite religion. So you have a matrix of ideas here, you also have Bashan is actually an important term.

Here's Caesarea Philippi at the top. This is where this scene occurs, also known as Baniyas, or Panias. You'll notice Galilee, this is Upper and Lower Galilee on the left side.

On the right lower side, this whole region, actually, going down it includes Edrei and Ashtaroth, is not on this map, but this whole region is Bashan in the Old Testament.

This is the region where Joshua and Moses went up on the other side of the Jordan, heading to Bashan to get rid of the last vestiges of the giant clans

In that area; the Rephaim. This is their turf, or was their turf in the Old Testament. So, if you take a look at this Caesarea Philippi, there's the rock. When Jesus is standing in this place, and he says; "You're Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church." This is the Grotto of Pan. This is Banias/Panias.



This is in their thinking, both in the Canaanite world Ashtaroah and Edrei were gateways to the nether world. This is adjacent to a cult of Baal, the god of the underworld. This is what he's talking. It's hard to miss the rock. "upon this rock, I will build my church." You know, basically Jesus saying; I'm going to reverse death. I'm going to be the cure for death. I'm going to turn Satan's Dominion The Lord of the dead, Beelzebul, the New Testament term for Satan. It means Prince Baal, Ba'al Zəbūb. He is God of the dead, Lord of the dead. This is why Baal becomes a Satan figure, because Satan, as the result of his rebellion, is lord of the dead, everything dies.

Everything winds up on his doorstep as it were. And Jesus is saying, well, I'm here to preach the kingdom of God. And upon this rock I'm going to build my church and the gates of hell are not going to be able to **withstand** it.

Now you might have noticed the subtle difference in my translation there. ESV has "the gates of hell or Hades shall not prevail against it."

There is no preposition here that means "against". That's a translator's attempt to capture what's in the Greek. Rather, rather, there's a better way to translate this. And that is; the gates of hell will not be able to withstand it, the verb use there "stand against it" can also be "withstand", and then you don't need the preposition. "The gates of hell will not be able to withstand it."

And so what you have here is Jesus saying, in effect, I'm going to take Satan's domain, where he lives, the Lord of the dead, and I'm going to turn it into his own tomb. I'm going to empty the place out.

So, what exactly is Jesus doing at that location with the pronouncement that his church will prevail over the gates of hell? Among other things, he is telling them that his church is being built with Galileans, in Galilee, at the very heart of the evil kingdom. He is knocking at the front door of the rival kingdom's headquarters and proclaiming their doom through the ministry of his disciples.

- He is also provoking the forces of darkness to attempt to thwart his mission, drawing them to move to have the Jewish and Roman authorities to crucify him.
- The spiritual geography of Mount Hermon and Bashan also explains a strange reference in [Ps. 22:10-15](#) about being surrounded by the "bulls of Bashan." Psalm 22 is recognized by Christians as the messianic psalm of Jesus' crucifixion. This is a poetic reference to the forces of evil, spiritually centered in Bashan, the land of darkness that had seen his great light.
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- The rock which Jesus referred to in this passage was neither Peter nor Himself; it was the rock on which they were standing—the foot of Mount Hermon, the demonic headquarters of the Old Testament and the Greek world.
- It is the Church that Jesus sees as the aggressor. He was declaring war on evil and death. Jesus would build His Church atop the gates of hell—He would bury them.
- We have been given our marching orders (Matthew 28:18-20), and when we preach the gospel of Christ, we are storming the gates of hell.

Romans 1:16

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

And not even the curse of death can stop it. But we have to preach the gospel **Biblically**. You mean I can't walk up to someone on the street and say..."Jesus Loves you!"

That's not how the apostles did it. Maybe our methodology is wrong. Maybe it's not biblical. The apostles said things like; "God commands men everywhere to repent!" Matthew 4:17

The call was going out to have people **submit** themselves to the lordship of Jesus Christ, **Trusting** in Him, **fleeing** from their sin, **believing** in Him and receiving the gift of eternal life. That's how the apostles did it.

1 Timothy 4:1-5

1 I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:

2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

3 *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;*

4 *and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.*

5 *But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.*

Why do we need to be *charged* to do that?

Because there's price to pay when you do that in the midst of a culture that **loves** you if you do everything else but that.

1 Corinthians 15:3-11

3 *For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,*

4 *and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,*