

COLLEGE OF THE SCRIPTURES



Greater Christ Temple APOSTOLIC CHURCH

2940 S. Anthony Blvd. Fort Wayne, IN 46806

Wednesday Evening Bible Study 6:00 PM

“The Destiny of the Church”

Part 01

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pastor / teacher

GreaterCTC.org



Matthew 16:13-18

13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

- Caesarea Philippi, which stood in a lush area near the foot of Mount Hermon, became the religious center for worship of the Greek god, Pan. The Greeks named the city Panias in his honor. Years later, when Romans conquered the territory, Herod Philip rebuilt the city and named it after himself. But Caesarea Philippi continued to focus on worship of Greek gods. In the cliff that stood above the city, local people built shrines and temples to Pan.
- Interestingly, Jesus chose to deliver a sort of "graduation speech" to his disciples at Caesarea Philippi. In that pagan setting, he encouraged his disciples to build a church that would overcome the worst evils, "The Gates of Hell".
- Caesarea Philippi's location was especially unique because it stood at the base of a cliff where spring water flowed. At one time, the water ran directly from the mouth of a cave set in the bottom of the cliff.

The Gates
of Hell.

Caesarea
Philippi



- The pagans of Jesus' day believed that their gods lived in the underworld during the winter and returned to earth each spring. They saw water as a symbol of the underworld/realm of the dead and thought that their gods traveled to and from that world through caves. They believed that their city was literally at the gates of the underworld, the gates of hell. In order to entice the return of their god, Pan, each year, the people of Caesarea Philippi engaged in horrible deeds, including prostitution and sexual interaction between humans and goats.
- When Jesus brought his disciples to the area, they must have been shocked. Caesarea Philippi was like a red-light district in their world and devout Jews would have avoided any contact with the despicable acts committed there. It was a city of people eagerly knocking on the doors of hell.
- Standing near the pagan temples of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked his disciples "Who do you say that I am?" Peter boldly replied, "You are the Son of the living God." The disciples were probably stirred by the contrast between Jesus, the living God, and the false hopes of the pagans who trusted in "dead" gods. ⁵

- Jesus continued, "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it" (Matt. 16:16-18).
Jesus' church would be built on the "rock" of Caesarea Philippi, a rock literally filled with niches for pagan idols, where ungodly values dominated.
- Gates were defensive structures in the ancient world. By saying that the gates of hell would not overcome, Jesus suggested that those gates were going to be **attacked**. Standing as they were at a literal "Gate of Hades, Jesus was now commissioning them to a huge task: to attack evil, and to build the church right on top of the very places that were most filled with moral corruption!
 - The great commission is a charge, given to the whole Church, to take the offense and **ATTACK** the Kingdom of darkness! We are on a rescue mission, we are called to go behind enemy lines and snatch souls out of the fire!!!
- Jesus presented a clear challenge with his words at Caesarea Philippi: He didn't want his followers hiding from evil: He wanted them to **storm the gates of hell!**

STORM

THE

GATES

Worship With Us

Greater Christ Temple

APOSTOLIC CHURCH



2940 S. Anthony Blvd.
Ft. Wayne, IN 46806

Sunday School 9:00 AM
Morning worship 10:30 AM

Social Distancing • Face Masks
Hand Sanitizer • Safety Precautions

APOSTLE MARK A. HAYWOOD
senior pastor

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