

The Gates of Heaven - part 2

In part 1 we talked about how we are literally the house of God, the gate of heaven, and we are to release the Kingdom on earth. When that takes place we see people healed, delivered, saved, and whole atmosphere's transformed. We are to walk under an open heaven receiving revelation and releasing the supernatural glory of God into situations that are under the influence of the enemy and this world. To continue on this thought I want us to look at a well known verse where Jesus was speaking to his disciples in Matthew chapter 16.

It says, starting in verse 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?" We know the rest of the conversation as the disciples answered, "some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." Jesus then goes on to ask them "But who do you say that I am?" To which Simon Peter answers, "You are the Christ the Son of the living God." Jesus responds by saying, "flesh and blood had not revealed that to him but My Father which is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

There is a lot in that passage of scripture but I want to focus on the last statement. Jesus says the gates of hell shall not prevail against His church. Now there has been a lot of debate as to what Jesus meant by the "gates of hell." Some have interpreted it to mean the gates or power of death will not prevail against the church since the word for hell in the Greek is "hades." The implication is that 1) either death, which could not hold Jesus in the grave, will neither be able to prevail over the life of the believer who will have victory over it or 2) that through out the ages the church will remain as generations of believers die and pass the faith on to others. Some have taken it to mean, since the gates of the city represented the place of the city's authority and the city's defense, that since satan is the ruler of this fallen world he will not be able to defend and prevail against the church as they storm the gates of hell. All these views are valid and possible, but to grasp a greater understanding of these words we must look into the historical context and setting of this great statement by Christ.

When Jesus said that the gates of hell would not prevail against his church he had just come to Caesarea Philippi, a city on the northern area of Galilee near the foot of Mt. Hermon close to the city of Dan. In Old Testament times the city was known as Baal Hermon, likely because of the amount of Baal worship there, who was the pagan god of fertility, but in Hellenistic times it was called Paneas because the Greek god Pan was worshipped there replacing the Baal worship. In later years after the Romans conquered the area Herod Philip rebuilt the city and named it after himself, but the city continued its worship of the greek gods. In the cliffs that stood above the city the people carved niches for shrines to Pan out of the rock. The reason this cliff was cho-

sen was because of the large cave that was in it from where a spring flowed out as one of the sources for the Jordan River. The pagans literally believed that this cave was the gate to the underworld, the gate of hell, where the fertility gods lived in the winter. In order to entice their god Pan to return each year they would practice abominable rituals including temple prostitution and other gross immorality.

So here we have a picture of a huge rock with a cave that is known as the gate of the underworld from which a stream of water flows out and is the main place of pagan worship. It is with this setting that Jesus says to Peter after confessing that He was the Christ, that



upon this rock He would build His church. Across the way there was a rock depicting worship to false gods but Christ says that his church will be built upon the living stones or rock of those who believe He is the messiah. Out of this rock would flow living water as well and the gates of hell would not be able to prevail against it.

Jesus plainly states hell has gates. If hell has gates then heaven has gates too. We see what the gates of heaven are by what He states will be in opposition to the gates of hell. He says that the gates of hell will not prevail against the church. It is the church vs. the gates of hell. Both are gates. Both are releasing the Kingdom, authority, rule, and will of their king on earth. What is the church? It is a called out group of people with the purpose of being a dwelling place for God in the Spirit (Eph. 2:21-22) and combating the forces of darkness (Eph. 6:12). The churches two fold purpose is to be the temple of God made of living stones to house the manifest presence of God, and to be a gateway of heaven, releasing God's rule and will on earth combating and pushing back the forces of darkness. So simply, what are the gates of heaven? The Church. What is the Church? People who believe.

So then what are the gates of hell? People by whom satan is using to bring his will to pass on earth. Just as the pagan worship at Caesarea Philippi was most definitely releasing demonic activity through the peoples' actions and words, so people today are doing the same thing. Don't just think of people involved in witchcraft or satanic worship, all those who line their thoughts, actions, and words up, even unknowingly to the spiritual ramifications, are being used

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New DVDs available at our Bookstore

"Take Your Position" - Recorded at Word of Life Church were the Holy Spirit moved powerfully as many responded to this message

"Hungry for the Fire" - Recorded at a recent youth revival - humorous and powerful

Both available on DVD—order by calling our office or visiting www.BenNaughton.com

-- REVIVAL RESOURCE --

This month's revival resource is a message on DVD preached by Ben Naughton entitled "Hungry for the Fire." This message was given at a youth revival service in Naples, Florida. If you are hungry for more of God's consuming fire get ready as you watch this DVD. You will find yourself ignited with a fresh hunger for the fires of revival and possibly laughing in the process.

Ministry Reports & Testimonies

Port Charlotte, FL - April and I had a great time of ministry and fellowship at River of Life Worship Center. As people came forward the Holy Spirit fell giving everyone a desire to go deeper into the presence of the Lord.

Holbrook, NY - On Friday night I ministered to around 150 young people as many different churches came together for an awesome youth revival. The fire of God touched many young people that night. Sunday morning I gave a message on the joyful sound and prophetic worship to see the glory of God fall and revival come. On Sunday night God moved mightily and the meeting transitioned into a healing service. Many remarkable healings took place as the power of God fell in the church.

to release darkness on earth. Have no fear though, the gates of hell cannot and will not prevail against the Church of Jesus Christ. We must become co laborers with Christ and release the living waters of the Holy Spirit from within us, literally releasing Heaven on earth, and be that gateway for signs, wonders, and miracles to take place for the glory of God.

Why are people the gates by which supernatural activity and its interference with the affairs of earth are released? In the beginning, when God created the whole natural order, earth, and man, He set it up so that only man had legal dominion on earth. Gen. 1:26 states, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion... over all the earth." Therefore the only one with legal right before God to interfere with the affairs of the created order on earth has to be human, that is a spirit that has a soul and lives in an earth suit, otherwise known as a body, which was created of the earth/dust of the ground. Have you ever wondered why God doesn't just step down and fix all of the world's woes? God cannot interfere with the affairs of earth because He will not break His own word. He is always looking for a man or woman to come into agreement with Him so that His will can be done and His Kingdom can come on earth as it is in Heaven. That is why God always found a man to work with whenever He wanted to do something on earth. Whether it was Abraham, Noah, or Moses, He always has and always will work through man, and this is why He works through His Church. This is why God tells us to pray because it is literally legally releasing God to intervene with the affairs of man on earth. This is why He also had to come born as a man through a woman to legally take back the authority stolen by satan and redeem man back to Himself. This is also why demons, who are spirits without a body and are acting illegally on earth, are always looking for a body to possess. The

MIRACLE TESTIMONY! - I am now thirteen years old. When I was three years old, my chin stopped growing on one side. Leaving me with a crooked chin. Throughout the years my parents and I have always asked pastors to pray to God to heal my chin. Then Pastor Ben came to our church. My parents asked Pastor Ben to pray for me. I had already thought that I would be like that for the rest of my life. After he prayed for me, I felt my whole chin turn very warm. It wasn't hot, but warm, almost like a hand. Now my chin opens and closes normally and I can now chew without always biting myself. Thanks to God, anything is possible and nothing is impossible.

-Victor

devil is looking for a man or woman to come into agreement with him, so his kingdom can come and his will can be done on earth. That is why demons always attack the mind, so they can control people's actions, open a door for them to enter their lives, and bring the devil's will to pass on earth. We as believers are to renew our minds and be possessed with God's Holy Spirit and yield our thoughts and actions to Him so His will is done on earth as it is in Heaven. Both people, those in relationship to the Lord and those under the influence of the enemy are gateways. People through their ungodly actions and words are releasing hell on earth and believer through their actions and words are releasing the flow of the Holy Spirit to release Heaven on earth. Just as out of that rock in Caesarea Philippi sprung a stream of water, so the Bible says we are to guard our heart for out of it flows or springs the issues of life (Prov. 4:23). Jesus said those who believed in Him out of their innermost being would flow rivers of water. What streams are flowing out of your life? Streams of God's supernatural presence and power or polluted streams of worldly wisdom and demonic influence?

To finish this teaching on the gates of Heaven we will look at Psalm 24:7-10 in next month's article and see the King of Glory who enters into our lives to fight our battles.

BNM Itinerary

<i>Tempo de Gloria</i> Bonita Springs, FL 7pm	3/1
<i>Church Alive Worship Center</i> Lafayette, IN	3/6-7
<i>Centro de Avivamiento Rehobot</i> Easton, PA	3/21-22
<i>Nueva Jerusalem</i> Parsipanny, NJ	3/26-29
<i>Ft. Myers Foursquare Church</i> Ft. Myers, FL	4/19
<i>Slavic Christian Ministries</i> Englewood, FL	4/25-26
<i>New Life Assembly of God</i> Farmingdale, NY	5/15-17



Ministry Needs:
MiniDV Camcorder—\$350
Laptop Computer—\$800
Firewire Card & Cable—\$100

Prayer Points

- Anointing and Open Heavens for Signs, Wonders, and Miracles
- For the Fires of Revival to be released in each church we minister
- Necessary finances to come in to do all God is calling us to do
- Hedge of Protection around Ben & April
- Ben & April to have greater intimacy with the Lord

Send us your prayer requests & Testimonies!

April and I would love to pray for you and to hear of the testimonies of what God has done in your life through our ministry.

**E-mail us at: BNM@BenNaughton.com
Or write us at: PO Box 07478, Ft. Myers, FL 33919**