

# The Gates Of Hell

Do you ever feel, as a conservative Christian in this changing culture, that you are out of place? That our world has, as they say, “gone to hell?” You aren’t alone!

It’s the furthest north that we have record of Jesus ever traveling to: Caesarea Philippi. There at the base of the sheer cliff of Mount Hermon was a center of pagan worship. The dark god Pan (from which comes our word “panic”) was worshipped here. The Canaanites had worshipped their god Baal here. The rock face was covered with carved alcoves for worshipping various gods. Near a cave here, which the Romans believed was the entrance to the world of demons, were several pagan temples. Here all kinds of horrid things happened. Ritual prostitution. Bestiality, where humans performed sexual acts with animals in broad daylight. Can you imagine the horror of the disciples when Jesus took them there?



Cliffs of Mount Hermon

Some years back, I stood in that place. The places of pagan worship were still visible, carved into the high stone wall. The foundations of the temples of unimaginable perversion are still visible. Even two thousand years since Jesus had been there, and these places were alive with perversion, this place still felt dark to me!

It is in this place that Jesus asks, ***“Who do people say the Son of Man is?”***

And Peter answers, ***“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”*** Jesus commends Peter and replies that ***“on this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”*** Matthew 16:13-18 (NIV). The “rock,” of course, that He is speaking of is not Peter himself (as Roman Catholicism wrongly understands) but the “rock,” the solid foundation, of the declaration that Jesus is the Christ, the only begotten, crucified and risen and reigning Son of God!

That is the foundation upon which the true Church is built. And we have the promise that the very Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it! We live in a time when many perversions and unimaginable things are promoted as normal, right, and good. Our culture has embraced as “normal” things that not so long ago would have embarrassed most people even to mention. Some congregations and denominations even join in the apostasy. It can be so hard for Biblical believers to stand in this world without frustration ... even “panic!” But we need not fear. And we must stand firm on the unchanging, solid rock foundation of the Bible!

Jesus led His Disciples to that place without fear. He has brought us to this time in history without fear! We must proclaim truth. We must stand for truth. We must share the Gospel with love and care. Our churches may be called “narrow-minded” or “backward.” You may be seen as “out of touch.” But Jesus will help us, and some will turn from their ways and join us in the Kingdom, and we shall rejoice!

**Larry M. Dentler CBC Executive Board**

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## **Weekly Prayer Points**

Our highest calling is to bring others to Christ. It is the primary mission of our congregations! It is the primary work of the Covenant Brethren Church as a young denomination. In service and compassion work, we seek to point to Jesus. In fellowship, teaching, and preaching, we lift up Jesus. In a lost world, so many need to hear and to know Him. Pray for yourself for the courage and opportunities to share the Gospel. Pray for the faithfulness of our church to win the lost. Pray for open minds and hearts. King Solomon wrote, “...he who wins souls is wise.” (Proverbs 11:30 NIV)

### **Please pray for these congregations and pastors:**

- Bowden Family Worship Center Congregation in Bowden, WV and pastor Lynn Ryder
- Brake congregation in Petersburg, WV and pastor Craig Howard

**CBC Prayer Committee**