

**(Matt. 16:21)** – In *Matthew 16:18*, the Lord said, *“I will build My church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”* This means that all the forces, strategies, and designs of Satan and His evil spirits which operate out of the pit of hell, all the powers of death and the grave, cannot overcome or prevent the building of the true church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember, His church is not a building or a denomination. His church is His bride which consists of all the elect of God, chosen by God before the world began and given to Christ to be His possession in glory forever and ever. This means that by His power and grace, He will not fail to save even one of His chosen people (Matt. 1:21), who are called His sheep (John 10:11-14), His brethren (Heb. 2:10-17, His redeemed ones (1 Pet. 1:18); the justified and the called (Rom. 8:29-30). He will not fail to bring them to glory (John 6:37; 10:27-30).

Here, following Peter’s confession of Jesus as the true Messiah (the Savior of sinners), the Lord tells them specifically how He would accomplish the redemption and salvation of His people – *“HE MUST GO UNTO JERUSALEM, AND SUFFER MANY THINGS OF THE ELDERS AND CHIEF PRIESTS AND SCRIBES, AND BE KILLED, AND BE RAISED AGAIN THE THIRD DAY.”* Notice, He *“MUST”* do this because He was made Surety of the Covenant of Grace before the world began. He was chosen by the Father; He willingly engaged Himself to do that which was required to save His people from their sins. As the just penalty for sin is death (Rom. 6:23a), He had to die as the Substitute of His people and pay their sin-debt which was imputed to Him (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 2:14-17). His resurrection from the dead would be the confirmation of His success and victory in paying their sin-debt in full and establishing righteousness for His people which God has imputed to them. This was all according to the *“the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God”* (Acts 2:23) and in line with the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the Messiah (Luke 24:44-47). Christ had to die to put away the sins of His covenant people, to redeem us from the curse of the law, to justify us and reconcile us to God by His righteousness imputed to us (Heb. 9:26; Gal. 3:13; Rom. 3:24; 5:9-10). He also had to die that we would have spiritual and eternal life in the new birth and be brought to faith in Him and repentance of dead works and idolatry (Rom. 8:10; John 6:37-45; 14:6).

**(Matt. 16:22)** – Even though it was written in their Scriptures, and in spite of the fact that the Lord had alluded to His death for their salvation (John 2:18-22; Matt. 12:39-40; 16:4), the thought of Jesus dying was a great shock to Peter – *“BE IT FAR FROM THEE, LORD: THIS SHALL NOT BE UNTO THEE.”* It was as though Peter ignored the Lord’s statement of His resurrection from the dead. It is true that these disciples were still under the impression that Christ would establish an earthly kingdom in Jerusalem, but He told them that He must go to Jerusalem, not to ascend the earthly throne, but to

die. So, Peter actually *"BEGAN TO REBUKE"* the Lord. It is clear that Peter was not thinking rightly, but that he was giving in to his selfish and fleshly desires. It is apparent that he was not considering that the only way that God could be reconciled to sinners in a just way and sinners reconciled to God and made righteous in His sight was by the sacrificial death of Christ (Rom. 3:24-26; 2 Cor. 5:19-21; Heb. 2:14-17).

Note the expression, *"BE IT FAR."* This same word is translated "merciful" in Hebrews 8:12. Peter was saying, "Lord, be merciful to yourself." What he failed to realize was that if the Lord had been merciful to Himself, God could not in justice show mercy to us (Matt. 27:42). The exercise of mercy must be consistent with the holiness and justice of God. God must be just when He in mercy, love, and grace justifies the ungodly (Rom. 4:1-8), and this can only be accomplished by the death of a God-appointed, able, and willing substitute who is none other than Jesus Christ, the Lord our Righteousness.

**(Matt. 16:23)** – The Lord turned to Peter and said, *"GET THEE BEHIND ME, SATAN: THOU ART AN OFFENCE UNTO ME: FOR THOU SAVOUREST NOT THE THINGS THAT BE OF GOD, BUT THOSE THAT BE OF MEN."* This may seem like a startling rebuke and even unkind and harsh, but the Lord spoke the truth by telling Peter that he was following a desire inspired by Satan and not a desire to glorify God. It is by Christ's obedience unto death for the sins of His people that Christ defeated Satan and all the powers of death and hell (John 12:31-33). It is no wonder that Satan's goal, as demonstrated on the mount of temptation (Matt. 4:1-11), was to stop the Lord from going to the cross. Satan knew that the death of Christ would be his downfall.

We need to consider how that unregenerate people are totally under the deceptions of Satan and in total unbelief (2 Cor. 4:3-4). Even believers (those who have been born again by the Spirit and brought to faith in Christ) are subject to Satan's attacks and assaults. That is why we are commanded to put on the whole armor of God that we *"may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil"* (Eph. 6:11). And the main way that we turn back Satan's assaults against us is by setting our hearts and minds on Jesus Christ and Him crucified and risen from the dead (Rev. 12:9-11). We must realize and know that even though Satan continually charges us as sinners who in ourselves deserve nothing but God's just wrath, God does not impute our sins to us because He has imputed them to Christ. Christ went under the wrath of God for us and satisfied God's justice completely (Rom. 8:1,33-39). Therefore, His death is our salvation!