



Storming the Gates of Hell

Prayer

Text: Matthew 16:1–19

Icebreaker: Remembering back to when you were in school, what was your favorite field trip, and why?

1. Were the Pharisees sincere when they asked Jesus for a sign to prove he was the promised Messiah? Matthew 16:1; 12:38; John 2:18; 6:30

2. List many of the miraculous things that Jesus did that should have made it obvious that He was whom He claimed to be?

3. What was the only further sign that Jesus gave to them?
Matthew 12:39-40; 16:2-4; John 2:19-21

4. When they crossed the Sea of Galilee what warning did Jesus give to His disciples, and what did He mean? Matthew 16:4b-12

Jesus then took His disciples on a field trip, which meant a 12 hour walk north into Gentile territory to Caesarea Philippi. This was a religious center, filled with pagan temples, images and shrines for the worship of Baal, Pan, Zeus, Nemesis, Caesar and other Greek god's and goddesses. On the mountainside above town was a cavern, from which flows the headwaters of the Jordan River. This cavern was called the *Gates of Hades*, and was believed to be a gateway leading to the underworld and the demonic realm. The Greeks claimed that this was the birthplace of Pan, a half man / half goat like creature, which they claimed was *the god of nature*.

Three hundred thirty years before Christ Alexander the Great built and dedicated a temple to Pan at the entrance to this cavern. Cubicles were carved into the cliff face to place carved images of Pan and other idols. People came from all over the world to seek the favor of these powers of darkness. And the pagan fertility rites and sacrifices associated with the worship of Pan caused devout Jews to avoid this place of pagan worship like a plague. But Jesus was about to teach His disciples that we do not need to fear the powers of darkness.

5. What vitally important questions did Jesus ask His disciples when they arrived at this so called *Gates of Hades*? Verses 13 and 15

6. What opinions did the Jews have of Jesus, and what do people believe concerning His identity Jesus today? Verse 14

7. What is the significance of Jesus' title: *The Son of Man*?

Verse 13; Psalm 8:4-5; Daniel 7:13-14

8. What was Simon's answer to Jesus question: *But who do you say that I am?* And why could He and the other Apostles be so sure of this? Verse 16; 1 John 1:1-3

9. Who makes it possible for spiritually blinded sinners to come to a right understanding of who Jesus is? Verse 17; 1 Corinthians 2:14; John 6:44; 12:32; 16:7-13

10. What new name did Jesus give to Simon, son of Jonah? Verse 18

11. What do we become when we make the same confession as Peter did?

1 Peter 2:4-6; Romans 10:9-10

12. What is the Rock (*Petra – bedrock*) on which the Church is built?

Verse 18; 1 Corinthians 3:10-11; Ephesians 2:19-22

13. What do you think the *Keys of the Kingdom* are that Jesus promised Peter?
Verse 19; Matthew 18:18-20

Think about it this week:

Jesus took His disciples to the *Gates of hell*, this place of demonic power and darkness to make this amazing promise: *On this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.* He was saying that Satan, and his demons, and all their human cohorts would not be able to conquer His Church.

He (Jesus) Who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

1 John 4:4