**THE GATES OF HELL**

 By Walter Guy

Matthew 16:15-18 – *He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who 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 (hades) shall not prevail against it.*

 What does Jesus mean when He says *“the gates of hell shall not prevail*”. The significance of this statement of fact comes into play as we approach the end of the age and His soon return. Obviously Jesus is referring to the spiritual warfare that the enemy wages against true believers in Christ throughout the church age. Jesus and His apostles along with several Old Testament prophets have made mention of spiritual battles the saints have to deal with; in particular they identify the extreme level of warfare just prior to His return when He puts down the enemy as listed in Revelation 19:11-21.

 First of all we need to understand what the gates of hell are. A gate is a portal, a passage way for entering and exiting. The reference to “hell” as used here does not refer to *“sheol”* which is the grave but to the underworld of hellfire or *“hades”* with all its evil. Hell, as used here, implies a pit or abyss of evil. Since Jesus is referring to “gates” plural, then there must be multiple portals. We are not so much concerned about what enters in through these portals as we are about what comes out of them. And since Jesus is referring to the “gates of hell” we can be assured that His saints (those of His church) do not go in or out of these portals.

 Clearly this refers to the realm of evil spirits, the forces of the enemy that come against us as described by the apostle Paul:

Ephesians 6:12 – *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

 Next we need to understand what Jesus meant when he said that the gates, or what comes out of these gates, *“will not prevail”.* The word *prevail* means to gain ascendancy; to win mastery; to triumph; to succeed; to be effective. This clearly shows that what comes out of the gates of hell has the objective of opposing the true church, those in Christ.

The enemy wants to silence the church and make it ineffective, even to destroy it and its influence. This is exactly what Jesus told us was the purpose of Satan:

John 10:10 – *The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*

 Now let’s go back to beginning of the above passage when Jesus told Peter about what was the *“rock”* or the foundation of the church that Christ is building. Some believe, (the Roman Catholic Church in particular), that Jesus was saying that Peter was the rock upon which the church is built. This is a lie from Satan. The “rock” that Jesus referred to is the statement of eternal truth that Peter confessed: *“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”* This fact is the foundation of the true church of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the fact that the enemy has been opposing ever since Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection; where the enemy has added so many false doctrines, rituals and practices as “religious” ordinances into the churches of various denominations.

 The truth of the gospel and God’s Word is always under attack by the enemy’s evil spirit forces to get people to believe anything other than the truth; even by adding false doctrines to the truth which then nullifies it as truth. Once the truth is received it must be maintained and continued in.

John 8:30-32 – *As He spoke these words, many believed in Him. Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”*

 So we see that the enemy’s efforts will not succeed as long as we hold to the truth. Nevertheless, we will be engaged in spiritual warfare to hold to the truth of God’s Word and His Kingdom (His domain). The enemy is out to separate us from God’s truth and His domain. Many Christians deny there is a spiritual warfare; however, to do so is to deny the entire Book of Revelation.

 Consider just one such gate or portal:

Revelation 9:1-4 – *Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.*

 Notice here that this gate has been locked and will be opened by a certain spirit being who is authorized to unlock this gate and loose what is contained therein at a specific time. Also notice that the evil forces that come out of this gate cannot not touch those who have the mark of God - the true saints! They cannot not prevail against the true church, but guess what the false church will experience.

 However, we need to understand that a mighty warfare will ensue before the return of Christ; things are going to get very nasty and Christians will be persecuted. Persecuted does not mean destroyed because in the end the enemy WILL NOT PREVAIL. The problem is that most Christians are not prepared to fight the current or greatly increased coming spiritual warfare that scripture warns about.

2 Timothy 3:12-13 – *Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus* ***will suffer persecution****. But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.*

 Yes true Christians will experience persecution and tribulations, many will even be killed for their faith and testimony – many already have been martyred; but it is important to recognize that killing the body does not “destroy” the believer who will be resurrected to eternal life.

Matthew 10:28-33 – *And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.*

John 16:33 –*These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”*

Revelation 12:12 – *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.*

Revelation 13:7 *– It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.*

 This warfare is not about surviving this physical life since death comes to everyone. This warfare is about preserving your spiritual eternal life. Satan wants to separate you from Christ and God, to destroy your faith and trust in Him. This is what the devil began in the Garden of Eden and has resumed with a vengeance since the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus for our sins. It is when the devil turns a believer away from Christ that is a defeat. God made provision for us to resist and overcome and be victorious which is revealed in following scriptures.

 Paul told us that there is an *“evil day”* where this warfare will be intense; he also tells us how to prepare and how to stand against the attacks of the enemy and just what and who is it that we to fight against.

Ephesians 6:13-18 – *Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.*

 Notice that every item of armor has to do with what is in and provided by the Word of God. We need to use the resources provided by our Lord to make a stand and fight the fight of faith: which is trust in Him and application of His Word.

We are not to fear what we see approaching.

Luke 21:26-28 –*men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”*

 Next we need to keep our focus on, and make our stand on Him and His Word and do not allow yourself to be preoccupied with material things of this world or be focused on the fearful things that are happening; but you do need to be aware and alert so you know how to pray and what to pray for.

Luke 21:34-36 – *But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly; For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”*

 We need to apply God’s Word to our lives and use His Word in our prayers. Since with is a spiritual warfare we need to rely on and apply our superior spiritual weapons – the Word of God.

2 Corinthians 10:3-4 – *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down* (the enemy’s) *strongholds,*

The evil forces that come out of these *gates of hell* are, and have been, spirit beings that influence ungodly people to engage in immoral, criminal and heinous behavior. This has been going on for centuries but is now increasing like never before. Our news headlines are the evidence of what is coming out of these gates of hell – and it is only going to get worse as even greater levels of evil spirit beings are coming out to cause havoc and destruction.

Mass shootings are only one form of evil being perpetrated on our society. Much more that is not being reported is also going on; as in what some areas of government is doing and planning under the influence of the enemy. (Look up “The Bohemian Grove” on the internet to see the demonic rituals many of our government leadership are involved in. such rituals open the “gates of hell” allowing evil spirit beings access and control over those who participate is such rituals.) There are those that try to reveal what they have discovered but are debunked by categorizing them as “wacko conspiracy theories” – of which some are but many are not.

Then we have the “secret societies” which have been so well publicized that they now make movies about them in order to cause people to think these are all fictional. Then we have the active Satanists and covens of witches that are growing and very active – these too are viewed as fictional and benign, but are not – these deluded people are also opening these portals or “gates of hell”. Add to this the reports of UFO’s, aliens and extraterrestrials, (which are more likely extra-dimensionals – spirits and evil angels), and you can see the likes of what is coming out of these gates.

Of course our local, state and national leadership does not recognize the source of the problem so they can only deal with such issues from a carnal, natural, human level. This will not solve any of the problems but will simply create the environment for even more evil events as the forces of darkness continue to increase their activity being fully misunderstood, masked and hidden from view of natural man.

As stated in 2 Corinthians 10 3-4 above, our weapons in this warfare are mighty THRU GOD – He is the power behind such weapons HE provides as a defense and offense. These are HIS weapons! Remember these weapons consist of faith in the Word of God and prayer; the prayer of authority that is in Jesus’s holy name.

Luke 10:19 – *Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.*

 Jesus gave us His name to use, and His name is all POWER and AUTHORITY.

Matthew 28:18 - *And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All (power) authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.*

 He instructs us to go in His name and use His authority by making demands in His name of what He instructed, (as in Mark 16:17).

John 14:13-14 – *And whatever you ask* (make demand) *in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask* (demand) *anything in My name, I will do it.*

(Note: we are not demanding Jesus to do it, but we are making demand in His name, using His authority to command that it be done and He sees to it that it is done because it is what He gave us authority to do - as referenced Mark 16:17. )

John 16:23-24 – *And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.*

(Note: what Jesus did not specifically give us authority to make demand on we are to ask the Father for in His name and our Heavenly Father provides it.)

 Something that needs to be recognized is that Jesus has *all power* as listed in Matthew 28:18. The word *“power”* as used here is translated from *exousia* which means authority. This means Jesus has ALL AUTHORITY, both in heaven and on earth. If Jesus has all authority, then Satan has none. The power that Satan has is not by authority but he does retain his ABILITY, which is translated from *dunamus*, another word for power. Jesus defeated Satan but did not eliminate him. Satan has usurped (Luke 4:6) that authority that God gave to man (Genesis 1:28 & Psalm 115:16) and that authority is what Jesus took back when he defeated the Satan on the cross and at his resurrection.

 As mentioned before, we are not to fear what we see happening or coming:

Isaiah 59:19 *– So shall they fear The name of the Lord from the west, And His glory from*

*the rising of the sun; When the enemy comes in like a flood, The Spirit of the Lord will lift*

*up a standard against him.*

 Do not allow yourself to be intimidated by what the enemy throws at you. One of his favorite weapons is fear. Fear makes you back up and yield ground to him. We are commanded to STAND FIRM and not yield up ground. Fear has torment but confidence in God’s loving care for you overcomes fear.

1 John 4:18 – *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.*

2 Timothy 1:7 – *For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*

Isaiah 54:17 – *No weapon formed against you shall prosper, And every tongue which rises*

*against you in judgment* ***You shall condemn****. This is the heritage of the servants of the*

*Lord, And their righteousness is from Me,” Says the Lord.*

 We are told to speak the Word of God (the Sword of the Spirit) to the situation or enemy and his attack, we are to condemn it and cause it to fall apart by speaking in the name and authority of Jesus.

Ephesians 3:20 – *Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think,* ***according to the power that works in us****, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*

 The power at work in us is our faith, trust in Christ and His Word - 1 John 5:4-5.

 What could we expect from the enemy? What could come out of those *gates of hell?* Obviously things we are not familiar with according to Revelation 9 when the abyss is opened. One thing for sure is that all that comes out of these gates is evil and their purpose is the destruction of mankind. What form they take, either physical or spiritual, or a combination thereof we do not know at this time but we are assured that these evil beings will be loosed on earth much as were the nephilim - the hybred giants of Genesis 6 that were a cross between human and fallen angels.

Are there other portals or gates that are listed in scripture? Here is one where angels come and go:

Genesis 28:12 – *Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.*

So are there other gates or portals? Probably since Jesus refers to the *gates* of hell in plural. Already we see the effects of evil spirits in the world as they have used their evil influence on mankind since the Garden of Eden. This was clearly seen in the last century with the rise of evil leaders who have been instrumental in causing the deaths of millions of people, an even more recently the deaths of millions of unborn babies.

The evil we have been seeing in the world today is only going to get worse as the end of this age draws close. The evil has been the result of ungodly people being led by evil spirits as evidenced by laws passed by the American government. Soon there may be more to deal with than just ungodly mankind and his evil laws.

Revelation 12:12 – *Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.”*

 Our defense from these evil ones and their efforts is found in the Word of God because He is our defense as listed below.

Psalm 18:2-3 – *The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my*

*strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.*

*I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; So shall I be saved from my*

*enemies.*

Psalm 28:7-9 – *The Lord is my strength and my shield; My heart trusted in Him, and I am*

*helped; Therefore my heart greatly rejoices, And with my song I will praise Him. The*

*Lord is their strength, And He is the saving refuge of His anointed. Save Your people,*

*And bless Your inheritance; Shepherd them also, And bear them up forever.*

Psalm 31:3-5 *– For You are my rock and my fortress; Therefore, for Your name’s sake,*

*Lead me and guide me. Pull me out of the net which they have secretly laid for me,*

*For You are my strength. Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have redeemed me, O*

*Lord God of truth.*

Proverbs 30:5 *– Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust*

*in Him.*

 We are at war now and it will only continue to get more violent and intense; and fight we must as God has provided for us lest we be overcome and defeated.

Psalm 144:1-2 *– Blessed be the Lord my Rock, Who trains my hands for war, And my*

*fingers for battle — My lovingkindness and my fortress, My high tower and my deliverer,*

*My shield and the One in whom I take refuge,….*

 The Lord is our source, our defense, and provides our weapons and it is He who stands with us as long as we stand with and in Him. Complete TRUST IN HIM is essential.

CONCLUSION:

Psalm 91 - *He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High,* (this implies the prayer

closet),  *Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, “He is my*

*refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.” Surely He shall deliver you from*

*the snare of the fowler And from the perilous pestilence. He shall cover you with His*

*feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and*

*buckler. You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, Nor of the arrow that flies by day,*

*Nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, Nor of the destruction that lays waste at*

*noonday. A thousand may fall at your side, And ten thousand at your right hand; But it*

*shall not come near you. Only with your eyes shall you look, And see the reward of the*

*wicked. Because you have made the Lord, who is my refuge, Even the Most High, your*

*dwelling place, No evil shall befall you, Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling;*

*For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways. In their*

*hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone. You shall tread*

*upon the lion and the cobra, The young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot.*

*“Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high,*

*because he has known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be*

*with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him,*

*And show him My salvation.”*

Note: researchers of the occult have concluded that historical events of mass human slaughter, such as the holocaust, any any other effort to create a massive shedding of human blood, opens the gates of hell releasing these evil spirits or angels to wreak havoc on the human population. Such events are viewed as human sacrifices to Satan that open those gates of hell. Abortion in America appears to have opened one of those gates as the level of evil in this land has dramatically increased since abortion was legalized in this country.