

I Will Build My Church

Matthew 16:18 - And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Not By Might

- Haggai 2:1-5 – 1 In the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month, the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet: 2 “Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to all the remnant of the people, and say, 3 ‘Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory? How do you see it now? Is it not as nothing in your eyes? 4 Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, declares the Lord. Be strong, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land, declares the Lord. Work, for I am with you, declares the Lord of hosts, 5 according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not.
- Zechariah 4:6 - 6 Then he said to me, “This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.
 - “might” = *ḥayil* = the strength of an army, the king’s wealth... from a root word meaning to writhe around in pain, to whirl and dance about, to wait impatiently
 - “power” = *kōah* = from a root word meaning firmness
- Zechariah 4:7 - 7 Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain. And he shall bring forward the top stone amid shouts of ‘Grace, grace to it!’”
 - “grace” = elsewhere translated “favor”
- Zechariah 4:8-9 – 8 Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 9 “The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also complete it. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you.
- Zechariah 4:10 - For whoever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice, and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. “These seven are the eyes of the Lord, which range through the whole earth.”
 - New King James: “For who has despised the day of small things? For these seven rejoice to see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. They are the eyes of the Lord, which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth.”
 - Something Odd...
 - “day of small things” = *qāṭān* = lit. “a small, insignificant day”
 - “despise” = *buz* = to treat as small and insignificant

Unless the Lord Builds the House

- Psalm 127:1-2 - 1 Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. 2 It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep.
 - Written by Solomon
 - Solomon was a builder: the temple, temple furnishings, his own palace, a palace for his Egyptian wife, fortifications around cities, walls around cities (Jerusalem, Hazor, Megiddo, Gezer), a fleet of merchant ships, buildings throughout Jerusalem, buildings in Lebanon, whole cities (fortified cities, wilderness cities, storage cities, cities for his chariots, cities for his horsemen), even High Places for false gods like Chemosh and Molech
 - Solomon’s life has more references to building projects than any other person in the entire Bible
 - He knew something about building
- Something Odd...

- “Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.” – Who is building? God or “those who build it”? Both! We work with God.

The Gates of Hell Won’t Prevail

- Background on Caesarea Philippi
 - Location: Far northeast edge of Israel, almost outside of Israel, away from everything, not in Jesus’ normal stomping grounds... He purposely chose to take the disciples to this out-of-the-way location
 - History
 - Founded as Paneas, in honor of the Greek god Pan
 - Pan = half-man, half-goat god of wildness, animal instincts, irrationality, hysteria, unrestrained sensuality, immorality, lust...
 - He was everywhere and in everything
 - He played enticing music, causing irrational behavior
 - He shouted loudly and caused irrational fear, called a “panic”
 - Our words pandemic, pan-sexual, pandemonium come from this
 - Temple, shrines, and festivals for Pan
 - Before Jesus was born, Herod the Great built a beautiful temple of white marble in Paneas to honor Pan
 - Gates of Hades = There was a large cave in Paneas, which locals said connected our world to Hades, the underworld.
 - They said that Pan dwelt there, who would come out on occasion to shout and cause fear (the “panic”).
 - This cave was seen as a gateway to Hades / Hell
 - Re-founded as Caesarea Philippi
 - Years later, Herod’s son Philip took over the city and renamed it Caesarea Philippi
 - “Caesarea” to honor the Roman Emperor (Caesar)
 - “Philippi” to honor himself (Philip)
 - So Jesus took His disciples to Caesarea Philippi, a pagan city devoted to the false gods of Unrestrained Immorality, Authoritarian Government, and Selfish Ambition...three false gods that are just as strong in our day
- Matthew 16:13-18 - 13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” 14 And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” 15 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16 Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” 17 And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. 18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.
 - The Gates of Hell will not prevail against the church Jesus is building. The gods of Unrestrained Immorality, Authoritarian Government, and Selfish Ambition will not prevail, not in Jesus’ day and not in ours.

We Do Our Part and He Does His

- It’s His church, not ours, so He will build it. We can trust Him to get it done.
- But there’s a balance...
 - Zerubbabel had to build the Temple... but it was by God’s Spirit that it would get done. (Zechariah 4)
 - If God doesn’t build the house, the builders build in vain... but the builders still gotta build it. (Psalm 127)
- What’s our part?

- Right before Jesus promised that He would build His church and the gates of Hell wouldn't prevail, Peter declared that Jesus was the Messiah (Matthew 16:16)
 - Our Job is 1) to know who Jesus is, and 2) to make Him known to the world