

In this usage we discover two ideas: Capernaum is to be humiliated, to be brought down to destruction; and its inhabitants are to be left in a miserable state of anticipation of coming judgment for their continuance in sin and unbelief in the face of Christ's teachings and sign-miracles.

Matthew 16:18 -- "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of *Hades* shall not prevail against it."

Here Christ assures His disciples (and us) that the gates of *Hades* shall not prevail against, shall not overpower the Church! But how could the gates of *Hades* overpower the Church?

There are three ways of viewing this assertion:

(1) The gates of *Hades* cannot overpower the Church by keeping the Church out of *Hades*. In this view the Church breaks into *Hades* and frees its prisoners.

(2) The gates of *Hades* cannot overpower the Church by keeping the Church in *Hades*. In this view the gates of *Hades* cannot keep the Church from bursting the bonds of *Hades* and breaking out through its gates.

(3) The gates of *Hades* cannot overpower the Church by swallowing up the Church. In this view the gates of *Hades* are looked upon as gaping jaws, threatening to swallow the Church. But the gates of *Hades* are unsuccessful, and the Church escapes *Hades* by the redemption wrought by Christ.

I would propose the third interpretation.

Luke 10: 15 -- "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to *Hades*."

This is a parallel passage to Matthew 11:23.

Luke 16:22-23 -- "And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom; the rich man also died, and was buried. And in *Hades* he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom."