

YAHWEH SHABBACH HOUSE INTERNATIONAL TEACHINGS

Date: 08 January 2026

Sermon: The Lost King Among the Dead: "Overcoming the Gates of Hades" - Part 3

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Introduction: The Gates of Hades - What Are We Really Overcoming?

Jesus made one of the most powerful declarations in all of Scripture when He said to Peter:

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

Notice carefully what Jesus did **not** say. He did not describe His church by denomination, by building, by organization, or by human leadership structure. Instead, He defined His church by a single, defining characteristic: **the inability of the gates of Hades to overpower it.** The church of Jesus Christ is recognized not by its name on a sign, but by its victory over death itself.

To understand what we are truly overcoming, we must first understand what "the gates of Hades" actually represent in Scripture. This is not merely poetic language or abstract theology. The gates of Hades represent three interconnected realities:

- 1 **The power and legal authority of death over humanity**
- 2 **The organized counsel and policy of the kingdom of darkness**
- 3 **A defensive structure that cannot withstand the advance of Christ's church**

When Jesus rose from the dead, He did not merely escape from a tomb. He **shattered the gates of Hades from the inside.** He walked out of the realm of the dead holding the keys of death and Hades in His hand. Overcoming the gates of Hades, therefore, means walking in the resurrection victory of Christ, so that death, fear, curses, and demonic legal claims can no longer hold us captive.

Part 1: Understanding "Gates" as Legal Authority and Counsel

The Gates in Ancient Israel: Places of Legal Power

In the ancient world, and particularly in the culture of Israel, **the gates of a city were far more than physical structures.** They were the seat of legal authority, the place where justice was administered, where elders convened, and where binding decisions were made and enforced.

Consider the following scriptural evidence:

1. The Gates as the Place of Judgment

"You shall appoint judges and officers in all your towns that the LORD your God is giving you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment." (Deuteronomy 16:18, ESV)

The Hebrew word for "towns" here literally means "gates." Judges were appointed **in the gates** because that is where legal authority was exercised. The gate was the courthouse, the city council, and the place of public record.

"If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and, though they discipline him, will not listen to them, then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gate of the place where he lives." (Deuteronomy 21:18-19, ESV)

The rebellious son was brought to the gate because that is where the elders sat to render judgment. The gate was the place of **legal reckoning**.

2. The Gates as the Place of Covenant Transactions

The Book of Ruth provides a beautiful example of how the gates functioned as the place where legal transactions were witnessed and sealed:

"Then Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there. And behold, the redeemer, of whom Boaz had spoken, came by. So Boaz said, 'Turn aside, friend; sit down here.' And he turned aside and sat down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city and said, 'Sit down here.' So they sat down. Then he said to the redeemer, 'Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, is selling the parcel of land that belonged to our relative Elimelech. So I thought I would tell you of it and say, "Buy it in the presence of those sitting here and in the presence of the elders of my people."'" (Ruth 4:1-4, ESV)

The redemption of Ruth and the inheritance of Elimelech was legally transacted **at the gate**, in the presence of witnesses. The gate was the place where **legal rights were established and transferred**.

3. The Gates as the Place of Counsel and Policy

The prophet Amos condemned the corruption that took place in the gates:

"They hate him who reproves in the gate, and they abhor him who speaks the truth."
(Amos 5:10, ESV)

"For I know how many are your transgressions and how great are your sins—you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe, and turn aside the needy in the gate." (Amos 5:12, ESV)

The gate was where policy was set, where decisions affecting the entire community were made. To "turn aside the needy in the gate" meant to deny them justice in the place where justice should have been guaranteed.

Application: The Gates of Hades as Legal Authority of Death

When Jesus speaks of "the gates of Hades," He is using language that His Jewish audience would have immediately understood. **The gates represent the legal authority, the counsel, and the power structure of the realm of death.** Hades has "gates" because it operates as a kingdom with:

- **Legal claims** over humanity (through sin and the curse)
- **Organized counsel** (the principalities and powers of darkness)
- **Enforced judgments** (death, disease, bondage, and eternal separation)

The gates of Hades are the place where death makes its legal arguments, where the accuser of the brethren brings his charges, and where the sentence of eternal separation from God is pronounced.

But Jesus declares that **these gates will not prevail**. The legal authority of death, the counsel of darkness, and the judgments of the enemy **cannot stand** against the church built on the rock of Christ's victory.

Part 2: Understanding Hades and Sheol - The Realm of the Dead

Sheol in the Hebrew Scriptures

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word **Sheol** (שָׁאֹול, Strong's H7585) is used 65 times to describe the realm of the dead. It is consistently portrayed as:

- 4 **The destination of all who die** (both righteous and wicked, prior to Christ's resurrection)
- 5 **A place beneath the earth**
- 6 **A place of darkness, silence, and separation from the living**
- 7 **A place from which there is no return (by human power)**

Consider these key passages:

"For in death there is no remembrance of you; in Sheol who will give you praise?"
(Psalm 6:5, ESV)

"What profit is there in my death, if I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it tell of your faithfulness?" (Psalm 30:9, ESV)

"The dead do not praise the LORD, nor do any who go down into silence." (Psalm 115:17, ESV)

Sheol is described as a place of silence, where the dead cannot praise God. It is the realm of the departed, the abode of those who have left the land of the living.

"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going." (Ecclesiastes 9:10, ESV)

"For Sheol does not thank you; death does not praise you; those who go down to the pit do not hope for your faithfulness." (Isaiah 38:18, ESV)

Sheol is portrayed as a place of **inactivity, darkness, and hopelessness**—the realm where death reigns.

Key Passages on Sheol:

| Scripture | Description of Sheol |
|-------------------------|---|
| Genesis 37:35 | "All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, 'No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son , mourning.' Thus his father wept for him." |
| Numbers 16:30-33 | "But if the LORD creates something new, and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into Sheol , then you shall know that these men have despised the LORD." (Judgment of Korah) |
| Job 7:9 | "As the cloud fades and vanishes, so he who goes down to Sheol does not come up. " |
| Psalm 16:10 | "For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption." (Messianic prophecy—fulfilled in Christ) |
| Psalm 49:15 | "But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me." (Hope of resurrection) |
| Proverbs 15:24 | "The path of life leads upward for the prudent, that he may turn away from Sheol beneath." |
| Isaiah 14:9-11 | "Sheol beneath is stirred up to meet you when you come; it rouses the shades to greet you, all who were leaders of the earth..." (Describing the descent of the King of Babylon) |

Hades in the Greek New Testament

When the Old Testament was translated into Greek (the Septuagint, c. 3rd-2nd century BC), the Hebrew word **Sheol** was consistently translated as **Hades** (Ἄδης, Strong's G86). In the New Testament, **Hades** is used 10 times, and it carries the same meaning as Sheol: **the realm of the dead, the unseen world where departed souls go.**

Key New Testament Passages on Hades:

| Scripture | Context |
|----------------------|---|
| Matthew 11:23 | "And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day." |
| Matthew 16:18 | "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. " |
| Luke 10:15 | "And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades. " |

| Scripture | Context |
|----------------------------|---|
| Luke 16:19-31 | The parable of the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man dies and is "in Hades, being in torment" (v. 23), while Lazarus is in "Abraham's side" (also called "Abraham's bosom"). This passage reveals that Hades had two compartments : a place of torment for the wicked and a place of comfort for the righteous. |
| Acts 2:27, 31 | Peter, quoting Psalm 16:10, declares: "For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption... he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades , nor did his flesh see corruption." |
| Revelation 1:18 | "I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades." |
| Revelation 6:8 | "And I looked, and behold, a pale horse! And its rider's name was Death, and Hades followed him. " |
| Revelation 20:13-14 | "And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them , and they were judged, each one of them according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire . This is the second death, the lake of fire." |

The Distinction: Hades is NOT the Lake of Fire

It is critical to understand that **Hades (Sheol) is a temporary holding place for the dead**, not the final destination. Revelation 20:14 makes this clear: "Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire." Hades itself will be destroyed. The lake of fire (Gehenna) is the final, eternal judgment for the wicked. But Hades is the intermediate state—the realm where the dead await the final resurrection and judgment.

Part 3: Christ's Descent, Victory, and the Keys of Death and Hades

The Descent into Hades

When Jesus died on the cross, He did not simply cease to exist. His body was placed in a tomb, but **His spirit descended into Hades**—the realm of the dead. This is affirmed in multiple passages:

"For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison." (1 Peter 3:18-19, ESV)

***"Therefore it says, 'When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.' (In saying, 'He ascended,' what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)" (Ephesians 4:8-10, ESV)*

Peter, preaching on the Day of Pentecost, quotes Psalm 16 and applies it to Christ:

"For David says concerning him, 'I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption.' Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption." (Acts 2:25-31, ESV)

Christ descended into Hades, but He was **not abandoned there**. He went into the realm of death as the Victor, not as a victim.

The Victory: Christ Holds the Keys

When Jesus appeared to John on the island of Patmos, He made this triumphant declaration:

"Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades." (Revelation 1:17-18, ESV)

What does it mean that Jesus holds the keys?

In the ancient world, **keys represented authority and control**. The one who held the keys to a city had the power to open and shut, to grant access or deny it, to imprison or to release. Jesus holding the keys of Death and Hades means:

- 8 **He has absolute authority over death**—death no longer has the final word.
- 9 **He has absolute authority over Hades**—He controls who enters and who leaves.
- 10 **He has conquered death from the inside**—He entered the realm of the dead and emerged victorious, taking the keys from death's hand.

The imagery is powerful: Jesus did not avoid death. He **entered death's domain, broke its power, and walked out with the keys**. Death thought it had captured the King, but the King rose from the dead and took death's authority as spoils of war.

The Legal Victory: Death's Claims Are Nullified

The Apostle Paul explains the legal dimension of Christ's victory:

"When you were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him." (Colossians 2:13-15, ESV)

Death had a **legal claim** on humanity because of sin. The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). The law gave sin its power, and sin gave death its sting (1 Corinthians 15:56). But when Jesus died on the cross, He **canceled the record of debt**. He satisfied the legal demands of the law. He paid the price that we could not pay. And in doing so, He **disarmed the rulers and authorities**—He stripped them of their legal right to accuse and condemn.

"O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 15:55-57, ESV)

Death no longer has a sting for those who are in Christ. The legal claim has been canceled. The gates of Hades—the legal authority of death—**cannot prevail** against the church because the church stands on the victory of the risen Christ.

Part 4: What It Means to Overcome the Gates of Hades

1. We Walk in Resurrection Victory

To overcome the gates of Hades means to live in the reality of Christ's resurrection. We are not waiting for victory; **we are walking in victory that has already been won.**

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you." (1 Peter 1:3-4, ESV)

Our hope is not wishful thinking. It is a **living hope** grounded in the historical reality of the empty tomb.

2. Death No Longer Has Legal Authority Over Us

Because Christ has canceled the record of debt, death has no legal claim on those who are in Christ.

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:1, ESV)

"Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us." (Romans 8:33-34, ESV)

The gates of Hades cannot prevail because **there is no legal ground for accusation**. The debt has been paid. The case has been dismissed.

3. We Are Freed from the Fear of Death

"Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery." (Hebrews 2:14-15, ESV)

The fear of death is a form of slavery. But Christ has destroyed the one who had the power of death. We are no longer slaves to that fear.

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Philippians 1:21, ESV)

Paul could say this because he knew that death was not the end—it was the doorway to being with Christ, which is "far better" (Philippians 1:23).

4. Curses, Sickness, and Demonic Oppression Lose Their Power

The gates of Hades represent not only physical death but also the works of death: sickness, curses, oppression, and bondage.

"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree.'" (Galatians 3:13, ESV)

"The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil." (1 John 3:8, ESV)

To overcome the gates of Hades is to walk in the authority of Christ over every work of the enemy. Sickness, poverty, fear, addiction, and bondage are all works of death, and Christ has conquered them all.

5. We Advance the Kingdom, Not Defend a Fortress

Notice the imagery: **gates are defensive structures**. When Jesus says "the gates of Hades will not prevail," He is not picturing the church hiding behind walls while the enemy attacks. He is picturing **the church on the offensive, storming the gates of the enemy's stronghold**.

The church is not called to retreat. We are called to **advance**. We are called to proclaim the gospel, to set captives free, to heal the sick, to cast out demons, and to establish the kingdom of God in every place where death has claimed dominion.

Conclusion: The Lost King Who Conquered Death

Jesus is the **Lost King Among the Dead**—the One who entered the realm of death, not as a prisoner, but as a conqueror. Death thought it had won. Hades thought it had claimed another victim. But on the third day, the King rose from the dead, holding the keys of Death and Hades in His hand.

And now, He has given us the authority to walk in that victory.

"Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you." (Luke 10:19, ESV)

The gates of Hades **shall not prevail** against the church. Not because we are strong in ourselves, but because we stand on the victory of the risen Christ. The legal claims of death have been canceled. The keys have been taken. The gates have been shattered.

We are the church of the Living God, and death has no power over us.

Final Charge

Church, do not live as though death still has authority. Do not live in fear. Do not live under the curse. Do not live as slaves to sin and bondage.

Christ has overcome. And in Him, so have we.

Walk in resurrection power. Walk in legal freedom. Walk in the authority of the One who holds the keys.

The gates of Hades shall not prevail.

Amen.