

those whom Satan has bound. If the church were to fail in this task, the lost would continue to be bound; if the church fulfills its responsibility of bringing them the message of salvation, and they receive the Lord Jesus Christ into their hearts, they will be loosed. Jesus promised Peter, as the representative of every member of His true church, "whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." The very gates of hell cannot prevail against this message.

Jesus praised Peter as the man who first clearly saw and declared the truth of the deity of Christ. He said to Peter, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Peter was a wonderful man. He was one of the very finest of the apostles. According to tradition he gave his life as a martyr for his loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter deserves great praise and our Lord certainly gave it to him in this verse.

Yet it is very interesting to read on in the succeeding verses and to find that, after enunciating this great truth, Jesus proceeded to explain other truths that are equally vital, that are in fact, absolutely essential to salvation. Verse 21 reads: "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." The death of Jesus Christ on the cross and His following resurrection--the fact that He died for our sins and that He was raised again as evidence that God had accepted the sacrifice--these facts are the basis of the salvation of every believer.

It is easy to see why this truth did not appeal to Peter. Peter loved Jesus. He could not bear to think of Jesus as going through this suffering. Peter's great love for Jesus led him to put his knowledge ahead of that of his Lord, and even to rebuke the Lord. Verse 22 reads: "Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee." Peter was putting *his human reasoning* ahead of the Word of God as proclaimed by the very Son of God Himself.