

Easter Sunday 040515

I Am He That Was Dead

Revelation 1:1-18

We preach the message of the resurrection continually and so the thoughts I am about to share are quite familiar to many of us. However, on Easter we always revisit the truth of the resurrection and all that it means to us. In fact, the resurrection provides the assurance that God ultimately has a plan to bring the entire world out of bondage to death into the glorious liberty of the sons of God!

I turn your attention now to our text today found in Revelation chapter one:

“ The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: 2 who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. 3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand. 4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; 5 and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, 6 and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. 7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. 8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. 9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard

behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, 11 saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; 13 and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. 14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; 15 and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. 16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. 17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: 18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death” (Rev. 1:1-18).

I call your attention to verse 18 of our text today and to the statement of the risen Christ who says, *“I am he that was dead.”* The Word ¹ (a distinct personality within the Triune Godhead), was incarnate in the person of Jesus the Christ so that he could experience death. The Scripture says, *“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”* It was necessary that the Word partake of our humanity as the last Adam in order to conquer death. The first Adam brought sin and death into God’s very good creation—it was the last Adam who conquered death through the work of his cross. At the cross, the holy Son of God became our sin bearer.² At the cross, he by the grace of God tasted our death. At the cross, he satisfied the just and holy wrath of

God against the sin of Adam's race. At the cross, he was our scapegoat that carried our sins into the wilderness of death. At the cross, he became our burnt sacrifice as the fire of God's wrath found its' mark. At the cross, he became our Passover lamb as his blood was shed to deliver us from the judgment of the second death! At the cross, *through death* he destroyed him who had the power of death, that is, the devil!

Since we are all fallen in Adam, sin reigns over us unto death. We are by nature the children of wrath. Satan holds us in bondage to the power of death because of the strength of sin.³ But at the cross, God provided a means of freedom through our Lord Jesus Christ! The power of death to rule over us was broken by virtue of Christ's all sufficient sacrifice *for* sin. Christ died unto sin once! This means his great substitutional sacrifice has once for all satisfied the holy wrath of God against us. Now, repentance toward God and personal faith in the provision of Christ upon the cross sets us free from the just penalty of our sin. Personal faith in the Savior frees us from the kingdom of darkness (where Satan held us in bondage to death) and translates us into the kingdom of light (or the Kingdom of God). Satan no longer has the power of death over a believer in Jesus Christ. Through personal faith in the Savior we have now passed from death unto life!⁴

My friends, the world may look at the cross as a picture of defeat, but in reality the cross is a picture of victory. The power of sin and death to rule over Adam's race is now broken by the victory of the cross of Christ. Listen closely to the apostle Peter in Acts chapter two as he speaks of Christ saying, "*Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he*

*should be (held by) it.” It was not possible that the body of the Lord Jesus Christ remain in the grave. **The grave gave up his body in testimony to the great truth that He is the Divine Son of God whose sacrifice for sin is fully accepted by God for our salvation!***⁵

And so Jesus declares to John on the isle of Patmos, *“I am the living One that was dead. I endured the cross and laid down my life. I had the power to lay it down, and I had the power to take it again! And behold, I am alive for evermore.”* And since the Lord Jesus puts an “amen” right there, I think we should too! Can you say, Amen!!

The Scripture says, *“For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.”* By man, the first Adam, came death. By man, the last Adam our Lord Jesus Christ, came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.⁶ This is the significance of our Lord’s statement that he now has the keys of hades and of death. Jesus Christ reigns in absolute power and authority. He reigns in power over the spirit world, or the realm of the dead (referred to as *hades*). Hear me: *it will be Christ who consigns you to either heaven or hell when you depart this life.*⁷

As well, Jesus is the risen Lord who reigns in power over physical death. He is the resurrection and the life. He has “the key to death—that is, he holds absolute authority over death by virtue of his death, burial, and bodily resurrection from the grave. Consequently, there is a day coming when all who are in the graves will hear the voice of the risen Christ and *they shall come forth!*

If you are a child of God, you will be a part of what the Bible calls the *first resurrection.*⁸ O, what a glorious truth this is! The grave can no more hold the

body of a redeemed child of God any more than it could hold the body of our Lord Jesus Christ! One day the dusty graves of departed saints will be stirred by the creative word of the one who is the resurrection and the life. As he descends from heaven with a shout the dead in Christ must rise to meet Him in the air. But some man will say, *“How are the dead raised up and with what body do they come?”* To that God would say, in the resurrection I will give my people a body as it hath pleased me. And it has pleased me that you should have a body like that of my risen Son. My friends, we shall be like Him!

“Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory!” (Someone say, Amen!!)

The songwriter said:

*One day they led him up Calvary's mountain, One day they nailed Him to die on the tree
Suffering anguish, despised and rejected, Bearing our sins, my Redeemer is He!*

*One day the grave could not conceal Him no longer, One day the stone rolled away from the
door Then He arose, over death He had conquered, Now is ascended my Lord evermore!*

One day the trumpet will sound for His coming, One day the skies with His glory will shine;

Wonderful day, my beloved ones bringing! Glorious Savior, this Jesus is mine!

Living He loved me! Dying, He saved me! Buried, He carried my sins far away! Rising He justified freely, forever! One day's He's coming—O glorious day!

Now let me finish with this solemn thought: the Lord Jesus says that *all* who are in the graves will hear his voice. Think about it my friend. There is a resurrection unto judgment! John the Revelator says that he saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works . . . and whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire!⁹

How heart breaking it is to contemplate the eternal destiny of the lost. How tragic it will be to hear the Savior say, “Depart from me, I never knew you.”

My friends, it does not have to be that way. You can be saved before it is too late. The victory of Christ over sin and death was secured for you! Today, the Lord Jesus Christ is offering you the free gift of eternal life. In order to receive this gift you must confess him as your Lord and Savior (Romans 10:9).

If you desire to be saved make the decision to receive Christ now by praying the following prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus I know that I am a sinner in need of your forgiveness. I turn in my heart from my sin and I ask you now to come into my heart and save me. I do believe you died for my sins and rose again from the dead for my salvation. Right now I trust you alone as my Savior. Thank you for loving me and saving me. Amen. (For assurance read Romans 10:9-13)

Footnotes with Scripture references for further study:

- 1 John 1:1, 14; 1 John 1:1; Revelation 19:13; John 17:5; 1 John 5:20; Philippians 2:5-8; 1 John 4:2-3.
- 2 Isaiah 53:5-6; John 1:29; 1 Peter 2:24; Hebrews 9:28; Leviticus 16:1-22; Hebrews 10:1-18; Hebrews 2:9-15.
- 3 John 3:36; Ephesians 2:1-5.
- 4 John 3:15-18; 5:24; Romans 8:31-38; Colossians 1:12-14.
- 5 Romans 1:4; 4:25; 10:9.
- 6 1 Corinthians 15:20-57.
- 7 John 5:17-22; Acts 17:29-31.
- 8 Revelation 20:5-6; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Corinthians 15:35-55.
- 9 Revelation 20:11-15.