

“Fear Not...I Am Alive”

Revelation 1:17-18

“If ye seek Jesus, do not go to His grave. You will not find Him there. Is it not quite striking that after the disciples were convinced that He had risen they never again visited His tomb? At least there is no record of it. Why should they? It was only an incident, a temporary halting place in the experience of our Lord. They did not make pilgrimages to it. They did not esteem it above any other place. They did not bury it beneath tokens of affection. They did not break off pieces of the rock and keep them as relics for seeking souls to look at in the hope of meriting divine favor.

“No, after that first Sunday evening, the disciples were done with the tomb. Why should they give their time to the veneration of places, when they had the living Savior with them? To us, Christ is all and in all. He is alive, and He has power to give life. Not by meat and drink, not by pilgrimages and fastings, but by looking unto Him do we enter into life that death cannot touch.”
(found in eSword Illustrations)

Today is the day we remember the greatest event in the history of sinful man – the resurrection of the dead by the “Second Adam.” The “first Adam” plunged mankind into death, but the “Second Adam” made a way for mankind to be redeemed from the consequences of sin – death – and to spend eternity in heaven with our Savior.

1 Corinthians 15:22

²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

1 Corinthians 15:45

⁴⁵ And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

In the text before us in the message is found a wonderful truth, supported throughout Scripture – we need not fear death, we need not fear the “afterlife,” we need not fear what waits us in heaven, for He Is “alive for evermore.” He was dead, as it says here, and as we will study shortly, but He conquered death and rose triumphant from the grave to become our Guarantor of eternal life – the “firstfruits of them that slept.”

1 Corinthians 15:20

²⁰ But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

As John began the visions that make up the book of Revelation, he was confronted with something, or Someone that he didn't understand and the sight was so wonderful, and so frightening (awesome would be the word to use if it had not been changed into something less meaningful by churches and pastors today), that all he could do was fall on his face in fear. In those two words, “Fear not,” our Savior declared victory for us over death and what awaits us in eternity.

WE NEED NOT FEAR DEATH:

I. BECAUSE OF WHO HE IS – “THE LIVING ONE”

A. The final clause of verse 17 and the first clause (as it is in the KJV) go together and they describe an attribute of God from the Old Testament that is used by the One speaking to John, who is clearly seen as God the Son, Jesus Christ, in this

text – His eternity. This is one of many portions of Scripture that show that Jesus was, is, and always will be God.

B. The first two words of that final clause are the same two words that the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the Sanhedrin (for the most part anyways), hated and are, in a great part, the reason they wanted Jesus crucified – He claimed to be God, claimed to be YAHWEH, the LORD.

1. The words in Greek are ἐγὼ (first person singular pronoun – “I”) εἶμι are common enough and do not always refer to deity, or to God, but when Jesus used it to define some aspect of the Godhead, or used it to describe an attribute of God found elsewhere in Scripture, the Jews would have picked up on that right away.
2. Although we shouldn't put more emphasis on these words than is there, there is, however some emphasis made.
3. The word for the LORD, YAHWEH, in the Old Testament – יהוה – is considered by some Hebrew scholars to have its basis, in part, in the Hebrew word אֲנִי, which translated into English is simply “I am.” There is no doubt of the root of the words for the LORD and for “I Am” as being the same – the debate is in their use.
4. If we consider the use of those Hebrew words, then we can see that when Jesus claimed to be “I Am” He was claiming to

have the same attributes of God – the one under consideration here is that of eternity – an attribute only God can have.

John 6:19–20

¹⁹ So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid.

²⁰ But he saith unto them, **It is I; be not afraid.**

John 8:58

⁵⁸ Jesus said unto them, **Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.**

John 18:6–8

⁶ As soon then as he had said unto them, **I am he**, they went backward, and fell to the ground.

⁷ Then asked he them again, **Whom seek ye?** And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

⁸ Jesus answered, **I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:**

5. The reference in John 8:58 points back to Exodus 3:14 in that great text (and the Law of First Mention carries here) where God told Moses to tell the Israelites that “I AM” sent him to deliver them out of Egypt. In the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint), the first “I AM” in this verse is ἐγὼ εἶμι – the second one (and third as well) is ὁ ὢν, “the One who is” (or, the self-existent One).

Exodus 3:14

¹⁴ And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

6. The use of the term "I Am" by Christ in the New Testament in the cases where it relates to His deity very clearly points to the fact that He claimed to be (and, in fact, was) the eternal God, the eternal YAHWEH of the Old Testament.

C. "The first and the last"

1. This defines the "I Am" – the eternity of God.
2. The word for "first" (πρῶτος) is a simple word and means foremost at its root. In this case, and this text, it means before all, or before the first, or the originator of all that followed.
3. The word for "last" (ἔσχατος) is transliterated by the word "eschatology" – the study of last things, as it is used in theology. It means farthest, or final of place or time. In context, He is after all.

D. *The first clause of verse 18 – "I am he that liveth" – Is viewed by some as a proper name for Christ – "The Living One." Although the text does not support this directly, it is certainly within the understanding to consider this a title for our Savior.*

1. The first two words in this verse, as found in the King James Version, are in italics,

meaning there is no word(s) in the Greek to correspond to these and were supplied by the translators for clarity.

2. The first word in the Greek is actually not translated in the KJV but it is seen in many other English versions, including those that predate the KJV and upon which the English was based for that translation – the Bishop’s Bible, and the Geneva Bible. The word that is not seen is the simple conjunction, “and” (καί), which joins this clause (phrase, title, attribute) with the previous clause, and is actually a continuation of the thought of the eternity of God.
3. Another word in the Greek not translated in the KJV after the word for “and,” is the word for the definite article “the” (ὁ, or τό). This is the reason for the title aspect – “The Living One.”
4. The word for “liveth” (ζῶω) is a common enough word and simply means to live. The indefinite pronoun “One” is implied in the word “live” – the word, in its form here, simply means “living.” He was always, is now, and will always be, the Living.
5. Wuest, in his literal translation of the Bible, reads this way: “I am the first and the last and the living One...” This is also the way several other translations read. Young’s Literal Translation has this clause as “and he who is living.”
6. What this shows us in the eternity of God

is not only was our Savior eternal in the past, the source of creation and life; not only is He eternal in the future, beyond time as we know it; but HE IS ALIVE right now – in the “nasty now and now.” He is the Living One – the One that provided the way for eternal life for all that would receive it because HE IS ALIVE.

WE NEED NOT FEAR DEATH:

II. BECAUSE OF WHAT HE DID – “WAS DEAD” (BECAME DEAD)

A. Jesus had to die the way He died in order for redemption to be effective. There was no other way but for God to send His only begotten Son to die for us – and die He did.

Romans 8:32

³² He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Isaiah 53:10-12

¹⁰ Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

¹¹ He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

¹² Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto

death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

John 19:30

³⁰ When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, **It is finished:** and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

John 10:18

¹⁸ **No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.**

B. "Was dead"

1. The verb for "was" here – εγενομην – is in a form (Second Aorist Middle Deponent Indicative - 1st Person Singular) that "strictly" (Robertson) means "became." Dr. Alford puts it, "I became: it was a state which I passed into."
2. Goes back to the text in the Gospel of John that shows Jesus chose to die for mankind's sin – they didn't kill Him; He gave His life willingly.

Philippians 2:6-8

⁶ Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

⁷ But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

⁸ And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

3. "Dead" – νεκρος – (transliterated in the

English by the word “necrosis,” defined as the premature death of cells). The word is simple – death, a corpse. Something without life and without the ability of restored life.

4. The Living One – “I am he that liveth” – who walked this earth as a man, endured all that He endured for us, died – became dead – of His own volition, of His own will, so that He could provide life for everyone.

Hebrews 2:9

⁹ But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

It Matters Not How Long in the Grave

A closely sealed vase was found in a mummy pit in Egypt by the English traveler Wilkinson. In it were discovered a few peas, old, wrinkled, and hard as a stone. The peas were planted carefully under a glass, and at the end of 30 days, they sprang into life, after having lain sleeping in the dust of a tomb for almost 3,000 years—a faint illustration of the mortal body which shall put on immortality. “Because He lives, we shall live also.” (as found in eSword Illustration tool)

III. BECAUSE OF WHERE HE IS – “ALIVE FOR EVERMORE”

A. Because He is “alive for evermore,” He is

where we need Him to be whenever we need Him. That is true of the unbeliever as well. Because He rose from the dead He is where He is needed most – in heaven making intercession.

B. "Behold" – a word used to call attention to what is about to be said. He wanted John to pay close attention – to see and hear what He was saying – "I am alive."

C. "I am alive"

1. The word order in the Greek is "alive I am" – ζῶν εἰμι. Notice that the "I am" here is not the same as in the previous verse and is not pointing to the attribute of God's eternity. This time it is referring to His resurrection, and the power over death.
2. The word for "alive" is the same one as for "liveth" in the first part of the verse.
3. The word order as well as the words used (the verb ζῶν along with the simple verb εἰμι – "I am") is used for emphasis. "ζῶν εἰμι expresses, more emphatically than would the simple verb, the residence and effluence of life. By this mention of His own death and revival, the Lord reassures his Apostle. He is not only the living One in His majesty, but He has passed through death as one of us, and is come to confer life even in and through death" (Alford).
4. There is almost universal translation in this phrase showing it has a straightforward truth with no opportunity for nuances of translation nor for opinion.

D. "For evermore"

1. Again, almost universal in common translations – the only difference might be "forever and ever."
2. The original words used here are unique in structure - εις τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων – literally, for (or to) the ages of the ages.
 - a) The words αἰῶνας and αἰώνων come from the root word αἰών (aion), from which the English word "eon" is derived (in fact, it's transliterated as that word). The word "eon" is defined as an indefinite period of time.
 - b) The use of this word, although is relative to time in the English, is a word without measure in the Greek. It is "time in perpetuity" – never ending, so therefore, time will be no more.
 - c) This phrase is found twelve times in Revelation, but in the Gospel of John or in his epistles. "It is the formula for eternity" (Vincent).
 - d) It is often translated "for ever and ever" – Rev. 1:6; Gal. 1:5; Heb. 13:21; 1 Pet. 4:11, to name a few.

Revelation 1:6

⁶ And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Galatians 1:5

⁵ To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Hebrews 13:21

²¹ Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

1 Peter 4:11

¹¹ If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

e) This clause ends with an "Amen."

(1) *This is a transliterated word from the Greek αμήν (which, coincidentally, could be why it is pronounced with the "au" sound at the beginning rather than with a long "a" sound).*

(2) *The Greek αμήν is, then, a transliterated word from the Hebrew אָמֵן, meaning verily or truly. The Hebrew word "is used more often as the declaration may it be so. It comes from a root meaning to confirm; to support; to be faithful. The major idea behind this word is constancy and reliability."*

(3) *The Hebrew word is used 30 times – 27 times as "amen," two times as "truth," and one time as "so."*

(4) *In the Greek, the meaning is basically the same – to be firm, steady, trustworthy. In the New Testament, the word is used 152 times – 101 of them it is translated "verily" and 51 times as "amen."*

(5) *The point of its use here in this verse is to confirm as absolutely so, verifiably trustworthy, that our Savior "alive for evermore."*

IV. BECAUSE OF WHAT HE HAS – "THE KEYS OF HELL AND OF DEATH"

A. "And have the keys" – the "I am" has the keys, a symbol of authority, the One who possesses all and has the sovereignty to do as He wishes with what is His. "Keys are emblems of authority, opening and shutting at will 'the gates of Hades [hell]'" (J-F-B).

Revelation 9:1

¹ And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

Revelation 20:1-2

¹ And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

² And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

Psalm 68:20

²⁰ He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto GOD the Lord belong the issues from death.

B. "Of hell and death" – in some of the oldest Greek manuscripts, the order is reversed – "of death and hell."

1. "Of hell"

a) The word for "hell" in this verse (as seen in

the KJV) is translated by many others as the word "Hades," which is a transliterated word of the Greek word ᾍδης.

- b) In fact, as Thayer references, several of the more current, formal equivalent translations have these terms capitalized as proper nouns, indicating the personification, so to speak, of the terms.
 - c) By "hell" here is meant the grave, as well as the place of the departed dead – specifically, in most cases, the place of the damned (which is why the KJV translates it as "hell").
 - d) "Christ can both save and destroy, can kill and make alive. Death is still under his dominion, and he can recall the dead whensoever he pleases. He is the resurrection and the life." (Clarke)
2. "And of Death" – not the same word as "dead" earlier in the verse. This word for "death" (θανάτου, θάνατος) means "that separation (whether natural or violent) of the soul from the body by which the life on earth is ended." It is further explained in relation to this particular verse by Thayer as: "The inevitable necessity of dying, shared alike by all men, takes on in the popular imagination the form of a person, a tyrant, subjugating men to his power and confining them in his dark dominions: Rom. 6:9; 1 Cor. 15:26, 54, 56; Rev. 21:4; Hades is associated with him as his partner: 1 Cor. 15:55; Rev. 1:18..." (Thayer – page 282-283).

[Romans 6:9](#)

⁹ Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

1 Corinthians 15:26

²⁶ The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

1 Corinthians 15:54–56

⁵⁴ 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.

⁵⁵ O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

Revelation 21:4

⁴ And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

Conclusion: Jesus came to earth to live as a man so that He could suffer death for all mankind. He did all that so we don't have to. He was crucified and buried, and if the devil had his way, He'd still be in the grave – but He is not – HE IS ALIVE FOR EVERMORE. That means, for the believer today, we don't need to fear anything, including and especially death, for He conquered Death and Hell (the grave) and took the keys with Him.

A Solitary Grain

In April, the Sunday school teacher asked all eight children in

her class to hide within an empty container a small object that represented life in the spring.

Not wanting to embarrass eight-year-old Stephen, whose mental [difficulty] was becoming more manifest, the teacher suggested that the children all place their unlabeled containers on her desk. Since she feared that Stephen might not have caught on, she decided that she should open them.

The first had a tiny flower. "What a lovely sign of new life!" "I brought that one!" the donor exclaimed. Next came a rock. "That must be Stephen's," the teacher thought, since rocks do not symbolize new life. But Billy shouted that his rock had moss on it, and moss was new life. The teacher agreed.

A butterfly flew from the third container, and another child bragged that her choice was best of all.

The fourth container was empty. "That has to be Stephen's," thought the teacher, quickly reaching for the fifth.

"Please, don't skip mine!" Stephen interjected. "But it's empty." "That's right," said Stephen. "The tomb was empty, and that is new life for everyone."

Later that summer, Stephen's condition grew worse, and he died. On his casket at the funeral, mourners found eight containers. They were ALL EMPTY.