
REVELATION 1:17-18 — JESUS, THE LIVING GOD

INTRODUCTION — The past couple of weeks we have been gazing upon Jesus in Revelation Chapter 1, in which John saw a vision of the glorified Son of God on the island of Patmos. Undone by the majesty of Christ, the apostle falls as a dead man but is comforted by Jesus declaring the gospel, saying, ***“Don’t be afraid! I am the First and the Last. I am the living one. I died, but look—I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave.”*** Jesus, the eternal God, preaches the eternal Gospel to His beloved disciple and to us.

I. THE FIRST & THE LAST

- A. When Jesus says that He is “the first,” it is a statement and declaration of His *preeminence*, that He is before all things. He is superior in rank to everything in the created order. There is nothing that was before Him; He created all things and everything has its being in Him. He is the firstborn of creation and the firstborn from the dead (Col 1:15, 18). He was present from the beginning
- B. When Jesus says that He is “the last,” it is a statement and declaration of His *sovereignty* and *providence*. Not only is He preeminent (superior) in all things but He is the One who is bringing forth the fullness of time. All things are upheld by the word of His power and all things are being reconciled through Him (Col 1:20; Heb 1:3). There is no being that comes after Him; He has the final authority and the last word.
- C. This phrase is a direct quote from Isaiah 44:6, in which God declares to Israel that He is ***“the First and the Last”*** and that ***“there is no other God”*** besides Him. When Jesus quotes this verse He is saying that He and the Father are one, that there is no other God than the one that John is seeing.

II. THE LIVING ONE

- A. One of the most frequently used adjectives that the Old Testament authors used to describe God is that He is alive (2 Kgs 19:4; Job 27:2; Ps 42:2)! The idols of the nations are not alive and cannot give life (Ps 115:4-8), but YHWH is the only God that is alive therefore He is the only One that can give life.
- B. This would have been a complete paradigm shift to John, radically changing the way that he saw Jesus. The stories that John heard about God as a young boy were all about Jesus! Jesus is not only a man but He is the living God, the way, the truth, and the life!
- C. He says to Philip, ***“Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don’t know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father!”*** (Jn 14:9).

III. AUTHORITY OVER DEATH

- A. Though Jesus is the living God, He subjected Himself to death by becoming a human. He allowed the powers of the darkness to crucify Him so that His blood could redeem those under the same power. The blood He shed is our redemption, our life.
- B. Yet, because death cannot destroy the living God, Jesus took back His life by the glory of God and the power of the Spirit so that those who are found in Him may have eternal life within themselves. No longer are we bound by the chains of death but are freed in the liberty of life in God.

IV. RESPONSE [APPLICATION]

- A. Those that have not received Christ, the living one, today is the day of salvation! If you desire everlasting life, He is the way! If you desire deliverance from death, He is the mighty right hand of God! Those who confess with their mouth and believe in their hearts that Jesus is Lord and Savior receive the eternal life He offers.
- B. For those of us who are already found in Christ, this passage should strengthen us to stand boldly in the presence of God. It was Jesus' declaration of the eternal gospel that strengthen John to write what he saw. The gospel is our manna, the food that gives us strength to run the race that is set before us.