

# Revelations of God - Part 4

by David Adams

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*The Lord Jesus is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and end of all things, encompassing all knowledge, wisdom, and expression.*

**Duration:** 43:43

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Revelation 1:8-22

**Topics:** "Eschatology", "Christology"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the concerns and difficulties faced by society, such as immorality, injustice, and violence. He emphasizes the need to focus on a voice that can provide guidance and hope. The speaker then describes a vision from the book of Revelation, where John sees the Son of Man amidst seven golden lampstands. The detailed description of the Son of Man's appearance and attributes is seen as relevant to the condition of the seven churches. The sermon concludes by highlighting the authority and power of the Son of Man, who conquered death and is the ultimate source of hope and salvation.

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## Transcript

The blessing is that there are facets of the character and person of the Lord Jesus that we may imitate, that we may be like him. What I'm concerned with this evening, that is, if you're not weary with these geometry lessons, these triangles, you know, they say it's the strongest geometrical form is the triangle, and we're looking at the trilogies of Revelation chapter 1. What I'm concerned with this evening, however, goes much farther, much beyond what you and I can ever be like in relation to him. Let's look again at chapter 1, if you will please, Revelation chapter 1, and I wish to begin to read from verse 8. I know many of you are aware of it, and I am acutely conscious of it at the same time, that the contents of this chapter are unattainable as far as we're concerned at the time we have together in making an analytical study of it.

But I want to make some extracts tonight from this chapter 1, starting with verse 8, and it concerns the person of our Lord. 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. 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.

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. Now, let's look down at verse 12, and I turned to see the voice that speak with me. Now, that's a remarkable expression, isn't it? I turned to see the voice.

You remember it is said about our parents, our first parents after the fall, they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. John heard a voice, and he turned to see the voice that speak with me. I think I did not complete my suggestion to you the other evening, that John was looking westward, and I suggest that to you because not only had he himself fallen under the power of Rome, which lay to the west of him when he was on the isle of Patmos, but the other apostles as well had fallen to the power of Rome, his nation was in subjection, and his nation was finally to be almost obliterated by the aggressive advance of the Roman armies.

So, it seems to me that he's sitting on one of these outcrops of craggy rock on the isle of Patmos, and he's looking towards the west, because when he turned to see the voice, he's looking towards Asia Minor and the seven churches of Asia Minor. Therefore, this voice seems to me it turned him completely in his perspective of that which was occupying his mind at the time. How often that is true of us.

We are concentrating, we are concerned, we are considering some difficulty, perhaps a major feature, the advance of immorality and injustice and crime and violence and so on in our society, the distortion and disintegration of all that we have held to be dear, and we're concentrating our minds upon this, and I hope we may hear a voice tonight. And as we turn to see the voice, because this voice is not abstract as is a voice, may we see what John saw. And being turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the breast with a golden girdle.

His head and his hairs were white like wool as white as snow, and his eyes were as a flame of fire, and his feet like unto fine brass as if they burned in a furnace, and his voice as the sound of many waters. 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. 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. 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. I wish to look with you this evening at another of the trilogies of chapter one, and we have them here in verses 8, 11, 17. I am Alpha and Omega, that's the first one.

The beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, that's the second one. And then in verse 11 he says, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. And again in verse 17, 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. I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore. Now, some of the translations that you have will not be as I read them to you from the... Well, as I sometimes tell Brother John Milton Mills, I've increased with him a number of times.

You know, Brother John, every time he gets up to speak, he always says, Now, if you notice any difference, I'm reading from the 1901 version. So when I follow him, although generally he makes me go first, I say to him, Now, if you notice any difference, you folks, I'm reading from the only authorized version to be read in churches. And just a wicked little smile comes over John's face as I say that.

I don't know if some of you must know John Milton Mills from Goldsboro, North Carolina. And we certainly appreciate Brother John. So, if the translation which you have does not conclude everything I read... By the way, I did read from the King James Version, and I hope you understand that clearly.

A little lady came to me after a meeting one night, and she said, Brother Adams, why did you talk about the Russian secret police? And I said, I didn't talk about the Russian secret police. She said, You did so. I heard it myself.

It's marvelous what can be heard from what is said. And she said, No, I know you did. I heard you say it myself.

And I said, Well, what was it I said? She said, You were talking about the KJV. I said, Ma'am, I said the KJV. It doesn't happen to be the same thing.

Now, turn over to Chapter 22, if you will, please, and let me give you this trilogy of couplets. A trilogy of couplets. The last chapter of our book, and verse 12.

He says, That's the first couplet. The beginning and the end. That's the second couplet.

The first and the last. That's the third couplet. So we have a trilogy of couplets.

Which is most interesting, isn't it? So, I think you'll find that in all your translations. Chapter 22 and verse 12. And so I'm just as fine in the reading as I have given it to you tonight from the KJV.

I am Alpha and Omega. When I was considering a little while this afternoon these three couplets, this trilogy which I want to leave with you tonight concerning the person of the Lord Jesus, I felt very inadequate to handle this. What do you say when you have three couplets given to you concerning the Master such as these are? It seems to me it's something that's beyond the reach not only of our intelligence, but the grasp of our hearts, and certainly the expression of our lips.

The unexcelled glory, the incomparable majesty, the inexhaustible excellency of this glorious person who shines so brilliantly out of the pages of the book of the Revelation, and particularly chapter 1. He is the Alpha and the Omega. Now, you all know, of course, that the Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and Omega is the last letter of the Greek alphabet. Every language has its alphabet.

In English we have 26 letters, in Spanish we have 27 letters, and other languages have a varying number of letters. But in the Greek alphabet, these are the two letters which include all the other letters. The Alpha is the first letter, the Omega is the last letter.

The Lord says, I am the Alpha and the Omega. Now, letters are to compose words. Of course, letters by themselves mean nothing to us, especially if they are in a heterogeneous collection and scattered amongst themselves.

But the Alpha and the Omega embrace all the letters of the Greek alphabet. Therefore, everything that can be said in Greek must be said with or between these two letters, the Alpha and the Omega. Letters are for words.

Words are vehicles of expression. The expression is the result of the motions of the heart. So, that's how we use words.

And our Lord, when he says he is Alpha and Omega, he is encompassing, he is embracing all knowledge, all wisdom, all expression of anything that can be said between the Alpha and the Omega. We all have our thoughts. Many of them are private.

A lot of them, it is well that they remain that way. But no one knows what we are thinking, that is, generally speaking, until we express these thoughts. Now, little children learn, of course, that mothers have eyes in the back of their heads.

But husbands have to learn a few things along that line as well. I remember some time back, my wife said to me on one occasion, she said, I don't think you should do it. And I said, Do what? She said, What are you going to do? I said, I haven't said what I'm going to do.

She said, I still don't think you should do it. I said, How do you know what I'm going to do when I haven't said what I'm going to do? She said, Do you think I've been living with you this long and don't know you yet? I said, All right then, since you know so much, tell me, what was I going to do? I shouldn't have said that. She told me exactly what I was going to do.

Now, that's very unsettling, living with a person that knows what you're going to do before you've said what you're going to do. And yet, we're constantly moving in the presence of one who even goes beyond that, doesn't he? But he knows our thoughts, our inmost thoughts. But how are we going to know his thoughts? By the words which he has left for us.

And all knowledge concerning himself is going to be compressed for our assimilation between the Alpha and the Omega. And there is nothing beyond that. He embraces, he encompasses everything that is going to be expressed about God for us.

In the beginning was the Word, said John when he wrote his Gospel. In the beginning was the Word. So if God is going to make himself known, and he delights to do that, if he's going to express himself for our benefit, for our sake, then he is going to do it in him who is, and always was, the Word.

For in the beginning was the Word. And this mysterious, I say, this unknown, this incomprehensible Triune God is going to be expressed through him who is the Word. And in the beginning, that's what he was.

And in the conclusion, that's what he will be. He is the Alpha. He is the Omega.

He is the sum and substance of everything that can be said about God. And so the official to the Colossians, Paul, tells us that in him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. There are various fields of knowledge, of course, about which some of us know nothing, including myself.

There are fields of knowledge which intrigue us, and yet we know very little about it. Astronomy, for example. I'm intrigued by astronomy.

And, of course, you have to look up, don't you, to understand astronomy. I was walking down the streets of Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, back in the year 1942, I think it was, with Ernie Sprint, one of my colleagues of early days, long gone to be with the Lord. And Ernie was always up to any and every occasion.

And we're walking down the street together, he and I. We used to go to a restaurant in the center of the city of Charlottetown every day. There was one luxury we afforded ourselves, where we were living in a third-floor little attic. We were sitting on orange crates, and we had two orange crates for a table, and we were making our breakfast and our supper.

But we went to the extravagant extent that every day at noon we went down to Milton's Old Spain restaurant, and we bought our meal. And we used to get soup, and we used to get meat and a couple of vegetables, and a piece of pie for 25 cents. That reminds some of you of the old saying, Well, we used to do that.

And so we're walking down the street one day, Ernie and I, and as we're walking down the street I was, I don't know what I was thinking about, but anyway, I saw a quarter in the gutter. So I stopped and picked it up, and I showed it to Ernie. It was a whole meal, you see.

I showed it to Ernie, and I said, Look, look what I found. If you didn't live all the time with your head in the air, you might find something, too. And Ernie quickly replied, he said, Well, you may look down for your money, I look up for mine.

Well, in order to understand the immensity of this universe in which God has placed us, we have to look up, and it intrigues me. And any time I read some new conclusions that the astronomers, the psychologists, and the physicists are coming, arriving at through their study of our universe, I'm fascinated by it. But there's no knowledge even there beyond this person.

He embraces it all. That's the idea of it. He's the Alpha, and he's the Omega.

He includes everything. He is beyond all knowledge. He contains it all.

He's the Alpha and the Omega. And in our understanding of God, and in our appreciation of who our Lord, our glorious Lord, is, we go through the scriptures, and we're constantly coming across something that is a fragment of the Alpha and the Omega. And it's marvelous, isn't it, to see these glimmerings, these gleamings, these rays of light that come shining out to us from the pages of Holy Scripture.

He goes on to say, I'm the beginning and the end. The beginning and the ending. Now, some scriptures will come to your mind as soon as you read something like that.

He was always the Word. But there was a time when this world of ours had a beginning. He had no beginning, as we were commenting the other night.

For there was nothing antecedent to Him. But there was a time when these things came into being. And as John 1 again says, all things were made, or came into being, by Him.

And without Him, there was not one thing that came into being. He was, and is, the beginning of it all. He is the One from Whom everything emerged, and there was nothing outside of Him that has come into being.

Marvelous thought, isn't it? Eye-hits in the beginning. We go back again in our minds to the epistles of the Colossians, in particular chapter 1. You remember, Paul comes to that marvelous statement, which he gives to us as well in Ephesians 1, that in Him we have redemption through His blood. Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation? The firstborn of all creation.

For in Him, not by Him. In Him were all things created. Now, Paul uses three prepositions here, and they're very interesting.

Let me just pause a moment to draw your attention to them. He starts off by saying, in Him were all things created. Whether they be visible, oh, pardon me.

In Him were all things created, whether in the heavens or on earth. Now, just keep that in mind, first of all. In Him were all things created.

The things in the heavens, and the things on earth. Then he goes on to say whether they're visible or invisible. Many things to us are invisible.

Even though he says in 2 Corinthians chapter 4, we're not looking at the things which are seen, but the things which are not seen. So, he says there are things visible, and there are things not visible, or invisible. And then he does a very strange thing.

He says whether they be thrones, or principalities, or dominions, or authorities. Now, when I come across something like that, I immediately am arrested. I stop and say, why did he say that? Why didn't he say angels, cherubim, seraphim? Why didn't he say the human family, the man and the woman? Why didn't he say the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, the fish of the sea? If he's going to detail or enumerate some of these things which he has made, visible and invisible, in the heavens or on earth, why does he say thrones and dominions, principalities and powers? Why does he say that? When he's talking about him being the firstborn of all creation.

Then he goes on to say this. Yes, I know. I'm often told I ask more questions than I answer.

Well, I've got to do something to keep my audience awake, I understand. Then he says all these things were created in him. He is the source of everything.

There was no material outside of him. There was nothing outside of him. Everything that was created was created in him.

He was the depository, if you will. He was the source of everything, and from him all energy was emitted that brought matter into being. Yes, everything was in him.

Nothing was outside of him. That thrills me to think that. I look at all these worlds, these planets, and you know what the astronomers say about our sun.

They say it's a spotty little star in the backwaters of an insignificant system which is part of an inferior galaxy. So, if you thought we were something, there you have it. And now they're telling us there's more than a million galaxies, and now they're telling us that the universe is expanding faster than light can travel, so we're never going to find the end of this universe of ours.

That's the latest conclusion of the world's most renowned physicists. So, the universe is a marvelous thing, but listen, it was all in him before it ever came into being. He says, I'm the beginning.

I'm the beginning of the creation of God. That, by the way, is his introduction of himself to the church at Laodicea, and I suggest to you there's another thought behind that. And then Paul goes on to say all things were created through him.

Now he uses another preposition, a preposition of instrumentality. He says everything was created in him. It all came out from him.

It's hard for us to conceive the magnificence, the splendor, the majesty, the glory of this glorious person who is our Lord Jesus Christ. But then, when it came into being out of him, or it was in him, how did it come into being? Through him. All things were created through him.

He is the one who brought it into being. It was all in him, and it came into being by his power, by his control, by his action, and his activity. And then he goes on to use another preposition still, and he uses a preposition.

It was all created unto him. Everything is for him. Isn't that marvelous? All things visible and invisible in the heavens or on earth were created in him.

All these things were created through him, and all things were created for him, unto him. Everything goes to him. God has appointed him, Hebrews 1, to be heir of all things, by whom also he framed the ages, made the worlds.

Everything is for him. When you see nations grasping for territory. When you see the migrants, you know, neighbors, you see the migrants over an inch of property.

Know your fences on my property. And how much is it? Well, it's a good inch over. You'll have to move it.

And you see nations striving and struggling for a piece of land here and a strip of dirt or desert somewhere else. And we individually too. And what's it all for? It's all futility, because everything is for him.

For thy pleasure they are and were created. They came into being for him. He's heir of everything.

We who are tenants of hovels for a day. Everything is for him who's the heir of the universe. He says, I'm the beginning.

And he says, I'm the ending. I was thinking of this as well in connection with that word in Hebrews chapter 12. Looking off unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith.

Who is the one who designed the pathway of faith that you and I have to live today? Who is the author of faith? Who is the architect of this lifestyle that we as Christians live? For not only, as you know from Romans 1 and 17, did we begin to live by faith. But you know from Galatians chapter 3 we continue to live progressively by faith. And you know from Hebrews chapter 10 that we are preserved in anticipation of the Lord's return by faith.

Those three quotations from Habakkuk chapter 2. This pathway of faith, sometimes we get a little irked by it. We're held in by it. We would like to do something different.

We would like to calculate. We would like to plan, to devise, to scheme, to order. And God brings us back to by faith.

The just began by faith. The just go on by faith. The just are preserved by faith.

Those are the three quotations, aren't they? Romans 1, Galatians 3, and Hebrews chapter 10. Who's the designer of this? He who lived by faith. His was the pathway of faith.

He was subject to everything that his father had planned for him. He never deviated. He was never frustrated.

He never was anxious or irritated by anything that happened. He walked by faith. He was the author of that.

He is the leader of the pathway by faith, if you prefer that interpretation of the word. Not only so, but he is the consummator. He is the conclusion.

He is the finisher of the pathway of faith. He is the end of our pathway of faith. The same blessed person who is our Lord Jesus Christ.

He says, I am the Alpha and the Omega. I am the beginning and I am the end. And then let me come to the last of the couplets in this trilogy.

I am the first and I am the last. Besides me, and remember Isaiah says, we have a quotation from there here, there is none else besides. I am the first and I am the last.

This will bring into our minds various aspects of our Lord's offices as well as of his work. He is the first in preeminence. He is the beginning of the creation of God.

He is the firstborn, which is a title of eminence, as you know. And as Colossians 1 tells us again, it was God's plan, as it is, that in all things he should be the preeminent one. He is the first.

He is unexhaled. He is unequalled. He is unsurpassed.

He is incomparable. He is the first. And that is the first.

He is the one who opens the book of the Revelation and closes the book of the Revelation. He is the one whose hand is upon the control of everything that is going to happen in the book of the Revelation. He is going to start after chapter 1 with the messages he sends to the churches.

And we don't have time this evening because I want to get on tomorrow night with something a little further on. I'm going to surprise you tomorrow night. I'm going to move out of chapter 1. Don't be startled, and I hope you can take it as a surprise.

Now, there is a paragraph here in chapter 1 that we don't have time to consider, but that majestic splendor of himself as he appears walking in the midst of the lampstands over Asia Minor. Caesar's on the throne in Rome. Son of man is still moving in the midst of the lampstands in Asia Minor.

John's 90, 92 years of age. The prophets, the apostles are all gone, and many of his contemporaries are all gone. And the church is coming into a time of unparalleled persecution.

And all the days of the cruel infamous Nero are lying just ahead. And John turns to look, and there is something that God is thinking more about than he is about Rome. And here is someone upon whom the eye of the seer is to be fixed, rather than upon Caesar over there in the west.

And he sees the son of man, and he gives to us a detailed description of our Lord as he saw him, and all these various details from his hair to his head to his eyes to his mouth, and then his countenance, his face, and his speech, and the garment that he wore, and the girdle with which he is restrained. All these things give to us wonderful details about himself in relation to the seven churches. And as you go through the study of the seven churches, which I'm sure you must have done here at Park of the Palms, many times perhaps, or various times, then we discover that the Lord takes up the details of chapter one, and he presents himself to each church in keeping with the condition of the church, and that specific detail of the manifestation of himself.

So, he doesn't give you what he is to me. He isn't necessarily to one assembly what he is to another, because he presents himself in the characteristic of his own person, in keeping with the condition of the assembly. And that's exactly what he does through chapters two and three.

But when John sees him in this unparalleled majesty, nature withers in his presence, and he falls at his feet as dead. What a strange thing, isn't it? Or is it? It reminds us of Daniel. You remember when Daniel saw those visions, we were looking at some of the visions of the Old Testament, when Daniel saw those visions, and even in the presence of Gabriel, nature of the human withers, and gets weak, and falls.

And John says, I fall at his feet as dead. And he put his right hand upon me and said, what John had written before more than once, that he said, Fear not. Fear not.

I am the first and the last. I am the living one, he says. So the man who falls at his feet is dead.

Fear not. I am he that liveth. I am the ever-loving one.

I was dead. That little expression in Romans chapter six has, I don't know if it's baffled me, but it has made me to wonder many times, when Paul is talking about the slavery of sin and the liberty of righteousness, and he talks about death being the consequence of sin, and then he speaks about our Lord having been raised from the dead, dies no more, and this is the word, death has no more dominion over him. And the word is lordship.

And I ask myself the question, how was it possible that he who is the author of life could die, and then that it might be said that death had dominion over him? Death came by sin. And he did no sin. In him was no sin.

He knew no sin. And yet he was made sin for us. Please don't change that parallelism, will you? He who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

And if you say of sin offering, to my mind you spoil the grammatical construction and the thought, the passage. It is a parallelism. He became what we were in order that we might become what he is in the state of righteousness.

He was made sin for us. And we come over to the epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 2. You remember it just said there, We don't see all things put under man yet, but we see Jesus, who was made for a little while lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honor, with what in mind that he might taste death for all creation. I noticed the order of that one time, and it drew my attention.

We see Jesus, who was made for a little while lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honor, that he might taste death, or for the sufferings of death. This was the honor that was conferred upon him. This was the glory that was his.

He was to come and take the place of the last Adam, the second man, who was to take the place of suffering, the sufferings of death, and submitting himself to the authority of death. Sin shall no more have lordship over him. You remember the angel in Matthew, chapter 28, said to the women, Come see the place where the Lord lay.

Now, no man's lord in the sepulcher. For all our arrogance and boastfulness, and for all our pride and all the authority that we believe we have at times, no man has any authority in the grave. We lay them down,

as Paul says, in dishonor.

It's a dishonorable thing for a person to die. Why? Because God made man to live. We saw him in weakness, because he succumbs now to death because of sin.

But, he says, Our Lord, who was tasting death for all creation, because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power, the authority, the dominion, the control of death, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. And the angel said, Come see the place where the Lord lay. No man's lord in the tomb.

No man has any authority in the grave. He might say, My Lord, on earth. He might say, Yes, sir, and so on and so forth.

But when you lay him in the grave, his authority is gone. His lordship is over. But here's one who was Lord in the grave.

Come see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell the disciples and so on. So he says to John here, I am he that lives.

I was dead. I was dead. I became dead.

And now I'm alive forevermore. So, Christ having risen from the dead, dies no more, says Paul. Death has no more dominion over him.

He destroyed that kingdom once and for all. And he's delivered us from the fear of entering into that. And I know we Christians are very human.

We're very natural. And when it comes to facing the enemy that shall be destroyed last of all, we still at times shrink from it. And yet, the scripture is clear.

The scripture is clear. That we have been delivered from this bondage of constant fears of that which is coming. Pardon the personal reference, but my wife said to me a little while ago, my wife comes up with some unique things.

Mr. Tate, Mr. Philip Tate, said to me, just a short while before he died, we were talking together on the phone. I mentioned Mr. Tate to you the other night. And my feelings about him and his sterling character.

So uncompromising in integrity he was. So self-effacing. He said to me one day on the phone, he said, you know brother Adams, I hold your wife in the highest esteem.

She's a most remarkable lady. He said it. I didn't.

And I said to my wife one time, I'm going to mention that sometime. She threatened me with death if I did. I will slay you if you ever mention what he said in public.

One day, does this go on Tate? Whatever happens, make sure it doesn't get to Unionville, won't you? Just make sure. I would like to live a little longer. She said to me one day, we're talking about separation.

When you get to be our age, you think about it, and some couples do and some couples don't. But we've talked very frankly about it. And how we get along, how the one will get along, or when the other one goes

first.

So she said to me, we're talking about that, and we're talking about the rapture. Driving into the city of Toronto one day from where we live, we're driving along, and I said to her, you know, I don't know what I'll do if you go first. I was serious.

There are times when I am. And I really meant it. I said, I don't know what I'll do if you go first.

And she said, I don't think you need worry. I said, why? She said, we're going together. Oh.

I said, you have some inside information on the rapture? She said, no, it's just the way you're driving. Laughter So I slowed down and paid more attention to my driving. But anyway, we were talking about the rapture, and we were talking about possible separation by death, and she said, and she really, I should be accustomed to things she says, but this caught me unaware.

She said, I hope I'm not here for the rapture. Have you ever heard anybody tell you that? I have a lot of people saying, I hope the Lord comes tonight, and I say, I wonder what kind of mess we're in right now. But did you ever hear anybody say, I hope I'm not here for the rapture? So, I called my compañera, and said, oh, why would that be? Well, I realized that if I'm here when the Lord comes, and the church, the saints are raptured to glory, I'm going to miss something.

I will consider myself cheated. I said, cheated? She's dead serious. Much more serious than her husband.

And, did I mutter there? Well, anyway, I said, what do you mean you'll be cheated? She said, if we're taken up from here, caught up, changed in the moment, twinkling of an eye, so long, caught away to be with the Lord, if that happens to me, I won't experience death. Therefore, I won't experience resurrection. I'll never have those experiences.

And I'm going to feel cheated if I don't have those experiences. It must be a very singular thing to die. And then, oh, that thrill, when he who has the keys of death speaks, and out of the graves, from the bodies of his own, reunited with the Spirit, for them that sleep, in, with, by, Jesus, thus will God bring with him when he comes.

Then, of course, the body will rise to meet that Spirit that comes with him. And she said, if we're here when the rapture takes place, we won't know, we'll never know, we'll never get to know what it was like to die. And we'll never experience what it would be like, resurrection.

Well, she floored me on that one. But she was dead serious when she said it. I haven't thought the thing through that far.

I am he that liveth, and I was dead, and behold, I'm alive, he says, forevermore. And listen to his absolute sovereignty. He said, I have the keys of Hades, and of death.

And the ultimate destiny of all spirits, and the ultimate destiny of all mankind, is in the hands of the nails of the cross. The keys of Hades. Remember the Lord said in Matthew 16, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

What have the gates of Hades got to do with the church? A whole lot. But what have the gates of Hades got to do now with the retention of the bodies of those who have gone? Their power is going to be broken. It is broken.

And he who has the keys of Hades will open the gates of Hades. And the spirits of all the dead, of all ages, of all the millennia past, and of all nations, and kindreds, and tongue and people, are going to rise, my friends. For he said himself in John chapter 5, indeed, all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth.

Number 29 gives us the division of that great resurrection, as we have it in Revelation chapter 20. He holds the keys of Hades in his hands. These demonic spirits, these angels bound with infernal change, these malicious, malignant, evil ones who are seeking the destruction of man and the deposition of God, these are under his control.

Fear not, John. Fear not. I am the first and the last, and there is nothing beyond me, and there is nothing beyond my control.

I have the keys of Hades, and I have the keys of death. And out of the graves shall rise the dead of all ages. But what are they going to do, my friends, when the heaven and the earth have fled away? They're going to stand before the face of him whom we know, in whom our hearts have rested, who has said to us, Fear not.

I am the first and the last. When we come to the church at Sardis, and this I must quote, when we come to the church at Sardis, he presents himself to the church at Sardis as the first and the last. Why does he do that? Because they're going to get thrown into prison, and they're going to have persecution ten days, and men are going to be put to death.

But what's greater than that? He who is the first and the last. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. I am the first, and I am the last.

And there's nothing beyond his control, and nothing happens to his people that doesn't come as a direct result of his sovereign will. Earth, heaven, and Hades are all subject to him. Men, angels, and demons are all subject to him.

Fear not. Shall we pray? Our Father, we acknowledge how little we know of this glorious person. Jesus, our blessed Lord, the one who went into death for us, who has made sin on our account, who destroyed him that had the power of death, and he, death by dying through, the one who lives and is alive forevermore.

Because he lives, we shall live also. And all the events of this earthly experience of ours, and all that happens to us in our frail mortality, we acknowledge comes under his control and his guiding hand. And for this, we give thee our grateful thanks this evening.

Command us to be in his blessed and glorious name. Amen.

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