

## Week 38

### Christ Having the Keys of Death and Hades

Hymns: E146

Scripture Reading: Rev. 1:17-18; 10:7; 12:11; 15:1, 8; Acts 2:24; Phil. 3:10-11

Rev. 1:17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead; and He placed His right hand on me, saying, Do not fear; I am the First and the Last

Rev. 1:18 And the living One; and I became dead, and behold, I am living forever and ever; and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

Rev. 10:7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel when he is about to trumpet, then the mystery of God is finished, as He has announced the good news to His own slaves the prophets.

Rev. 12:11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they loved not their soul-life even unto death.

Rev. 15:1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and wonderful, seven angels having seven plagues, the last plagues; for in them the fury of God was finished.

Rev. 15:8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one could enter into the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.

Acts 2:24 Whom God has raised up, having loosed the pangs of death, since it was not possible for Him to be held by it.

Phil. 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

Phil. 3:11 If perhaps I may attain to the out-resurrection from the dead.

#### § Day 1

#### I. "I am the First and the Last and the living One"—Rev. 1:17b-18a:

A. Christ's being the First and the Last implies that He will accomplish what He has begun.

B. The Lord Jesus is not only the First but also the Beginning, and not only the Last but also the End—21:6; 22:13:

1. The First indicates that none is before Him, and the Last that none is after Him.
2. The Beginning indicates that He is the origination of all things, and the End that He is the consummation of all things.
3. The indication here is not only that there is nothing before or after the Lord Jesus but also that there is no origination or consummation without Him.

C. Christ is not only the First and the Last but also the Beginning and the End; this assures us that having started the church life, He will surely accomplish it—cf. 2 Tim. 4:5:

1. The Lord Jesus will never leave His work unfinished—Rev. 10:7; 15:1, 8.
2. All the local churches must believe that the Lord Jesus is the Beginning and the End.
3. He will accomplish what He has begun in His recovery.

#### § Day 2

D. The Christ who walks in the midst of the churches, who is the Head of the churches and to whom the churches belong, is the living One; hence, the churches also, as the expression of the Body, should be living, fresh, and strong—2:1.

#### II. "I became dead, and behold, I am living forever and ever"—1:18a:

- A. The Lord suffered death and lived again—2:8.
- B. Christ entered into death, but death could not hold Him (Acts 2:24), because He is the resurrection (John 11:25).
- C. Resurrection is the lengthening of the Lord's days; He will exist forever and ever in His resurrection:

1. Jesus Christ today is the living One, the One who is in resurrection.

2. For Christ to dispense life, He must be the living One.

**D. The importance of Christ's being the living One is that He is living forever and is living in us:**

1. He wants us to leave every kind of death and rise up to be the living church.

2. The more living we are, the more we are the testimony of the living Jesus—Rev. 12:11.

### § Day 3

**III. "In which also He [Christ] went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison"—1 Pet. 3:19:**

**A. The spirits here refers not to the disembodied spirits of dead human beings held in Hades but to the angels (angels are spirits—Heb. 1:14) who fell through disobedience at Noah's time and are imprisoned in pits of gloom, awaiting the judgment of the great day—2 Pet. 2:4-5; Jude 6.**

**B. After His death in the flesh, Christ in His living Spirit as His divinity went to the abyss to these rebellious angels to proclaim God's victory, accomplished through His incarnation in Christ and Christ's death in the flesh, over Satan's scheme to derange the divine plan.**

**C. Prison (1 Pet. 3:19) refers to Tartarus, the deep and gloomy pits, where the fallen angels are kept.**

### § Day 4

**IV. "I saw a star out of heaven fallen to the earth, and to him was given the key of the pit of the abyss"—Rev. 9:1-2; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3:**

**A. The star in Revelation 9:1 refers to Satan, who will be cast down from**

**heaven to earth:**

1. The angels are likened to stars—Job 38:7; Rev. 12:4.

2. Satan, as the archangel, was the Daystar—Isa. 14:12.

**B. "Who will descend into the abyss?" that is, to bring Christ up from the dead"—Rom. 10:7:**

1. In Greek the word rendered as "abyss" is abyssos.

2. This word is used in Luke 8:31 in reference to the dwelling place of the demons—vv. 27, 33, 35, 38.

3. It also occurs in Revelation 9:1-2 and 11 to denote the place out of which the "locusts," whose king is Apollyon, will come.

4. In Revelation 11:7 and 17:8 it signifies the place out of which the beast, which is the Antichrist, will ascend.

5. In Revelation 20:1 and 3 it specifies the place into which Satan will be cast and imprisoned during the millennium.

6. In Romans 10:7 abyss points to the place Christ visited after His death and before His resurrection, which place, according to Acts 2:24 and 27, is Hades, for Acts 2:24 and 27 reveal that Christ went into Hades after He died and rose from that place in His resurrection.

7. According to biblical usage, the word abyss always refers to the region of death and of Satan's power of darkness into which Christ after His death descended as into the lower parts of the earth (Eph. 4:9), which He conquered, and from which He ascended in His resurrection.

### § Day 5 & Day 6

**V. In Revelation 1:18b the Lord Jesus says, "I have the keys of death and of Hades":**

**A. Due to the fall and the sin of man, death has come in and is now operating**

on earth to collect all sinful people and to bring them to Hades, the place where the dead are kept.

B. In the church life, however, we are no longer subject to death and Hades—Phil. 3:10-11.

C. Christ abolished death on the cross, and He overcame Hades in His resurrection:

1. Although death tried its best to hold Christ, it was powerless to do so—Acts 2:24.
2. Christ is both God and resurrection (John 1:1; 11:25), possessing the indestructible life (Heb. 7:16).
3. Because He is such an ever-living One, death is not able to hold Him.
4. Christ delivered Himself to death, but death had no way to detain Him; instead, death was defeated by Him, and He rose up from it.
5. With Christ, therefore, death has no sting, and Hades has no power.

D. Because Christ is the One in the church who is the Holder of the keys of death and Hades, death and Hades should not have any power over us.

E. In the church life the keys of death and Hades are in the Lord's hand.

F. It is impossible for us to deal with death:

1. We simply do not have the ability to handle it.
2. Whenever death enters, many will be overcome by it.

G. If we give the Lord Jesus the ground, the opportunity, and the free way to move and act among us, both death and Hades will be under His control—Matt. 16:18; Rev. 20:14:

1. When the Lord Jesus does not have the ground in the church, death immediately becomes prevailing, and Hades becomes powerful to hold the dead ones.

2. It is crucial for us to see that Christ has the keys, the authority, of death and Hades—John 5:27; 17:2; Rev. 12:10.

3. Death is subject to Him, and Hades is under His control.

H. We should praise the Lord that Christ has the keys of death and of Hades—1:18; Heb. 13:15; 1 Pet. 1:7; Rev. 19:5-6.

# WEEK 38 — DAY 1

## Morning Nourishment

Rev. 2:8 And to the messenger of the church in Smyrna write: These things says the First and the Last, who became dead and lived again.

22:13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

The Lord Jesus is not only the First but also the Beginning; He is not only the Last but also the End. The First indicates that none is before Christ, and the Last that none is after Him; whereas the Beginning indicates that He is the origination of all things, and the End that He is the consummation of all things. Hence, the indication here is not only that there is nothing before or after the Lord Jesus but also that there is no origination or consummation without Him. This assures us that the Lord is strong to promise, encourage, and strengthen us. He will accomplish whatever He has spoken in Revelation. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 4445)

### Today's Reading

The Lord told the suffering church in Smyrna that He is the First and the Last. This indicates that no matter how great were the sufferings through which He passed, those sufferings could not terminate or damage Him... In suffering, the church needs to know that Christ is the First and the Last, the ever-existing, unchanging One. Whatever the environment may be, He remains the same...All things are within the limit of His control.

When the Lord told the church in Smyrna that He was the First and the Last, He was indicating that the church should be victorious, not defeated by any kind of suffering.

Christ is not only the First but also the Originator; He is not only the Last but also the Finisher. In other words, in this universe from beginning to end,

all is Christ...The Lord Jesus is not only the First but also the Beginning, the origination; He is not only the Last but also the End, the completion, leaving nothing to anyone. He occupies the entire universe. In time, in space, and in everything He is everything.

The fact that Christ is not only the First and the Last but also the Beginning and the End assures us that, having started the church life, He will surely accomplish it. He will never leave His work unfinished. All those in the local churches must believe that the Lord Jesus is the Beginning and the End. He will accomplish what He has begun in His recovery.

Because the Lord is everything to us and because He is so strong, we should not excuse ourselves by saying that we are weak and that our environment is too difficult. The more difficult our environment, the richer the Lord will be to us. The more trying our circumstances, the stronger the Lord will be to us. We must exercise our faith in this all-inclusive One, the One who is the Alpha, the Omega, the First, the Last, the Beginning, and the End. With Him, there are no problems. Thus, we need to be immersed into Him, believe in Him, and rest in Him. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 263-264, 4445-4446)

God made the original design, and God also will bring it to its final completion. How we thank God that He is the Alpha, the initiator of all things... All things had their beginning in God [Gen. 1:1]. At the same time, He is also the Omega. Man can and will fail, but God is the Omega. Man may say this and man may say that, but God has the last word. He is the Omega. He will bring His plan to fulfillment, He will reach His goal, and He will accomplish what He has begun. We acknowledge that Satan's work has indeed interrupted the work of God, but we further acknowledge that God is not only the Alpha who purposed in the beginning but also the Omega who will finally succeed. God never gives up, and He will never let any of His purpose remain unfulfilled. Regardless of the church's condition in her present experience, she will have no spot, wrinkle, or any such thing in God's goal. Furthermore, she will be clothed with glory and presented to His Son. (CWWN, vol. 34, "The Glorious Church," pp. 119-120)

Further Reading: The Conclusion of the New Testament, msgs. 24, 434

# WEEK 38 — DAY 2

## Morning Nourishment

**Rev. 1:17-18** ...I am the First and the Last and the living One; and I became dead, and behold, I am living forever and ever; and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

**Acts 2:24** Whom God has raised up, having loosed the pangs of death, since it was not possible for Him to be held by it.

The Lord suffered death and lived again [Rev. 1:18]. He entered into death, but death could not hold Him (Acts 2:24), because He is the resurrection (John 11:25)...Resurrection is the lengthening of the Lord's days. He will exist forever and ever in His resurrection...For Christ to dispense life, He must be the living One since a dead person can never dispense life to others. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 4153)

## Today's Reading

The living One within us can never be dead. His church should be neither dead nor deadened; instead, His church must be living all the time. We must learn to enjoy Christ as the living One. His living forever is His testimony, for the testimony of Jesus is always related to the matter of being living. If a local church is not living, it will not have the testimony of Jesus. The more living we are, the more we are the testimony of the living Jesus.

The Christ who walks in the midst of the churches, who is the Head of the churches and to whom the churches belong, is the living One—full of life. Hence, the churches as His Body should also be living, fresh, and strong. We have a living Christ who has overcome death. Our Christ, who is the resurrected One, is living in us and among us. He is living forever and ever...In the recovery all the churches should be as living as Christ, full of life and overcoming death. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 4153-4154)

In Acts 2:24-32 Peter spoke concerning the resurrection of the Lord Jesus...Peter said that God raised up Jesus. In 10:40 and 41 he said the same thing again but added, "He rose from the dead." Regarding the Lord as a man, the New Testament tells us that God raised Him from the dead (Rom. 8:11); considering Him as God, it tells us that He Himself rose from the dead (1 Thes. 4:14). This proves His dual status—human and divine.

Acts 2:24 says that it was not possible for the Lord to be held by death. The Lord is both God and resurrection (John 1:1; 11:25), possessing the indestructible life (Heb. 7:16). Since He is such an ever-living One, death is not able to hold Him. He delivered Himself to death, but death had no way to detain Him; rather, death was defeated by Him, and He rose up from it. (Life-study of Acts, pp. 75-76)

John testifies of Jesus Christ as the One who said that He is the living One and that He became dead but is living forever and ever [Rev. 1:18]. This is a word spoken to the churches. Today He is living in the heavens at the right hand of the throne of God, but this is not the point of emphasis. The importance of His being the living One is that He is living in us. He is living forever and is living in us. He told us that today He is still living. Therefore, He wants us to leave every kind of death and rise up to be the living church. This is the thought in Revelation 1.

How do you live by Him? First, you must realize that formerly you had only your life, but now it is no longer you but the Lord Jesus who is living within you. Therefore, today you are a dual person. Outwardly it is you, and inwardly it is the Lord Jesus; within you there are two lives. Second, God does not want you to live by your original life. God wants you to live by your second life, which is God Himself. Third, this second life is in your spirit. Thus, if you want to live by this life, you need to live by your spirit. The issue of this living is the church. Therefore, for the church life we must all live in our spirit, exercising to live by the Lord. (CWWL, 1983, vol. 3, "A Living of Mutual Abiding with the Lord in Spirit," pp. 26-28)

Further Reading: Life-study of Revelation, msg. 9

# WEEK 38 — DAY 3

## Morning Nourishment

**1 Pet. 3:18-20 For Christ...on the one hand being put to death in the flesh, but on the other, made alive in the Spirit; in which also He went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, who had formerly disobeyed when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah...**

First Peter 3:19-20 tells us that immediately after the death of His body, Christ was strong and active in His Spirit and went to proclaim His victory to those disobedient ones at Noah's time. In the Spirit (v. 18) does not refer to the Holy Spirit but to the Spirit that is Christ's spiritual nature (Mark 2:8; Luke 23:46). (CWWL, 1984, vol. 3, "God's New Testament Economy," p. 158)

After He was buried, Christ went in His living Spirit to the spirits in prison (the rebellious angels) to proclaim God's victory, through His incarnation in Christ and Christ's death in the flesh, over Satan's scheme to derange the divine plan.

The crucifixion put Christ to death only in His flesh which He received through incarnation, not in His Spirit. Instead of dying at the cross when His flesh did, Christ's Spirit was made alive, enlivened with new power of life, so that in this empowered Spirit Christ made a proclamation to the fallen angels after His death in the flesh and before His resurrection. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 782-783)

## Today's Reading

We should not interpret "made alive in the Spirit" [in 1 Peter 3:18] as referring to Christ's resurrection...Rather, this verse indicates that when Christ was buried in the tomb, in His empowered Spirit, He went before His resurrection to the abyss to proclaim God's victory to the rebellious angels.

The phrase in which [in verse 19] refers to the Spirit in verse 18, indicating and proving that in this Spirit Christ, after dying in His flesh, was still active. In particular, in His enlivened Spirit He made a proclamation to the spirits in prison. Throughout the centuries great teachers of different schools have had varying interpretations concerning the spirits in prison. The most acceptable according to the Scriptures is as follows. The spirits here do not refer to the disembodied spirits of dead human beings held in Hades but to the angels (angels are spirits—Heb. 1:14) who fell through disobedience at Noah's time (1 Pet. 3:20...) and are imprisoned in pits of gloom for the judgment of the great day (2 Pet. 2:4-5; Jude 6). After His death in the flesh, Christ in His living Spirit went (probably to the abyss—Rom. 10:7) to these rebellious angels to proclaim, perhaps, God's victory, through His incarnation in Christ and Christ's death in the flesh, over Satan's scheme to derange the divine plan.

The prison in 1 Peter 3:19 refers to Tartarus, the deep and gloomy pits (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6) where the fallen angels are kept. The word proclaimed [in 1 Peter 3:19] does not indicate the preaching of the good news but the proclaiming of the triumphant victory. This proclamation was made to those "who had formerly disobeyed" (v. 20)...The spirits in prison do not refer to the disembodied spirits of dead human beings held in Hades but to angels who fell through their disobedience at the time of Noah. Those angels left their own place, came down to earth, and used human bodies to commit fornication with the daughters of men, polluting the human race and producing giants (Gen. 6:4).

Christ died on the cross for our redemption. But although He was put to death in His body, He was enlivened and empowered in His Spirit, even before the resurrection. In this enlivened and empowered Spirit He went to proclaim to the rebellious angels God's victory over Satan, their leader. Hence, Christ's death not only accomplished redemption for us but also gained the victory over Satan and his followers. After His death and before His resurrection, Christ proclaimed to Satan's followers God's victory over the devil through the crucifixion of Christ. This was Christ's work in His burial. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 783-784)

Further Reading: Life-study of 1 Peter, msg. 24; The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 72

# WEEK 38 — DAY 4

## Morning Nourishment

**Rev. 9:1-2** And the fifth angel trumpeted, and I saw a star out of heaven fallen to the earth, and to him was given the key of the pit of the abyss. And he opened the pit of the abyss, and smoke went up out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit.

The star [in Revelation 9:1] refers to Satan, who will be cast down from heaven to earth. The angels are likened to stars (Job 38:7; Rev. 12:4). As the archangel, Satan was the Daystar (Isa. 14:12). In Luke 10:18 we see the judgment upon him. In Revelation 9:1 and in 12:9-10, we see the execution of that judgment.

Revelation 12 reveals that after the man-child is raptured to heaven, he will fight against Satan...According to that chapter, Satan will fall from heaven at the beginning of the last three and a half years...This is a strong proof that the great tribulation will not begin before then, for, prior to this, Satan will still be in heaven.

When Satan falls from heaven to earth, the key of the abyss will be given to him that he may open the abyss to release the demon-possessed locusts to torment men for five months. (Life-study of Revelation, p. 279)

## Today's Reading

Speaking of the locusts, Revelation 9:11 says, "They have a king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon; and in Greek he has the name Apollyon." The angel of the abyss is the beast, Antichrist, who will come out of the pit of the abyss (11:7; 17:8). In Hebrew the angel of the abyss is called Abaddon, which means "destruction," as in Job 26:6; 28:22; and Proverbs 15:11. In Greek he will have the name Apollyon, which means "destroyer." As the destroyer, Antichrist will do much destroying (Dan. 8:23-25).

Satan will then release the locusts, which will be organized as an army under the rule of the beast, Antichrist, who will be their king. The locusts will proceed to torment for five months those who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. (Life-study of Revelation, pp. 281-282)

At the sounding of the fifth trumpet, Satan will be cast down from heaven to earth, and the key of the pit of the abyss will be given to him. After he opens the pit of the abyss, smoke will go up out of the pit of the abyss, and out of the smoke will come forth locusts to the earth (Rev. 9:1-3). These are demons, because they dwell in the pit of the abyss. These strange creatures have tails like scorpions and in the sting of their tails is their power to harm men for five months (vv. 3-5, 7-10). The pain from their sting torments men but does not kill them. Verse 6 says, "In those days men will seek death and shall by no means find it; and they will long to die, and death flees from them." The plagues of the first four trumpets are on men's outward environment, but the woe of the fifth trumpet is directly upon men. (CWWL, 1955, vol. 1, p. 455)

In Greek the word rendered as "abyss" [in Romans 10:7] is abyssos. This word is used in Luke 8:31 referring to the dwelling place of the demons. It also occurs in Revelation 9:1-2 and 11 denoting the place out of which the "locusts," whose king is Apollyon, will come; in Revelation 11:7 and 17:8 signifying the place out of which the beast, which is the Antichrist, will ascend; and in Revelation 20:1 and 3 specifying the place into which Satan will be cast and imprisoned during the millennium. The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, uses this word for the word deep in Genesis 1:2. Here in Romans 10:7 it points to the place Christ visited after His death and before His resurrection, which place, according to Acts 2:24 and 27, is Hades, for Acts 2:24 and 27 reveal that Christ went into Hades after He died and rose from that place in His resurrection. So, according to biblical usage, the word abyss always refers to the region of death and of Satan's power of darkness into which Christ after His death descended as into the lower parts of the earth (Eph. 4:9), which He conquered, and from which He ascended in His resurrection. (Life-study of Romans, p. 263)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1955, vol. 1, p. 455; Life-study of Romans, msg. 23

# WEEK 38 — DAY 5

## Morning Nourishment

Rev. 1:17-18 ...I am the First and the Last and the living One; and I became dead, and behold, I am living forever and ever; and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

Phil. 3:10-11 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if perhaps I may attain to the out-resurrection from the dead.

Due to the fall and sin of man, death has come in and is now operating on earth to collect all sinful people and to bring them to Hades, the place where the dead are kept. In the church life, however, we are no longer subject to death and Hades. Christ abolished death on the cross, and He overcame Hades in His resurrection. Although death tried its best to hold Him, it was powerless to do so (Acts 2:24). Christ is both God and resurrection (John 1:1; 11:25), possessing the indestructible life (Heb. 7:16). Because He is such an ever-living One, death is not able to hold Him. He delivered Himself to death, but death had no way to detain Him; instead, death was defeated by Him, and He rose up from it. With Christ, therefore, death has no sting, and Hades has no power. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 635-636)

## Today's Reading

Because Christ is the One in the church who is the Holder of the keys of death and Hades, death and Hades should not have any power over us. In the church life the keys of death and Hades are in the Lord's hand. It is impossible for us to deal with death; we simply do not have the ability to handle it. Whenever death enters, many will be overcome by it. But if we give the Lord Jesus the ground, the opportunity, and the free way to move and act among us, both death and Hades will be under His control. However,

whenever the Lord Jesus does not have the ground in the church, death immediately becomes prevailing, and Hades becomes powerful to hold the dead ones. It is crucial for us to see that Christ has the keys, the authority, of death and Hades. Death is subject to Him, and Hades is under His control.

The Lord was persecuted to death. But that death was not the end—it was the gateway into resurrection. When He entered into death, He came to the threshold of resurrection. This indicates that the suffering church should not be frightened by persecution or terrified at the prospect of being killed..., for once she has passed into death, she also will be on the threshold of resurrection.

Christ's resurrection was also His victory over death, Satan, Hades, and the grave (Acts 2:24). Satan, death, Hades, and the grave form a group. Christ, the Son of Man, was not only vindicated by God and was proved to be a success in His achievements, but He was victorious over death, Satan, Hades, and the grave, all of which are a great concern and trouble to us. The Son of Man overcame death and destroyed Satan (Heb. 2:14). The keys of death and of Hades are now in His hand (Rev. 1:18), and He is victorious over the grave. Such a Christ is walking in the midst of all the local churches in His recovery, taking care of them as the golden lampstands. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 636, 4154, 4156)

In the history of mankind Jesus was the only person who walked into death and walked back out. He walked into death to take a tour of death in order to study death firsthand. After He finished His tour through death, He simply walked out of death. Death had no hold on Him. He conquered death, subdued death, and walked out of death. This was the resurrection of Christ, the incarnated God and the redeeming God. We were redeemed by His walking into death and coming out of death (Eph. 1:7; Rom. 4:25), and now death has no power over us (1 Cor. 15:54-55), for we are in Christ, the redeeming One. (CWWL, 1973-1974, vol. 1, "The Vision and Experience of the Corporate Christ," p. 479)

Further Reading: The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 59

# WEEK 38 — DAY 6

## Morning Nourishment

**Matt. 16:18** ...Upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

**Rev. 20:14** And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

In Matthew 16:18 ...gates of Hades refers to Satan's authority or power of darkness (Col. 1:13; Acts 26:18), which cannot prevail against the genuine church built by Christ upon this revelation concerning Him as the rock, with stones such as Peter, a transformed human being. This word of the Lord's indicates also that Satan's power of darkness will attack the church. Hence, there is spiritual warfare between Satan's power, which is his kingdom, and the church, which is God's kingdom.

On the dome [of Saint Peter's Cathedral in Rome] there [are] written some words from Matthew 16:18: "I will build My church upon this rock." However, the last part of this verse — "and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it"—[is] not written there...The church in the Lord's recovery, however, is truly built upon the revelation concerning Christ, and against this church the gates of Hades cannot prevail. (Life-study of Matthew, pp. 541-542)

## Today's Reading

[In] Revelation 20:14...the lake of fire is the trash can for the entire universe, into which all negative things, including death and Hades, will be cast. Death will be the last enemy destroyed by the Lord (1 Cor. 15:26).

In the first death, the soul and spirit are separated from the body and, in the case of the unbelievers, are kept in the suffering section of Hades (Luke 16:22-24). In the second death, the soul and spirit of the unbelievers, after being rejoined to their body in resurrection, are cast with their body into

the lake of fire. This means that the unbelievers' whole being—spirit, soul, and body—will perish in eternal torment in the lake of fire. (Life-study of Revelation, pp. 646-647)

In the four Gospels Christ was mild, gentle, and kind. When He looked at people, they felt loved. In the Gospel of John, Jesus looked at people and wept; He truly captured people by His loving look (11:35; Luke 22:61). This same Christ, however, appears differently in the book of Revelation. He has seven eyes, which are like a flame of fire (1:14; 5:6), burning and shining. In the Gospels His most intimate disciple could even recline on His bosom (John 13:23)...However, when John saw Him again in Revelation, he was frightened and fell at His feet as dead (1:17)...Luke 4:22 says that words of grace proceeded out of His mouth, but Revelation tells us that a sharp two-edged sword proceeds out of His mouth (1:16; 19:15). Moreover, in John 1:29 He is introduced as the Lamb of God, but in Revelation 5:5 He is called the Lion of the tribe of Judah. The book of Revelation unveils Christ to us not in a common way but in an extraordinary way...Revelation continues the Gospels and the Epistles, but it does not reveal Christ according to the Gospels and the Epistles. In Revelation He is not a small, gentle, kind, patient, silent, and suffering Christ; He is a bold, fierce, rich, burning, and living Christ. If we experience the Christ unveiled in Revelation, we will be in life, enjoy His victory, praise Him, and shout for joy.

If we consider the picture of Christ in Revelation 1, we will see that this chapter presents a fierce Christ. His eyes are as a flame of fire; His feet are like shining bronze, as having been fired in a furnace; His voice is as the sound of many waters; and out of His mouth proceeds a sharp two-edged sword. We must have a new impression of Christ. Christ, the Son of Man, who is walking in the midst of the local churches, is living, burning, and fierce. He is gracious, yet He is terrifying...Because the days are so dark, evil, and dead, we need a fierce Christ. If we contact the Christ in Revelation, we will not be cold but burning, and we will not be silent but will shout to praise Him. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 4156-4157)

Further Reading: The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 407

