

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's Day Prophesying Message Two : Christ Having the keys of Death and Hades

I. Overview:

Christ's being the First and the Last implies that He will accomplish what He has begun. The Beginning indicates that He is the origination of all things, and the End that He is the consummation of all things. This assures us that having started the church life, He will surely accomplish it; the Lord Jesus will never leave His work unfinished. The Lord suffered death and lived again. Christ entered into death, but death could not hold Him, because He is the resurrection. 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. 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 Christ, it was powerless to do so. Christ is both God and resurrection, possessing the indestructible life. 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.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Expound that the Lord Jesus is the First and also the Beginning; He is the Last and 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.

B. Why does the church in suffering need to know that Christ is the First and the Last?

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.

Day 2 —

A. Explain the words in Revelation 1:18.

The Lord suffered death and lived again. He entered into death, but death could not hold Him, because He is the resurrection. 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.

B. State that as the head is, so also is the body.

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. If a local church is not living, it will not have the testimony of 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.

Day 3 —

A. Expound the significance of First Peter 3:19-20.

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 does not refer to the Holy Spirit but to the Spirit that is Christ's spiritual nature. After He was buried, Christ went in His living Spirit to the spirits in prison (the rebellious angels) to proclaim God's victory.

B. Explain "made alive in the Spirit" in First Peter 3:18.

The phrase 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. The spirits here do not refer to the disembodied spirits of dead human beings held in Hades but to the angels who fell through disobedience at Noah's time and are imprisoned in pits of gloom for the judgment of the great day.

Day 4 —

A. Explain the star in Revelation 9:1 referring to Satan.

The star in Revelation 9:1 refers to Satan, who will be cast down from heaven to earth. The angels are likened to stars. As the archangel, Satan was the Daystar. 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.

B. Expound Satan wanting to release the demon-possessed locusts to hurt people.

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. The angel of the abyss is the beast, Antichrist, who will come out of the pit of the abyss. The angel of the abyss is called Apollyon, which means "destroyer."

Day 5 —

A. Expound that death was defeated by Him, and He rose up from it.

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. Christ is both God and resurrection, possessing the indestructible life. 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.

B. Fellowship Christ being the Holder of the keys of death and Hades.

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. 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.

Day 6 —

A. Explain the words in Matthew 16:18, and how to experience it.

The gates of Hades refers to Satan's authority or power of darkness, 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 and the church.

B. Expound the lake of fire 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. In the first death, the soul and spirit are separated from the body and are kept in the suffering section of Hades. 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.

III. Conclusion:

Christ has already abolished death on the cross and overcome the Hades in his resurrection. Although the Hades tried its best to detain him, it was powerless. To Christ, death has no sting, and the Hades has no authority. In the church life, the keys of death and Hades are in the Lord's hand. As long as we give 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. Praise the Lord! Christ holds the keys of death and Hades. Death is under His authority, and Hades is in His control. Hallelujah! For the church, tribulations are a test of life. The extent to which the church experiences and enjoys the life of Christ's resurrection can only be tested through tribulations. Moreover, tribulations bring forth the richness of Christ's resurrection life.