

Fear Not

Revelation 1:17-18



Living Together In The Love Of God

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FOCAL Read Responsively Revelation 1:17-18 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: {18} 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.**

Franklin Graham noted in his book *The Name* that the most repeated command in the Bible is “Fear Not”. It occurs 366 times, one time for every day of the year – even during a leap year!

The first time the command *fear not* is given in the Scripture is when God speaks to His servant Abraham:

Genesis 15:1 (KJV) "After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."

Our text today has the **last occurrence of the command to fear not**. Now God speaks the words not to Abraham, the father of faith (**Romans 4:16**), but to the Apostle John, the only Apostle who died of *natural causes*. John was supposed to die on that Island, but the Lord came to him – just as He comes to all His people in need.

- What is the *first use* of "fear not" in the Scripture?
What is the *last use*? (Genesis 15:1; Romans 4:16; Revelation 1:17-18)

The reason that John fell down in fear was not because he was abandoned on Patmos – but because he saw the Lord Jesus Christ face to face. Our context says:

CONTEXT Revelation 1:12-16 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; (13) And in the midst of the seven candlesticks **one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. (14) His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; (15) And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. (16) 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.**

I've been amused by those who treat Jesus as if He's a fishing buddy or an ordinary person. I've heard people say "When I see Jesus He's going to have to explain this or that to me". Now, I'm not saying that Jesus won't explain things to us in glory. But I don't believe that we'll respond any differently than John did. John – *the Disciple Whom Jesus loved* – walked with Jesus for three years. When he saw the Risen and glorified Savior He **fell at His feet as dead**. How did Jesus respond to John? Notice the text:

FOCAL Revelation 1:17 "..... And **he laid his right hand upon me**, saying unto me, Fear not;

ILLUSTRATE In **ancient times** when the head of the family wanted to bless someone, he would put his **right hand** on the inheritor. The **right hand** was always considered the hand of authority and the hand of

blessing. Anyone could be on the *left* hand, but the **right hand was the upholding hand**. God told His Old Testament saints:

Isaiah 41:10 "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

Now Jesus reaches out His hand to John the Revelator and says *fear not*. The **calming hand of the Savior comes only for those who have a personal relationship with Him**.

- What is the *significance* of the *right hand* of Jesus in this passage? (Isaiah 41:10)

understand *fear not*. A nodding acquaintance with Jesus never leads to a state where we *fear not*. When a person can say they know the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior, then and only then can you know what it is to *fear not*.

1. I Do Not Have To Fear, For My Savior Is Eternal God

FOCAL Revelation 1:17 **Fear not; I am the first and the last ...**"

The Baptist Faith and Message states:

"There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord".

In recent years there have been those who have said that you could be saved by coming to Jesus Christ as *Savior*, but that you need not come to Him as Lord. That's absolutely untrue, for **Jesus is Lord God**. When He tells John "**Fear Not**" Jesus doesn't leave it at that, but goes on to say "**I Am the First and the Last**". That title "**First and Last**" is used in the Old Testament for God alone. We read:

Isaiah 44:6 "Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God."

God was there at the beginning of all things, and God will be there throughout all eternity. When Jesus uses the phrase **first and last** for Himself when He addresses John, He is telling him "I am Eternal God".

Isaiah 48:12-13 "Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last. {13} Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together."

Our Lord Jesus also calls Himself the **Alpha and Omega**, which are the first and last letters of the Greek Alphabet.

CONTEXT Revelation 1:8 (KJV) "**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."

Jesus Christ is the **beginning and end of all knowledge**. He is the **beginning and end of all creation**. He is Eternal God in human form, the Creator Who saves us.

- What are two of the titles that God uses for Himself to emphasize His *eternal Being*? (Revelation 1:17; Isaiah 48:12-13; Revelation 1:8; Isaiah 44:6)

This life is filled with trials.

**Trials dark on every hand and we cannot understand
All the ways that God would lead us
to that happy promised land
We are trusting in the Lord
And according to His word,
We will understand it better bye and bye.**

How do we make it from day to day? We trust in Jesus. We focus on Him, and give our burdens to Him. Just prior to His crucifixion Jesus told John, along with the other Apostles:

John 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome² the world."

² Perfect active indicative of *nikaō*, have overcome in the past with the result that it keeps on being overcome

Where is your peace? Is it in money? No, for money runs

out. Is it in *position*? No, for you may be on top today, but cast down tomorrow. Is it in the *temporal pleasures* of this life? No, for those fade away. **Your peace is in Christ, in trusting Him, in living for Him.**

The closer you draw to Christ, the more of your life you surrender to Him, the more blessed you are. Jesus said:

Matthew 11:28-30 Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. (30) For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

What do we do when fear comes, the fear that **makes us labor and weighs us down**? We come to Jesus. We come to Him and **take His yoke upon us**. A yoke symbolizes submission to the authority of another. We put ourselves under His loving right hand – just as John did – and trust Him. We **learn of Jesus**, seeking Him in prayer and Bible study. **His yoke is easy, and His burden light.**

I do not have to fear, because my Savior is also Eternal God – My God – and in Him I will trust!

2. I Do Not Have To Fear, For My Lord Jesus Has Conquered Death!

FOCAL Revelation 1:17-18 "... Fear not ... {18} I am he that liveth³, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen .."

³ Present Active Participle zao {pronounced dzah'-o}, *keeps on living*.

What is "death"? Death does not mean, as some people define it, *cessation or the end of life*. "Death" is best defined as *separation* not as *cessation*. When someone dies they do not cease to exist - they leave this life, and enter the next life. Life never truly ceases, but it passes on to the next world - the next state of being.

The Christian has no need to fear life **because the Savior has already conquered death**. That is proved by the resurrection of Christ. In fact, the Gospel we preach emphasizes the death – burial – and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is Lord of Creation, Lord of His people, Lord of Life, and Lord of Death!

The Apostle Paul said:

1 Corinthians 15:1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you **the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;**

What is **the Gospel Paul and the early Church preached, which was received and in what believers stand**? Paul said:

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that **Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; (4) And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures:**

Here is the Gospel. Jesus **died for our sins**. He had to die because someone had to make payment for our sins. Having died, **He was buried**. He did not *swoon* as a charlatan, pretending to die. He died. The executioners who nailed Him to the Cross witnessed His death. The man who thrust the spear in His side, seeing **blood and water come out (John 19:34)**. The guards placed around His tomb saw Him laid there, dead and unmoving. And at the end of the third day our Lord Jesus **rose again from the grave**.

1 Corinthians 15:5-8 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: (6) After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. (7) After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. (8) And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

And Jesus **was seen by many over the next forty days following His resurrection**. He has conquered death. Jesus conquered *spiritual death* when He died on the Cross for our sins, and He conquered *physical death* when He rose again on the third day, promising all who believe everlasting life.

1 Corinthians 15:55-58 (KJV) "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. {57} But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. {58} Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye

know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

- Jesus Christ has _____ death.
(Revelation 1:17-18)

- Has anyone *besides Jesus* ever come back from the grave? Is this different from Jesus' return from the grave? How so? (Matthew 27:52-54; 1 Kings 17:21-22; John 11:43; Luke 8:55)

The greatest fear in this life is the *end of life*. Jesus has conquered that fear, for death has no hold on the Children of God. When the believer closes his eyes for the last time, he opens up his eyes on eternity. When you come to the last minute of your life on this earth, the sting of death is less because you know Jesus Christ has conquered death. Just as Jesus put His right hand on John, He will place that nail scarred hand on you as you reach that final moment. What an assurance the believer has!

- Death no longer has the _____ for the Christian as it does for the unbeliever. (1 Corinthians 15:55-58)

3. I Will Not Fear, For My Lord Jesus Has The Keys

FOCAL Revelation 1:17-18 (KJV) "... Fear not; I am alive for evermore, Amen; and **have the keys of hell⁴ and of death⁵**."

⁴ hades {pronounced hah'-dace}, hades, the place of the dead, the grave

⁵ thanatos {pronounced than'-at-os}, death, separation from this life

Again, we have a third great promise from our Creator. Jesus Christ alone possesses the *keys* to death and hell (hades). **He who owns the keys to a thing controls a thing!** For those of you who have a relationship with Jesus Christ by faith, who know Him as more than just a title, you have His guarantee of life. He alone holds the keys to eternal life, or to eternal damnation. Jesus Christ told us that *all judgment* has been assigned to Him by the Father:

John 5:24 ... Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

The Christian – saved by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ – will *never be condemned with the world*. Our works are judged in eternity as to whether they merit reward or not. Yet the Scripture says:

1 Corinthians 3:15 (KJV) "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

The lazy steward who refuses to work for Jesus loses reward in Heaven, though he remains saved. However, the person who has *no relationship with Jesus* will one day stand before a fearful, dreadful Throne. On that day every person who ever lived without Christ will stand up before a Great White Throne. John later saw the Great White Throne, a fearful and terrible place of which we are told:

Revelation 20:11-14 (KJV) "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. {12} And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. {13} And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. {14} And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."

Those who stand before this Throne have their works judged, but I want you to notice that it is not the works that condemn them to the lake of fire. What condemns them to this terrible lake? Look at **verse 15**:

Revelation 20:15 (KJV) "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Works do not save you, but faith in Christ, the One Who holds the key to death and the grave, this is what saves you. Your name is written in the Book of Life the *moment you accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior*. Your name is written in the Book of Life (**Philippians 4:3**).

If you have believed in Him then your name has been

- Everyone will be judged by _____ when they leave this life. (John 5:22-24)

- Though your works will be judged, what causes you to enter heaven or the lake of fire is determined by whether your name is written in the _____. (Revelation 20:15; Philippians 4:3; Revelation 21:27)

- Jesus Christ holds the keys to _____ and _____, therefore He alone controls our entrance into heaven (Revelation 1:17-18)

written in that wonderful Book. You need never fear death, for Jesus - the Owner of that Book - knows you by name. If you do not know Jesus, however, you need to fear. A casual acquaintance with God will not make Him turn the key on Heaven's gate. You must be born again! You must believe in Him, believe that He died and rose again for you, in order that you be saved.

Charles Spurgeon said:

"I am the first." "I have gone before you, and prepared your way; I loved you before you loved Me; I ordained your whole course in life before you were in existence. In every work of grace for you and within you, I am the first. Like the dew which comes from the Lord, I waited not for man, neither tarried for the sons of men. And I also am the last, perfecting that which concerneth you, and keeping you unto the end. I am the Alpha and the Omega to you, and all the letters in between; I began with you, and I shall end with you, if an end can be thought of. I march in the van, and I bring up the rear. Your final

preservation is as much from Me as your hopeful commencement." Brother, does a fear arise concerning that dark hour which threatens soon to arrive? What hour is that? Jesus knows, and He will be with you through the night, and till the day breaketh. If Jesus is the beginning and the end to us, what is there else? What have we to fear unless it be those unhallowed inventions of our mistrust, those superfluities of naughtiness which fashion themselves into unbeliefs, and doubts, and unkind imaginings? Christ shuts out everything that could hurt us, for He covers all the time, and all the space; He is above the heights, and beneath the depths; and everywhere He is Love."

It is Christ's way, He Who is love, to offer salvation to each and every person who will accept it. But I beg you, do not believe that He Who holds the keys to death and hell will *overlook your failure to believe* if you refuse Him. The One Who holds the keys unlocks the door, but that same One also refuses to unlock the door if you will not come. Salvation is truly by faith in Christ, but faith is no mere word, but it is a *new birth*, a *changed state*, a being *born again*, a *new creature*. If you are saved, you are become *new creatures* who love Jesus:

2 Corinthians 5:17 (KJV) "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Works will not save you, nor enter your name in the Book of Life: only a living relationship with Jesus Christ does that. May God touch your hearts today to fully

surrender to the Redeemer!



Good Hope
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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**Genesis 15:1; Romans 4:16; Revelation 1:12-16;
Revelation 1:17; Isaiah 41:10**

- What is the *first use* of "fear not" in the Scripture? What is the *last use*? (**Genesis 15:1; Romans 4:16; Revelation 1:17-18**)

- What is the *significance* of the *right hand* of Jesus in this passage? (**Isaiah 41:10**)

**1. I Do Not Have To Fear, For My Savior
Is Eternal God**

**Revelation 1:17; Isaiah 44:6; Isaiah 48:12-13;
Revelation 1:8; John 16:33; Matthew 11:28-30**

**2. I Do Not Have To Fear, For My Lord
Jesus Has Conquered Death!**

Revelation 1:17-18; 1 Corinthians 15:1; 1 Corinthians

15:3-4; 1 Corinthians 15:5-8; 1 Corinthians 15:55-58

- **Jesus Christ has _____ death.**
(**Revelation 1:17-18**)

3. I Will Not Fear, For My Lord Jesus Has The Keys

**Revelation 1:17-18; John 5:24; 1 Corinthians 3:15;
Revelation 20:11-14; Revelation 20:15**

- Everyone will be judged by _____ when they leave this life. (**John 5:22-24**)

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- Jesus Christ holds the keys to _____ and _____, therefore He alone controls our entrance into heaven (**Revelation 1:17-18**)
