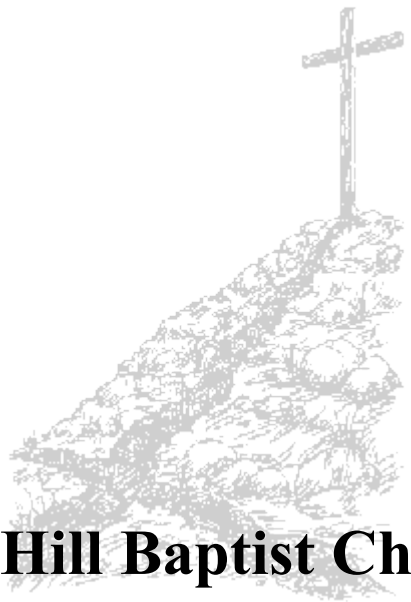


Fear Not

Revelation 1:17-18



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Revelation 1:17-18 (KJV) "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."

These are two of the greatest words found together in Scripture, "Fear Not". 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*. This time the words *fear not* are given, not to the Chaldean Abraham as he follows God through the wilderness, but to John the Revelator, cast out on the island of Patmos to die a lonely death in exile.

1. 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 words **fear not** that the Lord spoke to John are not just words, but they are a **blessing from God** to those who love Him. I want you to notice that **verse 17** tells us:

"he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not"

In **ancient times** the head of the family, as he got ready to pass the family fortune on to the next of kin, that head would put his **right hand** on the inheritor. The right hand was the hand of blessing, of power, of inheritance. The left hand was the place where *anyone* could be, but the right hand was the place of power and of honor. Just as God told the faithful of Israel:

Isaiah 41:10 (KJV) "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**. Religion and religious people will never

2. 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 Jesus Christ as personal Savior, then and only then can you know what it is to *fear not*.

1. Fear Not: I Am The First And The Last

Revelation 1:17 (KJV) "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 ...
"

When you are faced with an impossible, an overwhelming situation, you can *fear not* because **Jesus Christ is the First and the Last**. This is a title that belongs to God alone. We see in:

Isaiah 44:6 (KJV) "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."

that God refers to His uniqueness as God by saying that He is the **first and the last**. 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 (KJV) "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."

Jesus also takes the title of **Alpha and Omega** in the Book of Revelation:

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."

Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, **omega** the last letter. Jesus was saying "I've been there from the beginning. I was there in the Garden, and my lips breathed life into your body. I was there when you disobeyed Me, and ate that forbidden fruit. I was there at

3. 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)

your Creation, and was there when you left your mother's womb. I will be there when the trials come, and I will be there even to the end".

This life is full of trials, like the old song says:

**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.**

Just prior to His crucifixion Jesus told John, along with the other Apostles:

John 16:31-33 (KJV) "Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? {32} Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered¹, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. {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."

¹ Aorist Passive Subjunctive *skorpizo* {pronounced skor-pid'-zo}, shall be pushed away *by fear*, *by the world*.

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

Though many will tell you that life is just *a bed of roses* following your conversion to Christ, this is never supported by the Scripture. Life isn't a bed of roses. Jesus told us **in the world YE SHALL have tribulation**. You've never met anybody who can't say *amen* to this truth. When Adam sinned he brought sin and condemnation on all of God's creation. Adam sinned, *death came as God promised*, and Adam's legacy was that all die.

1 Corinthians 15:22 (KJV) "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

Man is a sinner living in a sinful world. Every day we live we live in corruption, in imperfection, in the threat of death. Yet Jesus places His right hand on those who have accepted Him as Savior and says to us, *fear not*. Life is hard, and we are weak. Humanity is sinful, and every day we are confronted with fearful things. Yet our Jesus not only paid for our sins, He also *made all things* as Eternal God:

John 1:1-3 (KJV) "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

{2} The same was in the beginning with God. {3} All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

Jesus made the world, and all things in the world, though He never made the sin that plagues mankind. He did, however, provide a solution to sin in the Cross of Calvary. Just as He told Israel:

Isaiah 43:1 (KJV) "... Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine."

4. Jesus Christ has _____ the world. Why is this important to me in my life? (John 16:31-33; 1 Corinthians 15:22; John 1:1-3)

When you know Christ as Savior, when you have that personal relationship with Eternal God, then fear fades away!

2. Fear Not: Jesus Christ Has Conquered Death

Revelation 1:17-18 (KJV) "... 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**. In fact, our text today tells us that Jesus Christ *keeps on living*. This is a wonderful comfort to the Christian. As humans we always fear that which is unknown, and what is more unknown than death itself. Who among us can say that we have been dead, and having endured the experience we have come back to tell you all about it? Not one of us! There are some who claim to have died and came back from the dead. In fact, I have heard of many who say they had a near death experience, saw some *light at the end of the tunnel*, then came back from the dead. We know that **Elijah** brought the widow woman's son back to life (**1 Kings 17:21-22**). We have the Biblical account of Lazarus, the man that Jesus (**John 11:43**) raised from the dead. In **Luke 8:55** Jesus raised Jairus' daughter from the dead. In fact, on the day that Jesus died on the Cross the graves broke open, and previously dead people walked about Jerusalem:

Matthew 27:52-54 (KJV) "And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, {53} And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. {54} Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God."

Yet all of these people, even though they were raised from the grave, later on died again. Only Jesus can say that He died, rose again, **and ever lives**. The greatest thing we have to fear is death, and Jesus has conquered death. He 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."

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

6. 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 Christian is encouraged to continue working for Jesus in this life, knowing that the *end of the road* in this life is not the end of life. 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!

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

3. Fear Not: Jesus Christ Has The Keys

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 5:22-24 (KJV) "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: {23} That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. {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."

Based on this text, as well as our text in Revelation, I believe that Jesus Christ is the One who judges *everyone*. He judges the Christian's works at the Bema/ Judgment Seat of Christ:

2 Corinthians 5:10 (KJV) "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

The Christian, saved by faith in Christ, is nonetheless expected to *work for Jesus in this life*, and our works will one day be judged. Not for salvation, mind you, for 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 the Revelator saw this terrible moment:

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."

This will not be a blessed event. Those who stand before this Throne will not see the face of Anyone they recognize. Those who stand before this Throne stand in front of a Stranger to be judged. Jesus is on the Throne because, as we saw in John 5:22, "**the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son**". 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 Christ as Savior*. Paul wrote of those who labored with him in the fields of God:

Philippians 4:3 (KJV) "... help those women which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow laborers, whose names are in the book of life."

Saved by faith in Jesus, Christians know Christ and work for Christ! The Lamb of God owns the keys to the Book of Life:

Revelation 21:27 (KJV) "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

If you have believed in Him then your name has been

8. Everyone will be judged by _____ when they leave this life. (John 5:22-24)
9. 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)
10. 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!

Rock Hill Baptist Church is located between Parsons and Lexington, Tennessee, on Highway 412. Look for our sign! We have services on Wednesdays (Adult, Youth, and children's Bible studies) at 7:00 PM, Sundays at 10:00 AM and 6:00 PM. Rock Hill is a family oriented Bible believing Church - Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever! Our Pastor, Brother David Buffaloe, will answer any questions you have about our Church if you contact him at 731-845-6104, or through his website at bibleteacher.org; or e-mail him by writing webmaster@bibleteacher.org. Rock Hill is an independent Church affiliated with the Tennessee Baptist Convention, the Southern Baptist Convention, and is a regular contributor to missions through the Cooperative Program.

