

## FEAR NOT; REV. 1:17-18 (Ed O'Leary)

### INTRODUCTION.

#### HAPPY RESURRECTION SUNDAY!!

▶▶ Today we celebrate the resurrection of our Savior, ~ the Lord Jesus Christ.

▶▶ But this morning, ~ other than touching on the resurrection, ~ we are not going to focus our attention on events from that first Resurrection Sunday.

▶▶ Instead, ~ we're going to focus, ~ long after Jesus' resurrection, ~ on something that happened on the island of Patmos around A.D. 95-96, ~ and, ~ more to the point, ~ on a very uplifting message from Jesus during that event.

▷▷ An uplifting message from Jesus ~ that is very much connected to the topic of His resurrection ~ and that will give us great encouragement on this Resurrection Sunday, ~ and every day really.

WHEN THE APOSTLE JOHN WAS AN OLD MAN, ~ JESUS, ~ IN ALL HIS resurrection glory, ~ appeared to him, ~ as recorded in Rev. 1:9-20, ~ part of which . . . . .

JUST AS A SIDE NOTE: ~ IN VERSES 12-16, ~ JOHN USES SYMBOLIC LANGUAGE . . . . .

#### WE'RE GOING TO ZERO IN ON VERSES 17-18.

▶▶ In [verse 17a](#), ~ we read John's reaction to seeing Jesus. ~ John writes, ~ "When I saw him, ~ I fell at his feet as though dead."

▶▶ Following that, ~ we read in [verses 17b-18](#), ~ Jesus quickly moves in, ~ lays His right hand on John ~ and tells John that he has nothing to fear, ~ not Jesus, ~ not anyone, ~ not anything, ~ and then Jesus tells John why he has nothing to fear.

▷▷ John writes, ~ <sup>17b</sup> But he laid his right hand on me, saying, ~ 'Fear not, ~ I am the first and the last, ~ <sup>18</sup> and the living one. ~ I died, ~ and behold I am alive forevermore, ~ and I have the keys of Death and Hades.'"

I SUGGEST THAT THERE ARE FOUR REASONS WHY JOHN HAD, ~ AND ALL believers have [because Jesus' words apply to all of His followers].

#### FOUR REASONS WHY ALL BELIEVERS HAVE NO NEED TO FEAR.

▶▶ And these 4 reasons contain the very uplifting message from Jesus. 📖 1/8

THE FIRST REASON TO HAVE NO FEAR IS IMPLIED. ~ & IT HAS TO DO WITH JOHN'S reaction and Jesus' response to it.

▶▶It is very likely that John fell at Jesus' "feet as though dead" ~ because he feared the presence of Jesus in all of His resurrection glory.

▷▷Perhaps like Isaiah, ~ John was totally overwhelmed by his sense of his own sinfulness when confronted by the blazing glory and absolute holiness of Jesus.

↪↪In [Is. 6:5](#), ~ we read that upon seeing the blazing glory and absolute holiness of the Lord, ~ Isaiah cried out, ~ ¶¶

→→"Woe is me! ~ For I am lost; ~ for I am a man of unclean lips, ~ and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; ~ for my eyes have seen the King, ~ the Lord of hosts!"

▶▶You know ~ I strongly suspect that terror is the natural reaction of sinful humanity when confronted with the blazing glory and absolute holiness of God.

▷▷[Heb. 10:31](#) ~ [LEB](#) ~ "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

▶▶But, ~ both John and Isaiah were believers; ~ and in both cases their fear was quickly removed.

▷▷In John's case, ~ by Jesus laying His right hand on John and assuring him he had nothing to fear.

▷▷And in Isaiah's case, ~ [Isaiah](#) writes in [6:6-7](#), ~ "Then one of the seraphim flew to me, ~ having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. ~ And he touched my mouth and said: ~ 'Behold, ~ this has touched your lips; ~ your guilt is taken away, ~ and your sin atoned for.'"

▶▶And the good news is that all those who confess with their mouth that Jesus is Lord ~ and believe in their heart that God raised Him from the dead ~ ¶¶

▷▷have absolutely no need to fear our risen and glorified Savior.

▶▶How comforting and encouraging it is to know that for all who receive Jesus ~ for all who believe on His Name ~ there is no need to fear Him.

▶▶He has paid the penalty for our sins, ~ and we are clothed in His righteousness.

▷▷As Paul tells us in [1 Thess. 1:10b](#), ~ Jesus "delivers us from the wrath to come." ¶¶ 2/8

▷▷ In Rom. 8:1, ~ Paul writes, ~ "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

▷▷ And in 1 Jn. 2:1, ~ John writes, ~ "My little children ~ [Christians], ~ I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. ~~ ¶¶

↳↳ But if anyone does sin, ~ we have an advocate with the Father, ~ Jesus Christ the righteous."

→→ I.e., ~ Jesus speaks to the Father for us. ~~ He stands up for us . . . .

▷▷ And then in 1 Jn. 2:2, ~ John writes, ~ "He is the propitiation for our sins, ~ and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world."

↳↳ I.e., ~ my fellow believers, ~ Jesus Himself was the sacrifice that took away our sins.

▶▶ So, ~ we have no need to fear our Savior.

▶▶ But not only do we need not fear Jesus, ~ our position in Him also means that we need not fear any one or any thing, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ not man, ~ and not "the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places," ~ or anything this world and Satan throw at us.

▶▶ Now, ~ isn't that extremely encouraging?

THE SECOND REASON TO HAVE NO FEAR IS BECAUSE JESUS SAYS, ~ "I AM THE FIRST and the last, ~ and the living one."

▶▶ The title "the first and the last" is a title that belongs to God alone.

▷▷ In Is. 44:6, ~ Isaiah writes, ~ "Thus says the Lord, ~ the King of Israel and his Redeemer, ~ the Lord of hosts: ~~ 'I am the first and I am the last; ~~ besides me there is no god.'"

↳↳ This is a reminder that Jesus is God Himself ~~ Besides Jesus . . . .

▶▶ And if that's not enough for us, ~ the title "the living one" is a common description of God in both the OT and the NT.

▷▷ In Ps. 42:2a, ~ "My soul thirsts for God, ~ for the living God." ¶¶ 3/8

▷▷ An in 1 Thess. 1:9, ~ Paul talks about how the Christians in Thessalonica had "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God."

▶▶ Most likely Jesus uses these two titles for emphasis.

▷▷ Add to this the fact that Jesus emphasizes the titles. ~ Literally, ~ He says, ~ "I, ~ I am the first and the last and the living one."

↳↳ And the emphasis is crystal clear: ~ our Savior is God Himself! ~ And He wants to make sure we don't miss it.

▶▶ Jesus is the living God ~ as opposed to the world's false gods.

▷▷ In Ps. 96:5, ~ the psalmist declares, ~ "For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, ~ but the LORD made the heavens."

▷▷ In Is. 57:13a, ~ listen to God mock those who worship false gods, ~ "When you cry out, ~ let your collection of idols deliver you! ~ The wind will carry them off; ~ a breath will take them away."

▷▷ Now, ~ today don't see people worshipping false gods like Baal or little statues, ~ but the world has turned many other things into false gods: ~ e.g., ~ career, ~ sports, ~ celebs, ~ material things, ~ money.

↳↳ But these false gods of this world cannot hear us or answer prayer. ~ They can't give us eternal life. ~ They cannot deliver us from the wrath of God.

→→ Only Jesus, ~ "the first and the last, ~ "the living one," ~ can do these things.

▶▶ Jesus is the living God, ~ every moment with His people, ~ and every moment in complete control of all things.

▶▶ Jesus is the Creator and sustainer of all life.

▷▷ From the vast universe and all it contains ~ down to the microscopic world and all it contains ~ to the spirit world and all it contains ~ ¶¶

↳↳ "All things," ~ as Jn. 1:3 says, ~ "were made through him ~ [i.e., ~ Jesus], ~ and without him was not any thing made that was made."

→→ In divine partnership, ~ God the Father and God the Son together created everything. ¶¶ 4/8

▷▷ And Heb. 1:3b tells us that Jesus "upholds all things by the word of His power" (NASB).

↳↳ Not only did He call the universe into existence by His powerful word, ~ the survival of the universe depends on His mighty word.

→→ Because he holds the universe together by it.

↳↳ Now ~ we should understand here that the Greek word for "upholds" means "holding ~ and carrying ~ from one place to another."

→→ We should not have the picture of Jesus holding everything up in one place like the mythical Atlas.

↳↳ The meaning of upholds involves both maintaining ~ and movement toward some goal.

↳↳ What we are saying is that Jesus sustains the universe in its existence and operation, ~ and is carrying it forward, ~ or guiding it, ~ to its divinely appointed end.

▶▶ We have no need to fear God, ~ because our Savior is God! ~~ And He is on our side.

▷▷ And we have no need to fear any one or any thing, ~ because Jesus our Savior is "the first and the last," ~ "the living one."

↳↳ As Paul says in Rom. 8:31, ~ "What then shall we say to these things? ~~ If God is for us, ~ who can be against us?"

▶▶ Now, ~ isn't that extremely encouraging?

THE THIRD REASON TO HAVE NO FEAR IS BECAUSE JESUS SAYS, ~ "I DIED, ~ AND behold I am alive forevermore."

▶▶ Understand ~ Jesus truly died on that cross ~~ And on the third day ~ He truly rose from the dead.

▷▷ He did not just faint and then later was resuscitated by the cool of the tomb. ~~ People did not go to the wrong tomb.

↳↳ No one stole the body. ~~ People were not hallucinating when they claimed to have seen Him. ↴↴ 5/8

▷▷ Roman soldiers were convinced of his death. ~~ They were experienced at this. ~~ Pilate asked for assurance before releasing the body.

↪↪ And one would think Joseph & Nicodemus would have noticed breathing.

▶▶ Jesus, ~ "the first and the last," ~ "the living one," ~ took on flesh ~ and died for our sins. ~~ But death could not hold Him.

▷▷ In Acts 2:24, ~ Peter said, ~ NIV ~ "But God raised him from the dead, ~ freeing him from the agony of death, ~ because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him."

▶▶ Jesus defeated sin & death & rose from the grave.

▷▷ As Paul writes in 1 Cor. 15:3-4, ~ "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: ~~ that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ~ that he was buried, ~ that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures."

▶▶ Jesus is truly alive.

▷▷ He is not a ghost ~~ When Jesus appeared to the disciples after the resurrection, ~ He said to them, ~ recorded in Lk. 24:39, ~ ¶¶

↪↪ "See my hands and my feet, ~ that it is I myself ~ ["See my hands and my feet, ~ I, ~ I am myself. ~~ IOW, ~ "It's me!, ~ Jesus, ~ who you know, ~ in the flesh!"]. ~~ ¶¶

→→ Touch me, ~ and see. ~~ For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."

▷▷ In Acts 1:3a, ~ LEB ~ Luke tells us, ~ "to whom ~ [i.e., ~ to the apostles] ~ he also presented himself alive after he suffered, ~ with many convincing proofs ~ ¶¶

↪↪ [i.e., ~ he proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive.]"

▷▷ And Paul tells us in 1 Cor. 15:6, ~ that Jesus ~ NIV ~ "appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, ~ most of whom are still living, ~ though some have fallen asleep."

▶▶ Yes, ~ Jesus is risen. ~~ He is risen indeed!

▷▷ "Up from the grave He arose ~ with a mighty triumph over His foes ~~ He arose a victor from the dark domain ~~ And He lives forever with His saints to reign." ¶¶ 6/8

▶▶ And Jesus is alive forevermore!

▷▷ In Rom. 6:9, ~ Paul says, ~ "We know that Christ, ~ being raised from the dead, ~ will never die again; ~ death no longer has dominion over him" ~ ~ Perm. vict. over sin & death.

▷▷ Furthermore, ~ means believers are secure in our salvation. ~ ~ Heb. 7:25, ~ NASB ~ "Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

▶▶ And because Jesus has risen from the dead, ~ He can promise a glorious eternal future to His people.

▷▷ 1 Cor. 15:20, ~ "But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, ~ the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep." ~ ~ "firstfruits" is a promise that more will follow.

↳↳ The first of a great harvest, ~ also known as "firstfruits," ~ was the first part of the harvest that faithful Jews would bring to the temple as an offering.

→→ Jesus has become the first of a great harvest of those who will be raised to life again.

↳↳ 1 Cor. 15:23, ~ "But each in his own order: ~ ~ Christ the firstfruits, ~ then at his coming those who belong to Christ."

↳↳ Jesus' resurrection is a guarantee that our resurrection will definitely follow.

▶▶ Now, ~ isn't that extremely encouraging?

THE FOURTH AND FINAL REASON TO HAVE NO FEAR IS BECAUSE JESUS SAYS, ~ "AND I have the keys of Death and Hades."

▶▶ This means that Jesus has the authority over death and the place of the dead.

▷▷ In Rom. 14:9, ~ Paul writes, ~ "For to this end Christ died and lived again, ~ that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living."

▷▷ And Heb. 2:14-15 says, ~ "Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, ~ he himself likewise partook of the same things, ~ that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, ~ that is, ~ the devil, ~ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery." ↓↓ 7/8

▶▶ Jesus alone holds the keys! ~ ~ Therefore, ~ Christians need not fear death.

▷▷ Fellow believers ~ for us death is but an unlocked door through which we enter our beloved Savior's presence

▷▷ Is. 25:8 says that God "will swallow up death forever; ~ ~ and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces."

▷▷ And in 1 Cor. 15:54-57, ~ Paul says, ~ "When the perishable puts on the imperishable, ~ and the mortal puts on immortality, ~ then shall come to pass the saying that is written: ~ ~ 'Death is swallowed up in victory.' ~ ~ ¶¶

↪↪ "O death, ~ where is your victory? ~ ~ O death, ~ where is your sting?" ~ ~ The sting of death is sin, ~ and the power of sin is the law. ~ ~ ¶¶

→→ But thanks be to God, ~ who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

▷▷ My brothers and sisters, ~ we have no need to fear death or eternity ~ ~ Because Jesus, ~ "the first and the last," ~ "the living one," ~ alone holds the keys!

▶▶ Now, ~ isn't that extremely encouraging?

### CONCLUSION.

AS WE GO FROM HERE THIS MORNING, ~ CELEBRATING OUR LORD'S RESURRECTION, ~ let us join our voices to that of David in Ps. 27:1 ~ and proclaim: ~ ~ ¶¶

▶▶ "The Lord is my light and my salvation; ~ ~ whom shall I fear? ~ ~ The Lord is the stronghold of my life; ~ ~ of whom shall I be afraid?"

LET'S PRAY . . . . 8/8