

Discovering Resurrection

Key Verse: *“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: 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.”*

—Revelation 1:17,18

Selected Scripture:
John 20:1-18,30,31;
Revelation 1:9-20

IT SEEMS FITTING THAT

John saw this vision on the first day of the week, on the day of his resurrection, our Sunday. Our Lord revealed himself and certain great instructions to the church through John, honoring this day. John was a prisoner on the isle of Patmos, as a penalty for his faithfulness in believing and teaching the “word of God.” (Rev. 1:9) In times of tribulation, the Lord’s presence and comfort are most precious to his saints, and helps them to learn what it means to live “in the Spirit” above the world. (vs. 10) As a result, he was especially filled with the Holy Spirit of adoration, love, and joy in God as to be mentally lifted above his surroundings

and out of the thoughts and feelings of his old nature.

As we continue with our study, we realize that the book of Revelation is a prophecy, and not a literal epistle. John was given a command to “Write the things which thou hast seen” (vs. 19)—this vision of the things past,

present, and future, that the church may ponder its deeply significant symbolisms. He gives us comfort when he says in verse 17, 'Fear not; I am the first and the last.' Our Lord was "the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. 3:14), "the only begotten Son" (John 1:18), and "the firstborn of every creature." (Col. 1:15) These scriptures reveal to us that as the Alpha (beginning), and also the Omega (ending), he was both the first created, and the first in highest rank of the angels. As Archangel, he was preeminent over all, and the life-giver to all Creation. We are also here given proof that before he became flesh Jesus had an existence, and that he was sinless, perfect on the spirit plane next to the Heavenly Father. It was for this reason that he was selected as the one who would redeem humanity from death. He came down to earth and gave his life as the offset to Adam's life, perfectly balancing the scales of Divine justice.

In verse 18 of our lesson, we read, 'I am he,' the Redeemer of the race—Jesus—the "messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in" (Mal. 3:1), 'that liveth, and was dead.' Speaking of his own resurrection he tells us that he is dead no longer. (John 14:19, 20:1-9) By faith we recognize that he is 'alive for evermore,' for he was the one who descended to the tomb (Eph. 4:9,10), and was raised from the dead, and who has ascended "far above . . . every name that is named." (Eph. 1:20,21; Phil. 2:9) "Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord [controller] both of the dead and living." (Rom. 14:9) He was "the firstfruits of them that slept" (I Cor. 15:20), and upon the death and resurrection of Jesus hang the resurrection hope of the church and the world. He has been given the power to call forth the dead—they that "sleep in the dust of the earth" (Dan. 12:2)—and in due time he will exercise this power. (John 5:25) How glad we should be to know that all things are in the hands of the one who "so loved the world."—John 3:16 ■