Series: Easter



15 | REVELATION 1:12-18 **ALIVE FOREVERMORE**

You have nothing to fear because the Risen Christ loves you.

Outline

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST (1:18)

Jesus is Transcendent God Jesus Became Finite Man Jesus Beat Death

THE REVELATION OF CHRIST (1:12-16)

Our Lamp-lighting Priest Our Priest's Care Our Priest's Power

> Our King's Glorious Hair Our King's Flaming Eyes Our King's Conquering Feet

Our Glorious Prophet

Our Sovereign King

Our Prophet's Voice Our Prophet's Hand Our Prophet's Sword Our Prophet's Face

THE REASSURANCE OF CHRIST (1:17-18)

Because Jesus Lives, You have Nothing to Fear Because Jesus Lives, You have Peace with God Because Jesus Died, You Don't Have to Die Because Jesus Lives, You Can Live Forevermore

Call to Worship: 1 Peter 1:3

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Series: Easter

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WELCOME: We are glad you are here! Be sure to grab a Welcome Packet from the Welcome Center if you are visiting with us.

GIVING: You can still give over Zelle through your bank with no fees.

Use secretary@livinghopechurch.net.

We also have a collection box on the Welcome Center

This is a promise from the Lord. "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it." – Malachi 3:10

Farewell Fellowship: for Pastor Garcia, May 16 after the service. We are asking you to bring a Spanish dish and a side or dessert.

Legacy Kids: We are excited to announce that Legacy Kids has started back up. We will meet on Prayer Meeting weeks in the children's ministry room. Legacy Kids is for children from 4 years old to 5th grade. We will be having lots of fun, and most importantly, learning the Scriptures! Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

Baby Dedications: April 18

Introduction

Jesus Christ is risen from the dead! He is risen! [He is risen indeed.] What a glorious Resurrection Day! Our title this morning is: "Alive Forevermore".

Time Traveler

My children and I like to play a game called "Time Traveler." The goal is to imagine a time and a place you would like to travel. It can be anywhere during any era. The question is: "What time period would you go to and why?" The answers vary: My younger son said: "The 1950s! The clothing and music were so interesting!" My older son said: "The age of the enlightenment, to see all the Bibles being printed and all the new inventions." My little daughter wanted to go to the time when she was born so she could see what she was like as a newborn baby. Of course, one time period is off limits, since it would be their favorite answer if it were allowed: "I want to go to the time of Jesus and spend time with him."

If we could see Jesus during his life and ministry, wouldn't that be wonderful? To hear his tender voice, see his miracles, rest our head upon him like John did. Can you imagine listening to his Sermon on the Mount? Or watching him heal the blind man? Or raising Lazarus? Of course, if we did travel to Jesus' time, we would only be seeing a veiled version of him. He came incarnate in human flesh.

He did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. —Philippians 2:6-7

He was veiled. His glory had been unveiled once during his earthly pilgrimage. Matthew records that,

Series: Easter

He was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. —Matthew 17:2

Peter, James, and John who were with Jesus during his transfiguration got to see a small glimpse of what the unveiled Christ looks like.

With a book title like "Revelation," you would imagine there would be a continuing unveiling of the subject, Jesus Christ, and you would not be disappointed. This morning on Easter Sunday morning, we are going to get a look at our resurrected and exalted Lord in all his power and glory.

In our passage Jesus is introducing a letter he is writing to seven church which represent all the churches, including ours. In his introduction, he wants us to know who he is. In verses 12-16, we see the exalted Christ in all his glory, and it's too much for him to take in, and he falls down as dead.

Revelation 1:17a | When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.

And it's here that John and all of us get comfort from the resurrected Christ. He tells John not to ever fear, even though Jesus is so glorious.

1. THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST (1:18)

Revelation 1:17b-18 | But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, ¹⁸ and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.

These are the words of someone who's conquered hell and come back to talk about it. Easter is all about Jesus being raised from the dead. Because he lives, I have nothing to fear!

JESUS IS TRANSCENDENT GOD

Jesus is the transcendent God. Fear vanishes when we realize that Christ who became man is God. He says,

Revelation 1:17b | Fear not, I am the first and the last.

He's quoting Isaiah 44

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." —Isaiah 44:6

That means he's God. He's made everything. He was before everything, and he sustains everything forever. That's God Almighty. Jesus claims deity. So you have nothing to fear if you know him.

JESUS BECAME FINITE MAN

Then he says,

Revelation 1:18a | Fear not, I am the ... the living one. I died.

That's right the transcendent, living one came to earth, lived a perfect life, and then he gave his life for you and died as a substitute for your sins. Jesus took God's wrath. The

Series: Easter

transcendent one became finite for you. The great God of the universe became a baby, grew up, and died like a criminal on a cross for you. He knew no sin. So Jesus is God and he is man. He is God, but he loved you enough to become just like you. He died so you wouldn't have to die eternally.

JESUS DEFEATED DEATH

Then he says,

Revelation 1:18b | Fear not... I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.

That means Christ as God conquered your greatest enemy. You have nothing to fear because Jesus conquered death and hades on your behalf. Death is now the doorway to eternal life. Fear not!

But let's back up and see why John would be so afraid of such a loving, amazing Christ. Why would he fall down as dead?

2. THE REVELATION OF CHRIST (1:12-16)

Revelation 1:12-16 | Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴ The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, ¹⁵ his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. ¹⁶ In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

What are we to make of this glorious vision of Christ? To understand his description, we find in Daniel 2 and 7 and 10 the divine mediator between God and man. He's called the divine "Son of man" which was Jesus favorite title for himself. This is another way of saying that our Savior is both God and man, and he will definitely save us.

John turns and sees Jesus as the God man, dressed in his mediatorial garments. You get this. When you see Clark Kent open up his shirt, and their what looks like an "S", and you know he's ready to fly.

Well this story of Easter is no mere superhero story. It's actual history, and Jesus puts on his salvation garments on: the robes of a priest, the armor of a priest, and the mouth of a prophet.

OUR LAMP-LIGHTING PRIEST

Revelation 1:12-13 | Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.

Series: Easter

Christ is first seen as the priestly lamplighter. John saw Jesus "clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest" (Rev 1:13), reminding us of the high priestly garments made for Aaron and his sons (Exo 28:4; Lev 16:4).¹

Our Priest's Care

Revelation 1:13 "In the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man."

Part of Christ's priestly role is to tend the lampstands. The Old Testament priest would trim the lamps, remove the wick and old oil, refill the lamps with fresh oil, and relight those that had gone out. Likewise, Christ tends the lampstands of his people by commending, correcting, exhorting, and warning (see chs 2–3) in order to secure the churches' fitness for service as light bearers in a dark world.²

Our Priest's Power

Jesus calls his people and his churches "lampstands." The lampstands in the vision remind us of the seven-stemmed menorah that blazed in Moses' tabernacle. On that lampstand, the seven lamps were joined by a golden stem of great beauty. In the Old Testament, Zechariah saw the church as a lampstand with the oil burning brightly. The angel explained that the oil from the lampstands is the Holy Spirit. He says,

Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts. — Zechariah 4:6

From our great high priest Jesus, we need the continual oil of the Spirit to enable us lamps to burn day and night (Zech 4:1-6). Christians will finally give a mighty witness to the world only as we are energized by the Holy Spirit whom Jesus sends.³ On this resurrection Sunday, let's look to our high priest to give us the Holy Spirit for joy, peace, and true happiness—a happiness not based on our circumstances, but based on his love for us. Be filled with the Holy Spirit saints!

John looks again, and not only does he see the garments of a priest, but a vision of a great divine king.

OUR SOVEREIGN KING

Here Christ is seen as the divine king. We begin with our sovereign king's divine and holy hair.

Our King's Glorious Hair

Revelation 1:14a | The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow.

John's description of Christ's head and hair is another reference to his deity. John must remember when he saw Jesus on the mount of Transfiguration, and it must have been looking straight into the Glory Cloud of the Old Testament. Here is the church's sovereign king, and isn't he glorious? His glorious hair indicates he knows all things. He has all wisdom and knowledge. He is pure and perfect in his direction of all things. Here we see the sovereign

¹ Johnson, Triumph of the Lamb, 58.

² Beale, Revelation, 208–209.

³ R. Phillips, *Revelation*, 73.

Series: Easter

King of kings and Lord of lords. Jesus as the ultimate King is the eternal, holy, Almighty God.⁴ He's your king. He's my king. He's conquered sin and death! He's God all by himself. Jesus affirmed his deity in his high priestly prayer in John 17. Jesus prayed:

Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed. —*John 17:5*

Praise God on this resurrection morning that we have a king who is infinite in his knowledge and wisdom. You can trust him. Live your life with Jesus as your glorious omniscient Head.

Our King's Flaming Eyes

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Revelation 1:14b | His eyes were like a flame of fire.
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His eyes "like a flame of fire" (1:14) are those that pierce into every heart to judge according to truth. He has perfect judgment. We must all appear before the judgment seat

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. -2 Corinthians 5:10

We must all look into his flaming eyes. His searching, revealing, infallible gaze penetrates to the very depths of his church, revealing to him with piercing clarity the reality of everything there is to know. Jesus declared,

There is nothing concealed that will not be revealed or hidden that will not be known. —Matthew 10:26

In the words of the author of Hebrews,

There is no creature hidden from his sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have to do. —Hebrews 4:13

The omniscient Lord of the church will not fail to recognize and deal with sin in his church. ⁵ God wants his church to live holy right now. That's what the resurrection is all about. Live your life through the eyes of Jesus.

Our King's Conquering Feet

Revelation 1:15a | His feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace.

Look at the kingly armor of Jesus. His "feet like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace" (1:15), are those of a conquering king who treads the earth in power. Jesus is here pictured as the divine King of all kings. His feet are able to stomp on his enemies.⁶ Indeed, Paul promises us, "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet" (Rom 16:20), fulfilling the ancient prophecy of Genesis 3:15, that the Seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head.

Here is a divine King fit to rule, able to conquer, all-knowing to judge, and all-glorious to demand our worship.⁷

⁴ MacArthur, Revelation, 46.

⁵ MacArthur, *Revelation*, 46.

⁶ Thomas R. Schreiner, "Revelation," in *Hebrews–Revelation*, ed. Iain M. Duguid, James M. Hamilton Jr., and Jay Sklar, vol. XII, ESV Expository Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 564.

⁷ R. Phillips, *Revelation*, 65.

Series: Easter

OUR GLORIOUS PROPHET

Revelation 1:15b-16 | And his voice was like the roar of many waters. ¹⁶ In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

Our Prophet's Voice

Revelation 1:15b | And his voice was like the roar of many waters.

The *voice like the sound of rushing waters* describes the awesome voice of God which is reminiscent of how Ezekiel and Daniel describe the voice of Almighty God.

I heard the sound of their wings like the sound of many waters, like the sound of the Almighty, a sound of tumult like the sound of an army. — *Ezekiel 1:24*

John identifies the voice of Christ with the sound of the glory-cloud, a sound which, throughout Scripture, resembles numerous earthly phenomena: wind, thunder, trumpets, armies, chariots, and waterfalls.⁸ We could also say that all these earthly phenomena were created to resemble various facets of the glory-cloud.⁹

What does Christ's majestic voice tell us? That this glorious Christ is the incarnation of the glory-cloud from the Old Testament. The glory-cloud has exited the Holy of holies in the innermost sacred place and took on flesh, conquered death, and is now glorified as God's King. Hear his roaring voice and pay homage to him (Psa 2:12).

Come to him. He calls you far and near. With his mighty voice, Jesus can and will make himself heard to those who are afar off as well as to those who are nearby. "His gospel is a mighty flowing stream, fed by the upper springs of infinite wisdom and knowledge." Come and be saved. Hear the majestic roar of the transcendent God made near.

Our Prophet's Hand

Revelation 1:16a In his right hand he held seven stars.

The Son of man radiates heat and light: eyes like flames, feet like bronze heated to a glow, face blazing like the sun shining full strength. His luminous appearance is reflected in the seven stars that he holds and the seven lampstands that surround him.¹¹ The effulgence of his glory radiates through these mysterious seven stars.

It is in Jesus' right hand that he holds the seven stars, which are said to be the "angels" or messengers (likely the pastors) of the churches (1:20, "the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches"). What comfort of knowing that we are held in Christ's right hand, the best and safest place we could possibly be.¹²

Though Jesus here is seen as holding the pastors and elders in his hand (what a comfort!), it is just as comforting to consider that all believers are held in the Father's hand.

⁸ Chilton, Paradise Restored, 58; cf Exo 19:16, 19; Eze 1:24.

⁹ Herman Bavinck, *The Doctrine of God* (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1977), 88ff.

¹⁰ Henry, Commentary on the Whole Bible, 2465.

¹¹ Johnson, Triumph, 61.

¹² Wilmshurst, *The Final Word*, 31.

Series: Easter

I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. ³⁰ I and the Father are one." —*John 10:28-30*

Christ has you in his hand. He's our divine Prophet. He's got all the answers for your life, and he holds you in his hand. By the way, notice it is in his "right hand". That's the hand of power, that means Jesus is going to do something with you in his hand. You are his instrument.

Our Prophet's Sword

Revelation 1:16b | From his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword.

Christ rules with his Word, which goes forth from his mouth like a "sharp two-edged sword." In the cosmic conflict that lies below the surface and behind the scenes of daily life, our Prophet is the Judge who, with his Word, will bring the whole earth before his Judgement Seat.¹³

Listen, if you don't submit to the Word of our Risen Christ now, the day is coming when you will be judged by it. We see Christ's great fury and how he wields the sword of his Word at the very end of Revelation.

From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. —*Revelation 19:15*

But realize that Christ has given you his sword right now, not to judge, but to save. Anyone who comes to Christ by the Gospel, will be saved. So, child of God, understand that Christ's sword is your sword. It is part of your divine armor (Eph 6:17). Take the mighty sword, and let our divine Christ fill you and empower you to preach his word so that thousands enter the kingdom. If they don't come now by the Sword of the Spirit, then they will later be judged by it. Wield Christ's sword, and sinners into the Kingdom before it is too late.

Our Prophet's Face

Revelation 1:16c And his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

The brilliance of Jesus' face is another clear reference to the Glory-Cloud. His hair is brilliant white, and his face shines like the sun. This is not just any man, this is the God man. Jesus is the divine Son of God who shared the glory of the Father before the world began (Jn 17:5). He's the Word who created the world and became flesh and entered that world (Jn 1:1-3, 14). He is truly the "Sun of righteousness with healing in his wings" (Mal 4:2). Look into his face, see his glory, and realize that this glorious Savior is here to save you. He's so powerful and glorious, but his power is not against you, it's for you. His arms are stretched out wide for you. He says, "Come to me, you who labor and burdened down with care, and I will give you rest" (Mt 11:28). Look into his glorious face, and live.

¹³ Johnson, Triumph of the Lamb, 59.

Series: Easter

3. THE REASSURANCE OF CHRIST (1:17-18)

When we see such a great and awesome vision of God, it can cause great anxiety. We feel that we are not worthy, and we are not. Sometimes we can be afraid of God. That thought has gone through my mind so many times. We all have to admit that at times, as much as we sing "When we all get to heaven what a day of rejoicing it will be," we are not necessarily looking forward to the Judgment Seat of Christ. Yet the amazing truth is, we have nothing to fear. Christ has paid it all. That's one of the comforting things about the book of Revelation.

Yet, if we could see Christ right now in all his glory, I'm pretty sure we would fall over like John did.

Revelation 1:17-18 | When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, ¹⁸ and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.

BECAUSE JESUS LIVES, YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR

The radiance and purity of the divine Son of man are overwhelming. When John saw the unveiled glory of Christ in this vision, he "fell at his feet as though dead" (1:17), but Jesus quickly comforts him and tells him not to be afraid.

What are you afraid of? Are you afraid of losing your good health? What are you afraid of? Are you afraid, seriously afraid of losing your financial stability? What are you afraid of?

Whatever you fear, you have made bigger than Jesus. Fear is a lie. Christ lives for you. He says, "I died." Jesus died for you. He has the "keys of death and hell" and he's alive forevermore. Jesus is alive, not just now, but forevermore!

A Terrifying Vision

Revelation 1:17a When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.

Though John had been the disciple that Jesus loved, and though he knew he was safe with his Lord, when the glory of Jesus' full deity is displayed to John in the vision, there is great fear. He had seen him transfigured in glory on earth, but this seems to have been much greater, so that John was no longer physically able to stand.

Isaiah's woeful sense of defilement in the presence of "the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isa 6:5) and Paul's fall to the roadway before Jesus' blinding light (Acts 9:4) show the sheer shock that mere mortals experience when confronted by the holy One of Israel. If the experience of biblical prophets is any measure, being slain in the Spirit is anything but pleasant. Consider that when Peter saw the Lord perform an early miracle, "he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Lk 5:8). When we see the glory of Christ, we cry out with Paul, "Wretched man that I am!" (Rom 7:24).

A Tender Voice

Revelation 1:17b But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not."

¹⁴ Ibid., 60.

Series: Easter

How tender that Christ lays his right hand on John and comforts him. The Son of man's touch and comforting words restore John's composure. No longer was he fallen over, but he had been set back by the tender touch of the Almighty Son of man, King Jesus!

Ultimately, the awesome majesty of Christ is not a reason for anxiety and fear for the Christian; rather, it is the ground of our confidence and stability. The presence of Christ is, very properly, the occasion for unbelievers to faint away and hide, out of sheer fright (*cf* 6:15-17); but our Lord comes to John (as to us) in love and sets him on his feet. The presence and activity of God in the glory-cloud was to the Egyptians a terrifying omen of their destruction; but, for the covenant people, he was the Comforter and Savior.¹⁵

BECAUSE JESUS LIVES, YOU HAVE PEACE WITH GOD

We should never be afraid of our Lord in the sense of rejection or retribution. We should never fear Christ as a prisoner who is about to face the rack. No child of God's court should feel the fear of rejection or retribution from God. But we should ever and always feel the fear of reverence. That's a very good and glorious fear. It is the fear of a child for a father—an honorable child for a kind and loving father. So do not be afraid to behold Christ in all his glory. His glory will transform you and make you good (2 Cor 3:18).

Peace is a Relationship

Revelation 1:17b | But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last."

Jesus says, "Don't fear." With his hand on John, it's like he's saying, "I love you. Be at peace in my love." Christ's victory should give every Christian true peace. Christ is saying, "Never fear me in the way of retribution. I will never hurt you. I will never punish you. I will never put you to death. Why? Because I am the one who conquered death." When we behold Christ's great love and his fight to the death against sin and the devil, all fear should be cast aside since beholding Christ's "perfect love" is exactly what "casts out fear" (1 Jn 4:18). If we know we are forgiven, justified, and can never be punished, why would we fear? There is indeed "no condemnation" for true believers in Christ (Rom 8:1).

Peace is Reconciliation

Revelation 1:17c I am the first and the last.

Our peace with God is rooted in Jesus' transcendence. It means that Jesus is God. He has all the transcendent attributes of God: omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience. He's all powerful, all knowing, everywhere present. He's the first and the last. That means he's the Creator and the Judge of all people on the earth.

Jesus message to us is: "Don't fear because I am Jesus, and as Almighty God, I love you." As "the first and the last," Jesus is sovereign over all time, history, and creation. Therefore, Jesus possesses the power and sovereignty to direct all things for our good and his glory, so that we ought to cast away all fear. 16

¹⁵ Chilton, Days of Vengeance, 77.

¹⁶ R. Phillips, *Revelation*, 82–83.

Series: Easter

BECAUSE JESUS DIED, YOU DON'T HAVE TO DIE

Revelation 1:18a | I am ... the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore.

"Lee Strobel, in his book "The Case For Christ", said "Every single shred of evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ is also evidence for my eventual resurrection."

Many people think the Resurrection of Christ is important. In the next 24 hours over a billion people will celebrate the Resurrection all around the world. Many who celebrate it don't understand it. A recent poll said that 78% of all people America believe that Jesus rose from the dead.¹⁷ Yet most people have no clue what it's all about.

I hate death. At 15 years of age, my mother of 49 years died. I attended her funeral and saw her lifeless body. At 17 my cousin Brett died in a car accident. The same year my next door neighbor who was like a Dad to me died of cancer. Make note of this. You will die. The statistics on death are impressive. Ten out of ten people die!

Jesus gave the knockout punch to death. To be more accurate, Jesus executed death. Jesus says, I am "the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades" (1:18).

BECAUSE JESUS LIVES, YOU CAN LIVE FOREVERMORE

Revelation 1:18a | I am ... the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.

Is the center of your world the resurrection? It ought to be. Because of the resurrection...

- 1) Death is dead! Death cannot harm those who are in Christ
- 2) If you are in Christ, you have experienced the power of the resurrection when you were born again.
- 3) You are now empowered by the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead.

Trust in the Lord today. Your sins can be forgiven because Jesus died for your sins. Many people wonder in coming to Christ, how can I stop sinning? How can I give up this life of sin. You don't have the power to do that. But if you will come to Jesus by faith, he will raise you up and give you the power to overcome sin in your life. He's alive forevermore. And that eternal life begins the moment you trust Christ as your Savior and Lord. Come to him today!

Conclusion

Our response to encountering Jesus as the Son of man should be the same as John's. When we see the Son of Man in all his glory, we are filled with awe and fall down in worship before him.

When we see our powerlessness, we rely on the power of the resurrection. We can live because Jesus lives. He's mediates the power of God.

He is our lamp lighting **Priest** who atones for our sin, our **Prophet** who speaks the word of God of truth in the storm, our **King** who reigns over all circumstances in our life. When we see Jesus, we behold him in all his beauty and glory.

If we truly behold Jesus in his glory, we won't fear anything else, not even death, for we will realize that Jesus holds the keys of Death and Hades. Death won't triumph over us,

¹⁷ Andrew Grenville. "Easter Poll" (Toronto, ON: Ipsos, 16 April 2006), https://www.ipsos.com/en-ca/easter-poll-majority-canadians-73-and-americans-78-believe-resurrection

Series: Easter

because it didn't conquer Jesus. We can be full of confidence whatever the enemy, whatever the difficulty, that Jesus reigns over all he will work all things for his glory and our eternal good. 18

¹⁸ Schreiner, Revelation, 568.