

"I Was Dead . . ."

Scripture Reading — Revelation 1:18

"I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades." — Revelation 1:18

Death is a terrible enemy to God, to us, and to the entire creation. There is little that matches the misery and grief we receive when death comes our way. None of us escapes this enemy—and for our sake, even the Lord Jesus laid down his life (John 10:14-18).

In the way he identified himself to John here, Jesus recalled the events he experienced in Jerusalem at his crucifixion for our sake (John 19-20). "I was dead," Jesus said, referring to the painful details of his suffering, crucifixion, death, and burial. Jesus knows death firsthand. (See the closing chapters of the Gospel books Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.)

But Jesus wants us to see death as an enemy he has defeated. "I was dead," Jesus says in the past tense. He *was* dead, but *now* look at him! He says, "I am the Living One . . . look, I am alive for ever and ever!"

Triumphant over death and grief, Jesus gives us this picture of his forever victory. Death does not have the last word with us. Jesus does! He alone holds the keys to unlock death's door. The ascended Jesus is the same one who said at the grave of his friend: "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die" (John 11:25).

Prayer

Jesus, our good shepherd, thank you for walking with us and leading the way through death's dark valley. Thank you for being "the resurrection and the life"! Amen.

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