

Jesus: The Faithful Witness, Firstborn, and Ruler

INTRODUCTION

For those who are joining us tonight for the first time, we're working through a challenging series, but it's one that's calculated to change your life. What I mean by this is that there are thirty descriptions in Revelation 1-3 of Jesus. Most of them He gives Himself: it's Jesus preaching Jesus. You don't get any better than Jesus revealing Jesus. There are more throughout the book of Revelation. They are significant and strategic to prepare the Church for the drama, the glory, and the crisis described in the book of Revelation.

GOD, THE MOUNT EVEREST OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

If we are going to be prepared for the glory and the crisis described in the book, Jesus is saying, "You need to know these things about Me." So we're taking them one by one, and yes, they're challenging because they're concepts that our mind doesn't readily grab hold of and go deeply in. It takes some work, but it's worth the effort. I've said this for years, that the most neglected subject in the kingdom of God is God Himself. The most glorious and the most challenging subject is God. He is the Mount Everest of the kingdom, meaning the subject of the knowledge of God is daunting and challenging, but we are going to climb that mountain to understand—which is the same thing as to comprehend—to get hold of these ideas about God and go deep in them. But it's not for the fainthearted; it's for those who have a resolve in their spirit to climb that mountain. It takes a lifetime to climb it, to feed our spirit on the knowledge of God. I don't think there's any deeper place in the Bible than Revelation 1-3, where Jesus reveals Jesus in a very direct way. I've studied these passages for some years, and I find them challenging and difficult. I feel the beckoning of the Spirit: "Keep coming; keep coming." I feel the Spirit beckon me, "Keep coming and I will unveil the glory of Jesus."

THE UNVEILING OF JESUS

Well, tonight we're going to look at three of them in Revelation 1:5-6. It says this: "Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and made us kings and priests to His God and Father" (Rev. 1:5-6). These titles aren't just revelations of Jesus so that we can acknowledge them as such, but so that they will equip our hearts to respond in a specific way related to the drama in the book of Revelation. There are three specific titles with which the book of Revelation begins, describing Jesus: The first one is Jesus as the faithful witness; the second is Jesus as the firstborn from the dead; and the third one is Jesus as the ruler over the kings of the earth. Those are the three.

PROMISES TO DAVID

These are three titles of the Messiah that we find in Psalm 89. We're going to get there in just a moment. The Psalmist, by the Holy Spirit, was describing the Messiah centuries in advance. We don't know when Psalm 89 was written, but we know of course that it was in the time of the Old Testament. Now we're going to look briefly at the background to Psalm 89 in just a moment, but the background of Psalm 89 is the covenant that God made with David. This is a very significant historical reality that a lot of believers don't even really get their hearts around. I mean, think about it for a minute: God made a covenant with a man, a very specific covenant with King David, and it was a promise to David's family line that would affect the whole world and all our lives. He was actually talking to David about one of his great-, great-, great-, great-grandchildren, whom we know as Jesus, the seed of David. He would actually be His blood relative, and He would rule the earth on the throne of David.

A LINE OF KINGS UNBROKEN

Here is the famous covenant in 2 Samuel 7. I'm only giving you a little of it; you've got to go back and read the whole thing, but it's a very significant covenant where God visited David. He said in 2 Samuel 7:12, "I am going to set up your seed" —or one of your great-, great-, great-, great-grandsons. "He is going to come after you, but He will come from your own body" (2 Sam. 7:12, paraphrased). Now, that was dear to David, but it wasn't the end of the story. "He will be Jewish" is the point. There are several points, but that is one of them: "He will be Jewish. Not only will He be Jewish when He's on the earth; He will be Jewish forever." Did you know that a million years from now, Jesus will still be Jewish? You will still be whatever you are a million years from now. "I will establish His kingdom; He shall build a house for My name" (2 Samuel 7:13, paraphrased). This house that Jesus is going to build is the glory of God covering the earth. That's where the house is going to go. No one really grasped the magnitude of this when the Father said to David, "This great-grandchild of yours is going to build My house. As a matter of fact, He will create the context on earth for what He will call the New Jerusalem to descend from heaven and come down to the earth when the context is right."

THE DRAGON'S WRATH TOWARDS ISRAEL

"I will establish the throne of His kingdom forever" (2 Sam. 7:16, paraphrased). In other words, "David, your house and your throne are going to be intertwined with your great-, great-grandson. You are still going to have a position in it; you are still going to be involved in it forever." Now, this is one of those moments in history that caused the devil to put a bull's-eye right on the nation of Israel, for real. The devil's rage against the nation of Israel and the mounting anti-Semitism that's happening in these days that we've seen through history is not a neutral subject to the Body of Christ. This is a subject much of the Church isn't really tuned into yet, because they don't understand the root system in the Spirit; but the covenant and the book of Revelation drama is going to cause the tensions around this anti-Semitism to come to a head in the globe. At the very forefront of the challenge is that we must be faithful witnesses in the same way that Jesus is a faithful witness. That is where the application of this passage brings us. It's not enough for us to adore Him as a faithful witness. That's wonderful in itself, but the point is that as He was a faithful witness to the truth, to the unpopular truth, to the difficult truths that actually led to His death, so the faithful will also take stands politically for the things that are dear and near and dear to Him. That is where this exhortation is going in terms of the Holy Spirit's intention in giving it.

THE PROMISE OF A KING TO COME

Now He says in 2 Samuel 7:16, essentially, "Your house and your throne will be established forever. David, there is going to be a Jewish house that will affect the whole earth. Your great-, great-grandson will rule it. He will fill the earth with My name, and there will be hostility against this." When Mary conceives the Child by the Holy Spirit, the angel Gabriel comes just before that and says to her, "This Baby that will be conceived in your womb is the boy from 2 Samuel 7. He is the One whom God promised David about a thousand years ago." David lived around 1,000 BC, and this was right there at year zero or whatever you call it. Actually it was about 4 BC when all this was happening.

THE HIGHEST OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH

We're going to look at Psalm 89 really briefly. My point is to steer you in that direction, for the eager who say, "I want to understand the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. I want to understand it more." So you're going to go and dig for gold out of Psalm 89 and 2 Samuel 7. I'm giving you a little roadmap of where you can find some treasure, but it will take work to get it. However, it is work that

is well worth it. In Psalm 89 there's a promise that God made to David: "I will make Him My firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth... Once I have sworn [a covenant] by My holiness... his seed" —David's family line, talking about Jesus specifically—"shall endure forever, and His throne like the sun before Me. It shall be established forever as the moon" (Ps. 89:27, 35-37). In other words, Jesus' throne will be reliable forever. It will never, ever lose its luster and its glory, but it will be a source of light to the darkness, and then forever when that darkness is banished it will be the source of light, the throne of Jesus. Jesus and His throne are a faithful witness in this age and the age to come, just as the sun and moon are. They bring light into the darkness.

That is why John the apostle is quoting from Psalm 89, intentionally. It's commonly agreed by commentators that John is intentionally tying these three titles to Psalm 89. The reason we care about that is because, if we want to get more information and revelation on these three titles, we have to go where the Holy Spirit deposited truth, and that's in Psalm 89 as well as 2 Samuel 7. What I'm really doing in this teaching is merely advertising where to dig for gold. All three of these are interrelated: the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth are all deeply connected to each other. They are not independent truths; each one of them affects our understanding of the other two.

JESUS, THE FAITHFUL WITNESS

Number one: Jesus is the faithful witness. In one sentence, Jesus loves truth; He is a lover of truth. This is one of the most challenging realities in our lives, to be lovers of truth. It's one thing to search for truth—we all love that; it's another thing to discover the truth. That is exciting and exhilarating. It's another thing to share the truth with a friend who is touched and inspired. All those things are excellent; there's no debate about it. What's difficult is taking a public stand for the truth. I don't just mean the general truth: "Jesus is the way to salvation." I mean the specifics that the Holy Spirit is focusing on, because in a dark world, when Jesus stood for truth, the nation turned against Him. They didn't mind that He was a good man; they didn't like the stand He took because it disrupted the nation.

THEY DID NOT RECEIVE THE LOVE OF THE TRUTH

In 2 Thessalonians 2:1 there's a passage describing the end times, or the generation the Lord returns. It talks of how, in that day, the deception will run rampant. Now, if you read it in context, 2 Thessalonians 2 is talking about the deceptions of the Antichrist and Satanic power. Here's the point I want to make: This deception will run rampant; but the point I want to focus on is that many were deceived by this deception because they did not receive the love of the truth. The love of the truth must be pursued and it must be perceived; the love of the truth is not something that automatically takes care of itself. The love of the truth is something that we go after. We go after it in a specific, intentional way; we go after the love of the truth. Jesus was a lover of truth.

STANDING FOR THE TRUTH IN THE DECADES TO COME

We're committing ourselves not just to search for truth, which is fun, not just the discovery, which is great, not just sharing it with a friend, though that's great, too, but standing for it in an hour in the decades ahead of us when many in the Church, millions and millions, will fall away from the faith because they will be seduced by the increase of lies. I don't believe it will be most of the Church, but the numbers will be staggering. You can already see a clear increase of seduction and deception and compromise laying hold of the Church. The message is getting weaker and weaker and more in agreement with the culture. It doesn't take a lot of discernment to see

that, but it's going to get far more intense in the decades ahead of us. We are lovers of truth. So that is what "the faithful witness" talks about.

THE FIRSTBORN FROM THE DEAD

Number two: Jesus is the firstborn. This means that Jesus has unique favor with God. That is what the phrase "firstborn from the dead" boils down to. As we understand this truth, it actually makes us tremble before Him and makes us love Him. He is the Man who inherits the glory of God. He inherits all the promises that God gave David, or the greatest promises God gave David. I would rather say it that way. As the firstborn, He is the heir to the glory of God as a man, and as the firstborn, He is in the position of the greatest favor and authority that God would ever give a man. The most authority God has ever given or will give a man, He gives to His Son Jesus, who is fully God and fully Man. My point is this: When we understand this truth, it creates a loyalty in our spirits to Him. When we understand how favored He is of God, it is actually a revelation. We all know that every knee will bow and every tongue will confess; then we move on, but when we stop and meditate as to the level of the anointing on this Man, it causes our spirits to tremble, and it causes us to love Him, because with the favor that He receives, of which there is none like it, He brings us into the good of it because He loves us. This Man actually went into the jaws of death and defeated death and came back and said, "I am going to bring the good of it to your life forever." We all know that, but beloved, when that touches my spirit in a fresh way, it makes Jesus look awesome. I mean, if we talk about a great prophet in the land who died and returned from the dead, people would all want to go meet Him. "What was it like? What is it like?" We're talking about a man with unction, authority, and favor on Him beyond anything we can really comprehend. That is what John is really saying. Not only is He a lover of truth, He has the unique favor of God. We won't really have time to break all this down in real detail. I'll end up having a bit more information in the notes than we will cover, but the good thing about this title isn't just that Jesus has this awesome favor, but He brings the good of it to our lives.

BEARING WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

The third subject or title is that Jesus has a unique authority over man. He is the greatest, the highest King in all of history, and He will be that King forever. Let's look at Jesus as the faithful witness. In John 18:37, He said, "For this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth." Sometimes we can read that and reduce this to the truth of how to get our sins forgiven. Jesus bore witness to the truth beyond the subject of how to become born again. His message is bigger than that. The message that He is releasing through the end-time Church is His plan, what He's going to do with the nations, with His Church in the nations, and what He feels about the encroaching seduction and deception. He's going to reveal it, and He wants us to give witness to it. A witness is a person who speaks from firsthand experience what they know to be true. They have seen it and they give testimony to it.

DECLARING THE FULL COUNSEL OF GOD

Paul the apostle made a pretty strong statement in Acts 20 when he was leaving the city of Ephesus. He said, "I kept nothing back from you that was helpful. I testified to you everything that God gave me." He said, "I want you to know that I am innocent of the blood of all men" (Acts 20:27, paraphrased). "I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. Therefore watch" —which means pray—"and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn you." Now, when I look at this passage in Acts 20, it seems like a strange statement, out of place in the Western Church. I look at that and measure my own ministry by this, that if I was to leave a ministry, would my parting words be, "I am innocent of your blood? I did not cease to warn you with

tears night and day?” That’s not very twenty-first century Western at all, for though Paul spoke the good news, he spoke an element of truth that is almost entirely foreign to the Western Church. We can’t even relate to this kind of statement. It wouldn’t even make sense if we heard a preacher on TV say this; we would think he was out of touch.

SPEAKING WITHOUT REGARD TO CRITICISM

My point is, God is going to raise up men and women in these days who will not shun to declare everything. They will declare the whole truth that God gives them. Again, we’re not just talking about the truth of how to be saved, although that truth is coming into great controversy. More and more, the Church today in the name of honor, respect, and toleration is becoming open to the idea that there is more than one way to salvation. That is a total deception. There is only one way of salvation; there is no other way. Even that truth needs to be boldly spoken in these days, in a way that’s surprising given how controversial it’s becoming even in the mainstream Church. Jesus did not hold back the negatives and He did not exaggerate the positives. This is a high standard for a ministry. I look at this. Some of you are being trained to be in a speaking ministry. Being in a speaking ministry doesn’t mean you need a microphone and a big crowd. You may have a ministry where you’re teaching the Word to five and ten in a small group. You don’t know where it’s going with all the Internet technology of these days.

Jesus did not hold back the negatives, and He did not exaggerate the positives. The trend of all of us is to hold back the negatives and exaggerate the positives, particularly in the midst of the people to whom we’re connected. I mean, I don’t want to say, “The negatives only cause trouble; they make the guys on the other side of town or the other side of the nation really upset. They make the congregation really upset, so let’s skip the negatives and only speak the positives. Then, let’s exaggerate the positives, let’s double them, so that everyone feels good about everything every step of the way, and mostly they feel good about the preacher.”

Jesus said, “No; that’s not how I did it. When I made the way for you, I was faithful to what God told Me, and you can’t do it this way, either.” Well, I will say this: Jesus spoke without regard to criticism. The criticism He was sure to reserve, He spoke without regard. He did not mind; He knew it was coming, but He said it anyway. Now, I certainly have not held the line on that when I look at my ministry. A number of times I have, but a number of times I have not. Paul said, “I do not shun to speak the whole thing.” Well, there have been times where I have shunned; drawn back; have thought, “Well, maybe this is not the time.” When in doubt, we always claim, “This is not the season or the time.” Well, decades go by and it’s never the time. There is never a good time to make people with whom you want to win favor upset at you. Again, I measure my own preaching by this. My marks are not as high as I wish they were, but most preaching today only speaks in positive terms to please people, to make sure that they don’t lose their position, their honor, or their financial opportunities. Jesus never did that, never. He never exaggerated; He never flattered. I am going to challenge you to take that and weigh it. Again, whether you have a teaching ministry or not, take that and weigh it as a member of the body of Christ, to be a faithful witness. That truth is right at the beginning of the book. When I look at it, I think, “Oh, Lord, You hit us hard with the very first topic of the faithful witness.”

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

We are to be faithful witnesses. I’ve put a passage here we’re not going to look at, Isaiah 43, but we see that we’re called to be faithful witnesses back in the Old Testament. God’s people are to be witnesses of the truth. I want you to be aware of that passage. You can read it on your own (Isaiah 43:10). In Matthew 24, as we all

know, the gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to every nation. Now that's exciting, except for what easily happens, which is that we reduce "the gospel of the kingdom" to the message of forgiveness. He did not say, "The message of free forgiveness will be preached to all nations and then the end will come," because the gospel of the kingdom is more than the way into the front door. I love the message of free forgiveness, but when every nation hears there is free forgiveness in Jesus, the gospel of the kingdom has not been preached to every nation. Now that's a beginning. We honor that, but the witness of what is on His heart and what He's doing in His kingdom is bigger than the subject of forgiveness. It's especially bigger than the offer of forgiveness without repentance, because in a lot of the gospel that's preached today it's the offer of forgiveness with no repentance, which is no gospel at all. I like to point out to people, not with glee, but because I feel it's important, that if you come to Jesus and ask Jesus to come into your heart, but you don't repent, Jesus says, "No. I'm not coming into your heart." People cannot be given the confidence that if they only pray a prayer, they're saved. If they don't repent, Jesus' answer is, "No, I'm not coming into your heart, because I will only come on My terms." We cannot earn it, but we have to open our heart fully to Him, to what we know in that hour. We don't have that much light the day we get saved, but we have to respond with the light we have. We have to come to Him on His terms.

STANDING AGAINST THE ENCROACHING DARKNESS

I give a few other dimensions of being a faithful witness. You can read those on your own. It's more than just giving the introduction to the gospel. We have to expose lies; we have to talk about the judgments that are coming. We have to stand against the encroaching darkness that is gaining rapid inroads in the Church today. Big, famous ministries are opening the door to many lies. We must bear witness against them and tell the truth. We have to do it. The Lord is looking for people who will say "yes" to Him as the faithful witness, who will open their hearts to Him as the faithful witness and who will then become faithful witnesses themselves.

THE WATCHMAN ON THE WALL

I will just summarize Ezekiel 33. You can read it later if you want. It talks about the watchman, who is the faithful witness, the forerunner, the preacher. If the watchman sees trouble coming and tells the people and the people don't respond to God, their blood is on the heads of those people. But if the watchman hears the message or sees it in the Word, but doesn't want to bear the reproach of that message, and so buries the message, the Lord says, "Their blood is on your head for the trouble that comes upon them."

THE BOLDNESS AND TENDERNESS OF FAITHFUL WITNESSING

So you want to be a messenger. Well, I want to be a messenger because that is dear to God's heart, and it's important, but being a messenger in this hour of history is going to be very, very costly. This is the subject I'm spending most of this time on, the faithful witness. When we give a witness of the truth, it has to be biblical, obviously. We have got to stay in the boundaries of Scripture. I'm not talking about having exotic dreams and visions that go outside the boundaries of Scripture. It has to be clear. Biblical is one thing; we all say "yes" to that, but it has to be clear, with no beating around the bush. We have to say what it means and mean what it says. Of course I don't want to pick on any individuals, but when you hear some of the guys on television being interviewed, they say everything except for the truth in a clear way. It's like they're running for office. No, really, it's like they're running for office. They're gaining supporters; they've got the big interview. What's on their mind is winning favor from people instead of speaking the truth. It needs to be clear and straightforward. We need to mean what we say and say what we mean. It needs to be bold; clear but without apology; bold and without intimidation, because rejection is real. Jesus was killed because of His witness; John the Baptist was

killed. Many will die because they are faithful witnesses. They will certainly lose a following in their ministry. There are many doors that will be closed if you are a faithful witness. Other doors will be opened, but it can't be about doors opening and shutting, because if you measure how many doors open and shut, and use that to determine what you're going to say, you already have the wrong spirit. You don't have the spirit of a faithful witness. We have to be bold, but, having said that, we have to be tender. We cannot speak in bitterness, or we don't have the spirit of a faithful witness. We have to be bold, but, having said that, we have to be tender. We cannot speak in bitterness. I know some guys who will be bold, but they're angry and defensive. There's not a tenderness in their boldness. We have to be humble. We can't be making a name for ourselves by being the bold guy. It can't be about us; it can't be about, "Wow, I really gave it to them straight. Boy, that's really going to open some doors." It cannot be about that kind of thing. It has to be a witness of the truth for the sake of Jesus and the sake of truth.

AGREEING WITH JESUS

We are done with the faithful witness. What do we do with all thirty of these descriptions of Jesus? It's what I gave in the first teaching. I apply a little prayer tool, the acronym A-R-K. With each of these thirty descriptions, the first thing you do is, A, agree with it. You say it to Jesus, not just agreeing in your heart, but actually making declarations of agreement to Jesus in an affectionate, tender way. It's very, very simple, but it will change your life if you actually do this. You'll get quiet and say something simple like, "Jesus, You are a faithful witness." There you have it. It's really simple, but if you say it, the Spirit will touch your heart; not every time, but something will happen if you actually say it. I'm not going to have you raise your hand, but how many of you have quieted your spirit and, with affection and a spirit of worship, said to Jesus, "You are the faithful witness?" "Thank You; I love You for telling the truth." Again, don't raise your hand. How many of you have actually said that? How many of you said that a hundred times in the last two years, or even in the last year? That is one of the most powerful descriptions of Jesus. You and the Holy Spirit will get along fine when you start talking to Jesus in the way Jesus revealed Himself. What I mean by that is, the Spirit will start touching you; you will feel His presence in an ongoing way. That's the A in A-R-K. We agree with affectionate agreement. I give a simple little sentence for each one. They're very simple, but if you do them, it will actually change your life.

SEEKING THE REVELATION OF JESUS

R means "Ask for revelation." "Jesus, reveal Yourself. Reveal Yourself to me as the faithful witness." How many of you have ever asked the Holy Spirit to reveal Jesus as the faithful witness to you? Again, don't answer; my point is not to figure out who has and who has not. My point is to get you to do a little self-check and say, "What? Now that you've mentioned it, I don't think I've ever prayed that once." My point isn't to make you feel bad; my point is to excite you, to give you a road map, to say, "Hey, here are thirty descriptions... go for it! There is Mount Everest. You have got a map; you have got a helper, the escort called the Holy Spirit. He will help you. Now go on that journey! Climb that mountain with Him." You will be on that mountain your whole life, and then in the age to come that mountain will continue. Then, a million years from now, you will still be climbing, meaning you will be gaining new insight into the glory of the Man Christ Jesus.

KEEPING THE PROPHECY

K, the third letter in the acronym, means "Keep the prophecy." The book of Revelation says, "Blessed are those who keep the words of this prophecy" (Revelation 1:3, paraphrased). In other words, "Blessed are the ones who apply the prophecy." How do we apply the revelation of Jesus? Well, every one of these thirty descriptions here is a personal application you can make. Of course, this one is a really easy one. We simply say simple things in

terms of keeping the prophecy, our personal application. “Jesus, help me; Holy Spirit, help me. I want to be a faithful witness. I want to stand for the truth. I will.” You set your heart. “I declare the resolve of my heart; I will stand for the truth. Help me; show me; touch me; I am Yours. When I get discouraged or feel weak, I give myself to You.” So we talk to Him.

A-R-K. We agree: “You are the faithful witness.” R: Ask for revelation—“Give me more insight.” K: You keep the prophecy, this aspect of the book of Revelation prophecy, and apply it to your personal life.

THE PREEMINENCE OF JESUS

We’ll only spend a minute on these other two titles. Jesus as the firstborn means He is the pre-eminent One. He has unique favor with God. I will say this first; I have it down a few notes later: Being the firstborn does not mean He is the first who is born. That’s not what it means. Being the firstborn means He is the heir, because in Jewish society the firstborn got the double portion of the inheritance. He got twice as much as everyone else. So when the Bible says that Jesus is the firstborn, it means He gets the double portion of the inheritance. It means He is the One with unique favor. He is the firstborn. The favor of God is on Him, and He is actually going to use the favor of God to bless your life. So I break that down a bit in the notes here. We won’t look at it, but I want to point you in that direction.

THE FIRSTBORN OVER ALL CREATION

Colossians 1:15-18 says that He is “the firstborn over all creation, for by Him all things were created” (Col. 1:15-16). He is the beginning; He is the firstborn from the dead, “that in all things He may have the preeminence” (v. 18). Now, when you read that, you catch the phrase *firstborn* twice in Colossians 1:15-18. He is the firstborn of all creation, and He is the firstborn of the dead. Some who get into heresy read that and they think of Jesus being the firstborn as meaning He was the first One created. There are heresies that say Jesus is the top of all men, of everyone created; that He’s the best of all of them. No. He is the best of all men, but Jesus is uncreated, like the Father and the Spirit. There was never a time where Jesus did not exist. He is Himself the uncreated God, like the Father and the Spirit. He has the fullness of God, like the Father does. When Paul says Jesus is the firstborn over all creation, He doesn’t mean He was the first One born in 4 BC. Jesus wasn’t the first One born. That’s not what Paul is saying; he’s saying that Jesus is in the position of the double-portion inheritance. That is what it means for Him to be firstborn. So He has more authority than any other man in all creation. He has the double portion, which doesn’t just mean twice; it means He is the One who has the leadership over creation. When it says He is the firstborn from the dead, it means He is the first One to be raised from the dead. He is the first One with a resurrected body, and He is in the position of heir for everyone who is to be resurrected. Everyone is to be resurrected, but He is at the front of the line. He has the premier authority for everyone who is raised from the dead. That’s what that means.

So when you apply this, the A-R-K principle—you can read the other notes. Again, my point is to steer you in that direction because you want to drink deeply of Jesus as the firstborn, the One with all the power, the One with all the authority, the One with the preeminent position, the One on whom rests God’s anointing and favor, and the One who is going to bring you into the place of favor with Him. That’s what it means that He is the firstborn from the dead.

SEEING AND SAVORING JESUS, THE FIRSTBORN

So when we say the “A”, we come into bold agreement, but it’s an affectionate agreement. It’s not just agreeing in your heart; you are actually declaring it to Him. You are right before Him. “Jesus, You are the firstborn; You are the preeminent One; You are the One; You are the heir of the promises. They are all Yours. I rejoice in Your preeminence over everything. I love this about You. Father, thank You that You gave Jesus this position.” Talk to Jesus and the Father like this. It will touch you. Again, you will feel the Spirit’s presence; not every time, but you will feel the Spirit’s presence when you talk to God on His terms. I mean, the Lord hears the groaning of our hearts. There are certain truths that the Holy Spirit is highlighting about Jesus. When we declare those truths to Him, things happen in our hearts that are powerful.

The “R” is very simple; it’s always the same: “Reveal Your glory to me as the firstborn; show me who You are as the firstborn.” What does that mean? You will be learning about this, not just for the next ten, twenty, thirty years, but for the next ten, twenty, thirty million years you will still be learning what this is about. You will be glorying in it.

COMMITTING TO KEEP THE TESTIMONY OF HIS PREEMINENCE

K: Keep the prophecy or respond to it in a practical way in your personal life. “I commit to proclaim that You are the preeminent One.” That is really great in a church service or a conference center or a prayer room. But when you get outside of the secure environment of people who are all excited about that, it’s a very uncomfortable truth out there. “I will proclaim You as the preeminent One. I will declare that You have infinitely more power than the world religions, than Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and all the other –isms. There is only one Jesus, and there is none like You. You alone are the preeminent One. I take my stand. I am convinced that You will triumph over all of them in history. I mean, You have already triumphed over them in the resurrection, but it will be openly displayed before all of history.” We are not intimidated by Islam. We are not intimidated by any other religion, because there is only One that is going to cover the earth. He is the firstborn; He is the absolute victor in history. He has the favor of God in every capacity.

Maybe you will tell Him, “As the firstborn, I will obey Your leadership. You have the favor of God on You; the glory of God is on You.” He is fully God, but as a man He has the fullness of God. “I will obey Your leadership. You are the boss; I am the follower. I am not negotiating with You; I am honoring who You are. You are the firstborn.” That is how we talk to Him, in those ways. “Empower me; help me.” Those are very simple prayers. You don’t have to have a fancy prayer, but here’s what I want to challenge you. Again, my point is not to embarrass you, but to get you to do a little self-check. Have you ever said that to Jesus? Have you ever just settled down in the heart of affection and said, “I love You as the firstborn? Wow. I don’t really know what it means, but wow. I want to know. I am Yours because You declared that about Yourself. So I am in. I am giving myself. I don’t get it, but I’m in.” The Holy Spirit will smile. He will say, “Come on, keep coming after it. You will grow.”

THE RULER OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH

The third title shows that Jesus is the ruler over the kings of the earth. We’re quoting again from Psalm 89:27, where He is called the highest of the kings of the earth. The theme of the book of Revelation is that there is a Jewish king who will topple every government of the earth in real history, not by democratically taking them over and not by popular vote. This is real, and it is really going to happen in history. When He comes, He is going to take over every government, and for any government that resists Him, it will be a hostile takeover. He

will be the King, the predominant King. He will have authority over all men on the earth in an open way for all the nations to see. That will happen at the second coming of Christ. He has that authority now, but He is openly going to display it to where every single person, believer and unbeliever, in heaven and hell, will see it happening on the earth in real time and space. One Man will be King over every other king.

OPENLY MANIFEST IN EVERY SPHERE OF LIFE

Imagine the implications of this: The kingdom of God will be openly manifest in every sphere of life. Now, we're working for the kingdom of God to be involved in every sphere of life now, but we're only having a small breakthrough. We're asking the Lord to double it, and double it, and double it again. But if I was guessing, I would say the kingdom of God has a one percent impact on the earth right now. That's not a real number, but it's not a lot higher than that in terms of all the laws of the earth being righteous or unrighteous, in terms of loyalty to Jesus is what I mean, because when I think of righteousness, I mean loyalty to Jesus. We may have the biggest revival in history; we may have a tenfold increase and get up to ten percent, but beloved, we are never going to Christianize the world until Jesus comes back in the full sense. When He returns, He is going to have massive reversals in a way we cannot even imagine. He is the ruler of the kings of the earth. He has that position now. It's only a minute away and it will be openly manifest, but we talk to Him this way. Our whole paradigm of the future is formed around this thought. We are asking King Jesus to break in, in all these spheres of society, right now. I am believing God for a tenfold breakthrough, but even if it is tenfold, if it's the greatest revival in history, it will go from one percent to ten percent. Of course I don't really know the numbers, but even the greatest breakthrough of all will be nothing like the breakthrough that is coming when He returns.

I have a bunch of verses up there you can read on your own. The day is coming after His return when all the kings of the earth will worship Him. Every single king on the planet will worship Him. The A-R-K principle is a prayer tool. I wanted just a simple little prayer principle. Agreement, A: You declare, "You are the ruler of the kings of the earth." It's simple to say that, but again, I'm assuming many people have never actually said, in a quieted-down way, in a spirit of adoration and affection, "Jesus, You are the ruler of the kings of the earth. Right now You are, but it will be openly displayed for all to see at the time of Your coming." I have a few other little jumpstart sentences; you've got to make your own, but my point is that they're really simple. R: "Reveal Yourself to me as the ruler of the kings of the earth. Show me Yourself in this way." K: "I commit to proclaim that You are the King of the earth. I will tell people now; I will now obey Your leadership. I give myself to You now in this way."

TO HIM WHO LOVED US

In Revelation 1:5, in the next statement, in response to the truth of these three titles, John was overwhelmed and went on to say, "Yes, He is the faithful witness; He is the firstborn from the dead, and He is the ruler of the kings of the earth, but at the core of everything, He is the One who loves us." That is one of my favorite titles of Jesus: "To Him who loves us." How many of you like that title? I mean, I like the other ones, but I really like, "To the One who loves Mike Bickle." I really like that Jesus; it touches me in a really deep way. "You washed me. Not only did You love me and remove the disqualification" —when it says, "He washed you," that means He removed the disqualifying factors out of the way. We like that He removes the disqualifying factors.

HE HAS MADE US KINGS AND PRIESTS

Why? Where is it going? He is going to make us kings (Rev. 1:6). It's not only that He is a king; He says, "I want you to participate with Me. I am going to bring you into the glory with Me. Yes, I am the King of all

kings, but it's not stopping there. I am bringing My people who are disqualified to a place of qualification by the grace of God, and I am going to bring them into the government with Me."

Not only is He going to make us kings; not only are we going to be a part of the government; He is going to make us priests. We will have access to God. We will be able to touch God in a very powerful way. As priests, we touch God and connect with Him. We experience His presence. As kings, we govern with Him. He says, "I am removing the disqualification so that you can govern with Me." That governing starts now, but it is only a partial fulfillment of what is going to happen in the age to come. However, it's still real. We all have a little sphere of responsibility in which we exert His rule and His leadership, and we are faithful to it. It really matters that we do that, but when He comes and at the resurrection that sphere of rule will exponentially, significantly increase in the lives of the faithful. It's not just that He wants us to work with Him as kings to rule; He wants us to experience God with Him. We are also priests. He says, "I will move the hindrance out of the way so that you can experience God with me, too. When I go before the Father, we are going together, and you will experience and know God. I will see to it that you do."

Someone asks, "Well, which is your favorite, being a king or being a priest?" I'm taking both: I want to touch God, but I want to rule with Him, too. I want to work with Him. I want to see the planet change. I want to touch Him and work with Him. I want both. We don't have to pick between them.

MINISTRY TIME

Amen. We're going to end with that. Let's go ahead and stand. Those are three titles. Well, actually, they're three titles plus a fourth description: Him who loves us. Again, my purpose tonight is to give you a little road map, to point you in the direction of these thirty. These were four that we looked at for a moment each. We want to look at all thirty of them over the Sunday nights to come so that we have a little language with which to approach the Lord in these subjects.

I'm going to invite anyone who would like prayer tonight for anything, whether you're saying, "I want more of this," or there's an issue in your life for which you're crying out to the Lord, whether for a breakthrough in the spirit of prophecy, or a breakthrough in an area of your life, or healing or something back home; any of you who would like prayer for anything, I invite you to come up and join us on these lines up here. If you look down, see the places to stand so that we can have room to move in and come pray for you.

Here we are, Lord. We ask You to release Your Spirit even now, Lord. Holy Spirit, I ask You to come and touch us. We invite Your presence, Holy Spirit. Here we are, Lord. I'm inviting anyone in the room who wants to pray to go ahead. If you love Jesus, we invite you to come and join us. Pray for people. Go ahead and come up now if you want, whether you're visiting or whether you live here, it doesn't matter. If you love Jesus, come on up. Jesus, come and touch us. Here we are, Lord. May You be all that's on our minds, Lord. We ask You to release Your glory even now. Release Your glory, Lord, tonight, I ask You, as we wait before you.

All over the room, sing with your spirits as we wait on the Lord.



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