

## ***Session 5 Jesus the Faithful Witness, Firstborn, and Ruler***

*Please refer to the teaching notes for this message.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

We're continuing on our series, "Jesus, Our Magnificent Obsession." This is part two. This is our second class, for those who are visiting.

Here's a quick review from the last session we covered. We looked at Jesus as the First and the Last. We'll take a few moments of review to get us up to date, and then build on that foundation of Jesus being the First and the Last. Then we'll apply these three titles of Jesus as the Faithful Witness, the Firstborn from the Dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. Those three titles, which describe His human destiny, are based on the foundational truth of Jesus as the First and the Last.

By way of review—paragraph A—in Revelation 1-3, John shares an open vision. In that open vision, he highlights thirty distinct descriptions of Jesus. He highlights eighteen eternal rewards. Each one of these thirty descriptions and eighteen rewards communicate to us specific understanding about Jesus. Each one of them is very significant. Each one of them is like the title of a book in God's library. There's a volume of information behind every one of these descriptions. It's as though the Holy Spirit is saying, "I'll give you a hint: Jesus is the Faithful Witness. You can search from Genesis to Revelation. I have so much to say to you about Him related to that title, to that description of Him."

### **THE MOST PROMINENT TITLE FOR JESUS IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION**

Paragraph B. In our last session, we looked at Jesus as the First and the Last.

This is the title that He used the most in the book of Revelation. He used it four times. He didn't use any other title four times. That tells you that it has a unique importance to the Church.

We ask the Holy Spirit, "What does this mean?"

He's the First and the Last. He said it by His own lips four times: "John, tell them I'm the First and the Last."

What does that mean? The answer is, ask the Holy Spirit and search Genesis to Revelation. The fullness of this truth will be an unfolding revelation. I want to spend all of my days searching out these thirty descriptions: understanding them more and more; proclaiming them with greater depth and clarity.

This title, "First and Last," refers to Jesus' destiny, His power, and His exaltation as a human being. We know He's fully God and we know He's fully Man. Whereas His title "Alpha and Omega" is a reference to His deity, this title has particular reference to His humanity. Jesus used this title in the context of His suffering as a man, to His death, and even to His resurrection. In a moment we'll see how the title "Firstborn from the dead" elaborates on the reality of Jesus as the First and the Last related to His death and resurrection.

### **"THESE THINGS SAYS THE FIRST AND THE LAST. . ."**

I'll give you a quick snapshot. Revelation 2:8. "These things says the First and the Last. . ." (Rev. 2:8). Jesus is saying, "I'm telling you who I am as the One with the title, 'The First and the Last.'"

Then He connects this title with His death and resurrection. He says, “What I mean is that I was One who was dead. I experienced all you can experience in the human experience related to death. I walked in it. The good news that is I walked through it and came out with life. Therefore don’t be afraid concerning the things you’re about to suffer” (Rev. 3:10, paraphrased).

“Lord, I don’t want to suffer.”

There’s martyrdom appointed to the Church throughout history, but particularly in the generation He returns to the earth. He says, “Don’t be afraid. If you know Me as the First and the Last, you know that it will end well and I’ll be with you in power. I’ll respond with eternal rewards beyond anything you can imagine if you’re faithful with Me. I understand what it is to walk through this. I did it as a man.”

### **THE SOVEREIGNTY AND PREEMINENCE OF JESUS AS A MAN**

Paragraph C. We’re still in review from the last session. Jesus as the First and the Last emphasizes His sovereignty and His preeminence over everything as a man. There’s one Man who is preeminent over everything. That’s what we’ll look at in a moment, in chapter 1:5, which is the theme of this session. We’ll look at His preeminence as the Faithful Witness, the Firstborn from the dead, and the Ruler over the kings of the earth.

### **THE FIRST SOURCE OF HONOR AND THE SOURCE OF ALL BLESSING**

Paragraph D. His preeminence is highlighted in three ways in chapter 1:5: as a man, as the First and the Last, He has the first place of authority. He has the first place of honor. He’s the first source of all blessing. Everything that you possess that’s good, He’s the first cause and the source of it. The good news is this: if He’s the original source of that blessing; and if persecution comes your way, and you lose it in a temporary way, you can be sure, if He’s the source, the One gave it to you originally, He can return it all back to you in a far greater measure than you had it before. He’s the source. He’s the First and the Last.

### **THE DESTINY OF JESUS; THE DESTINY OF MANKIND**

Roman numeral II. We’ll look at the verse in focus tonight. Revelation 1:5: “Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth” (Rev. 1:5).

There are three titles. They sum up Jesus’ human destiny as the One who is called the First and the Last. You’ll have to think on this later. “I don’t think I have that. What?”

Each one of these three titles is a mountain in and of itself. They describe Jesus’ human destiny as the One who has first place and preeminence, and the One who is the last, the end result and the end goal of everything.

John goes on and says in verse 5, “To Him who loved us. . .” (Rev. 1:5b). So this preeminent One loves us. He loves us so much that He paid the price to remove everything that gets in the way of us entering into our destiny under His leadership.

Look at verse 6. This is our destiny. It begins in this age in part, but forever the destiny of the redeemed is to be kings and priests to God—forever. There are significant applications to those two aspects of our eternal destiny as the redeemed.

## **THE FATHER WILL HAVE DOMINION OVER ALL THE EARTH FOREVER**

Then He goes on to the ultimate. He says, “Where’s this thing going?” He’s the preeminent One, the First and the Last, the Firstborn from the dead, and the Ruler over the kings of the earth. We have a human destiny under His leadership as kings and priests. Where is it going?

John says it clearly: “To Him”—the Father—“be glory and dominion” (Rev. 1:6). What that means is dominion on the earth. Where this is going is that Jesus is orchestrating a big vision that we’re deeply involved with, where the Father will have dominion over all the earth forever.

That’s what is on Jesus’ mind. Jesus comes back and begins the millennial kingdom, but His goal over 1,000 years is to prepare the earth for the Father to come and establish His throne upon it, and to have dominion on the earth forever. That’s the end goal of what He’s after.

Beloved, you want to read Revelation 1:5-7 over and over and over. You want to lock into those three verses, and meditate much on them, in long and loving meditation, because in this one passage—verses 5-7—we see His human destiny. He’s the First and the Last. In other words, He’s the preeminent—that’s the first—and the last. He’s the end result, the goal, the end product; He’s everything related to the realm of truth. All truth has its beginning and end in Him.

It doesn’t end with truth. That’s part of Jesus’ human destiny, to be manifest as the One in whom all truth begins and ends, in Him. That’s only one part of His destiny. In the realm of the resurrection, He’s the Firstborn from the dead. In everything that pertains to the new creation, the realm of the resurrection, everything that pertains to it, He’s the First and the Last of that realm as well—as a man. A man, a Jewish man, is the initiator, the first—the preeminent—and the last—the end goal of everything having to do with the realm of the resurrection.

These are big truths. I was talking about these earlier. I said, “These truths are so much greater than my understanding, but they beckon me to come.”

The Holy Spirit is saying, “If you have courage, climb these three mountains of truth.” They’re vast. They’re bigger than we think.

The third realm of Jesus’ human destiny is that He has the government over the earth forever as a man. He came to receive the government of the earth.

I have the passage broken down there a little. There are a lot ideas jammed into these three verses. I’m going to add verse 7. It all begins in verse 7 with a dramatic, global event called Jesus coming in the clouds, witnessed by every believer and unbeliever in the earth. This is how this grand scheme goes to the next level, this grand plan—where Jesus’ preeminence is seen openly by all. Right now it’s truth that we take by faith. We can see evidence of it through the eye of faith. In verse 7, John tells us, “Behold, a day is coming soon where there will be a dramatic global event that ushers in this whole realm of reality. It will be openly seen by believers and unbelievers. They all will bow down before Him. This is who this Man Jesus is” (Rev. 1:7, paraphrased).

## **ALL TRUTH BEGINS AND HAS ITS CULMINATION IN HIM**

Paragraph B. We'll look at these three titles that are brought together. It's like a mountain range with three large peaks that are too big to get to the top of in this life.

Mountain number one. He's the Faithful Witness. All truth begins and has its culmination in Him—all truth. That's a big subject.

Mountain number two: He's the Firstborn from the dead. He's the premier One in the realm of the resurrection and everything related to the resurrection, which is the new creation.

Mountain number three: He's the Ruler over the kings of the earth. To give a little background here—we're still in paragraph B—John is referencing a well-known messianic prophecy. It's a prophecy about the Messiah from Psalm 89. If you read Psalm 89 at first glance, you think it's only about King David. King David experienced some of this that was promised in Psalm 89, but we find with a more careful examination that it's bigger than David. It's the Son of David, Jesus of Nazareth.

Psalm 89:27. God is talking to David about Jesus—about David in a partial way, but the Son of David, Jesus, in a full way. He says, "I will make Him My firstborn. He will be the preeminent heir of everything I have" (Ps. 89:27, paraphrased). Wow! "I will make this Man, the Son of David, the highest of all the kings of the earth." Then in verse 35 He goes on to say, "And I've sworn that I will do this. He will reign as My Messiah, as My firstborn, the premier heir, as the highest of the kings of the earth. And, as a matter of fact, His reign will continue as the faithful witness in the sky, the moon" (v. 35, paraphrased).

In other words, we can rely on His reign before God to continue as clearly as the sun and the moon will continue. So His reign will continue unbroken and unhindered.

All three of these titles from Psalm 89, John brings together as a summary of Jesus that unfolds throughout the entire book of Revelation. This is the summary of Jesus in the book of Revelation, these three titles. They focus on Jesus' destiny as a man. It's remarkable. They'll all be fully expressed openly in the millennial kingdom, at the time of His second coming.

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE BEST OF ALL TEACHERS ON JESUS**

Page two. Let's break this down a little. Again, we're counting on the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "When the Spirit comes, He will glorify Me. He will declare Me to your heart. He will preach Jesus to you if you ask Him to" (Jn. 16:14, paraphrased).

I take these thirty titles and say, "Holy Spirit, teach them to me." The Holy Spirit is the best teacher on Jesus that we can imagine. He waits for us to ask Him to teach us. He will teach us as long as we continue the conversation with Him. Any of these thirty descriptions that you want to know about, as long as you keep talking about them, He will keep talking back to you. When you're not interested anymore, He'll change subjects and go with what you're interested in. That's how He relates to us. That's kind of frightening. He lets us initiate the conversation; He'll stay in it as long as we continue in it. He won't force us to have the conversation. He won't force feed us on any of these issues. I say, "Holy Spirit, teach me Jesus as the Faithful Witness."

## **TRUTH IS A PERSON, AND HIS NAME IS JESUS**

Paragraph A. He's the First and the Last. He's the source, the preeminence, the full authority; He's the fullness, the end result, the end goal of all truth. Everything He is, everything He says, and everything He does is complete and perfect truth. That's a massive statement. He's reliable in everything He's ever said. Every promise He has ever given, He says, "I promise you, it's 100 percent reliable, even though the time may be delayed." He speaks the truth about love. He alone defines love. He speaks the truth about justice. Only in Him can we understand love or justice. Any definition, of love on one end or justice on the other, that's disassociated from the truth about Him won't be the truth about love or justice. He is the Faithful Witness of everything that's true. He's the truth about God. Whatever He says about God, it's the complete, 100 percent truth.

He's the truth about salvation. When He says, "There's no other way," beloved, there's no other way. No matter what religious logic some well-meaning person with a humanistic spirit comes up with, there's no other way. He didn't lie about that. When men stand before God, there will be no other way. With boldness we declare this, because we know it to be true. He's the truth about hell; He's the truth about sin. Whatever He says about sin is true. He's the truth about judgment. He's the truth about eternity. He's the truth about rewards. He's the truth about the future. Whatever He says, He's the full truth. Though He may whisper it in one phrase here and one phrase there, beloved, you can stake your whole life on what He says. There will be no deviation whatsoever from what He says, because it's who He is. What He is, what He says, and what He does is in perfect harmony. He's reliable.

We think about the issues of the day. The Church is unsure about abortion. What Jesus says is the only truth about the sanctity of life. The issue of sexuality, and I'm not just talking about same-sex marriage—it's far bigger than that. The whole subject of sexuality in the Church, heterosexual and homosexual, all different expressions; He alone is the truth on that subject. A lot of people are wavering; they're struggling with same-sex marriage, which isn't the will of God at all. There's no question whatsoever. Beloved, there's a far greater issue. It's not just homosexual immorality; it's heterosexual immorality in the Church. That's a far greater issue that the Church is unsettled on. He's the only way to salvation. The Church is rethinking that through. The Church isn't sure about judgment. Beloved, He's the Faithful Witness.

We're still in paragraph A. He's reliable. He doesn't hold back any negative truths. He gave rebukes and judgments; they were all faithful to love and faithful to truth and faithful to justice. Every one of His rebukes was faithful to love. He can't ever deny love when He exercises judgment. He's the Faithful Witness. He can't suspend one attribute to exercise another. He wouldn't be the Faithful Witness if He did that, even once. He doesn't exaggerate the positive truths. When He gives affirmation, He loves us like the Father loves Him. That's not an exaggeration. I love that. He says, "If you're faithful to Me, though everyone turns away from you, I'll remember and reward you forever." Beloved, that's bigger than anything we can understand in this age. He doesn't exaggerate anything. He never flatters; He never talks out of bitterness. He doesn't get in a bad mood and then talk too severely and regret it later. His evaluations aren't too severe, and they're not too lenient. His judgments aren't too late; They're not too early. It would be a denial of Himself as a witness to the truth if any of those things deviated even once in His entire eternal existence. He's the Faithful Witness.

## **HE EMBODIES TRUTH WITHOUT EVEN THE SLIGHTEST DEVIATION**

There's a lot more on that. That's just a beginning. I stare at that mountain of truth. I say, "Oh Lord, I hardly understand even the parameters of that glorious mountain." He's the First and the Last of everything related to truth—as a man! That's remarkable. I mean, it's one thing for God to be the fullness of truth. We know Jesus is

fully God forever. As a man, Jesus of Nazareth, He's the Faithful Witness, full of truth in every single way. He's the First and the Last in everything related to truth. Not that He just says it; He embodies it without even the slightest deviation or contradiction. Otherwise He wouldn't be the Faithful Witness. That's one of His premier titles that gives our hearts confidence. Not only to believe what He said, but to search it out and fill our minds with the things that He said.

Beloved, He isn't just a religious philosopher giving an opinion. He's absolute truth on all these subjects. God's people have a casual approach to cultivating truth and understanding; many just read the Word a little on the run. Do you know who the Word is talking about? The One who is the Faithful Witness. We do well to fill our mind with truth; that we could better understand Him as the One who has no contradictions in anything He says, does, or is.

### **THE SOURCE OF THE DESTINY OF ALL GLORIFIED HUMANITY**

Let's move onto the second big mountaintop: this big mountain about Jesus' destiny as a man. He's the Firstborn from the dead. That's a huge truth with vast consequences and implications.

"I'm the Firstborn from the dead." What He's saying is that He's the First and the Last: the preeminence, the source, the top authority; the main attraction, the main focus. He's first in all those ways.

He's the last: in the whole realm related to the resurrection; the whole new creation. He's the source of the destiny of all of glorified humanity. This Man is the source of my eternal destiny in the resurrection. When that connects with me a little, I'm more grateful than ever to Him. It's not just your destiny or mine; it's the several billion saints through history, counting the great harvest. He isn't just over the resurrected humans; He's over the city, the New Jerusalem, that's a manifestation of the power of the resurrection glory of God. He's over the city. He's the One who determines how it operates. He's the One who determines who gets in it. He determines what role you'll have in the city forever. He's over the resurrection in every way.

The Firstborn means He's preeminent. He's the first in authority. "Lord, I want to get in that city."

He says, "Good, come to Me. I've done that."

"Lord, I want a role in the city."

He says, "That's all in My hands. I'll give you a role in the city based on the way you loved Me in this age. No one will change My opinion, My evaluation of your life when you stand before Me eye to eye on that day. I'm over the entire realm of the resurrection."

A man is over all of this. Jesus, who are You? Of course the answer is, "I'm more than you think."

I think John sort of had an idea that he knew who Jesus was. Right here in chapter 1:17, when the Lord shows him His glory, he falls like a dead man. Jesus could have said, "John, it's just Me. Or maybe you didn't really know Me as well as you thought!"

I don't know; John can sort that out when we meet one day. He might say, "Mike, you had it all wrong those years. I was falling like a dead man at the very beginning. You missed it 100 percent."

### **THE HEIR OVER THE REALM OF THE RESURRECTION**

He's the Firstborn. Being the Firstborn means He's the preeminent heir. He's the heir in a unique category in honor and authority. The firstborn in the family got a double portion from everyone else. They were the heir of the family. That's what it means to be the firstborn.

It means more than that. What happens is that John takes Psalm 89:27, where the Messiah is called God's firstborn, the preeminent heir. John expands that promise and adds, "Firstborn from the dead." He isn't just the heir; He's the heir over the realm of the resurrection. The people, the servants in the city—the angels—our place in the city, the government of the city, the plan of what will happen in the city for billions of years; He's over it all. One Man is over it. He's over the city planning committee. He has already thought over what He's going to do in the city for a long, long time.

### **THE FATHER HAS ORDAINED THAT HE WOULD HAVE PREEMINENCE FOREVER**

Paragraph B. Colossians 1. Paul takes two ideas, which are really two facets of one great truth. He refers to Jesus with two titles that are dynamically related. They point to the same reality, but with two facets.

Here in Colossians 1, Paul expands on Psalm 89:27, that the Messiah is the firstborn. Paul writes this even before John does in the book of Revelation. He calls Him "the firstborn over all creation" (Col. 1:15); "the firstborn from the dead" (v. 18). There are two points, two truths, that are really two facets of one truth. He's the firstborn over all creation; He's the source of the natural creation, is the idea.

He was the One who spoke in Genesis 1. When God said, "Let there be light" (Gen. 1:3), it was Jesus who was speaking. He's the source over natural creation. He's the ruler and the heir of it. Paul makes that clear. Jesus isn't just the Firstborn in the general sense. He's the owner and the preeminent one over natural creation.

He takes it up a notch in verse 18: "He's the firstborn over the new creation, the realm of the resurrection" (Col. 1:18, paraphrased). The reason He's over both realms, natural creation and the new creation, is given at the end of verse 18. The Father has ordained that He would have the preeminence in both realms forever.

### **THE FIRST PERSON RAISED FROM THE DEAD WITH A GLORIFIED BODY**

Paragraph C. Jesus is the Firstborn from the dead. That means a number of things. He's the first Man, the first human raised from the dead. He's the first person ever raised from the dead with a resurrected body.

You say, "Wait a second... Lazarus was raised from the dead!" Lazarus was resuscitated—in a supernatural way, yes, but he still had a natural body and he died again. When Jesus was raised from the dead, He received a physical, supernatural body. It's physical, but supernatural. He was the first Man, and He's the only Man right now with a resurrected body. No one else around the throne has their physical, resurrected body yet. Their spirit man is before God. He's the first Man raised from the dead with a supernatural, resurrected, physical body. He's the first Man who conquered the enemies of the human race. He conquered death. A man looked at death straight in the face, walked through it, partook of it, broke the power of it as a man, and stood victorious over it. He was the first Man ever to do this. As the Firstborn from the dead, He's the first One in power in the realm of the dead.

## **THE GUARANTEE OF EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM**

As the Firstborn from the dead, He's the pledge. Scripture makes clear that the Firstborn includes the first fruits. He's the pledge, which means He's the guarantee of everyone else who believes in Him having a body like He has. In Israel, they would bring the first fruits of the harvest. That first fruit would be uniquely dedicated to God. The first fruit was the guarantee that a greater harvest was coming after it.

Jesus is the first fruit: He's the pledge, He's the guarantee that there's a harvest of millions of resurrected believers following behind Him. He's the guarantee and the pledge. He's the first fruit.

He's the Firstborn from the dead in the sense that He's the source of the resurrection. He isn't just the First and the guarantee; the power of it is generated by Him as a Man.

We say, "What is this? You mean as God?"

Well, don't separate His deity and humanity too precisely. In your religious pride you'll get into all kinds of error. Those are truths we gaze at and bow down and worship and say, "Great is the mystery without any controversy. Great is the mystery: fully God, fully Man, God came in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16, paraphrased). A man, a man is the power source of several billion with resurrected bodies. It comes from a man. Really, ouch! That hurts me. That feels so good, that perplexes me so badly, that it's so far out of my grasp. The whole thing hurts me, yet I love it. It's a paradox. This whole thing bothers me but beckons me. I want to know this Man. The Holy Spirit says, "Good. If you want to know Him as the Firstborn, talk to Me about it. As long as you keep the conversation going, I'll keep talking back to you about it."

You have a Bible from Genesis to Revelation. God has much to say to us about Jesus as the Firstborn.

## **WE WILL HAVE FLESH AND BONES WITH A BODY LIKE HIS**

Paragraph D. He's the pledge or the guarantee. That's what first fruits means as well. This is remarkable. I threw this in here because I love this. Philippians 3: Jesus will transform our broken, weak body, that it would be conformed to His resurrected body (Phil. 3:21). Jesus, fully God and fully Man, is able to do this. He's the power source behind it.

What kind of glorious body did Jesus have? when He appeared after the resurrection, He looked at them and said, "Touch Me and handle Me" (Lk. 24:39, paraphrased). They looked at Him awestruck. He walked through the wall. "You look like Jesus to us." "It's Me. Touch Me."

He ate a meal with them. Physical food He ate with a resurrected body. He ate the fish. I have to say this; Allen Hood got me going on this. Then He walked through the wall. Allen said, "Did the fish go through the wall with Him?" We don't know.

I've brought that up to Allen a few times. He said, "Oh, move on! That was just a joke!"

"I have to know now, Allen. You got me going!" I want some intern to find this from the Holy Spirit and tell me the answer. Just email directly at [allenhood@ihop.org](mailto:allenhood@ihop.org) and I'll make sure you get an answer. As a matter of fact, send all your questions. That's OK.

He says, “Handle Me, touch Me. A spirit doesn’t have flesh.”

“What?”

Jesus says, “I have an elbow. I have real bones—resurrected, physical bones. I have flesh.”

Well, when I first began to ponder this, I said, “Yes, but Paul the apostle said flesh and blood doesn’t inherit the kingdom” (cf., 1 Cor. 15:50). It’s clear from those two passages, there’s a supernatural flesh that’s different than the flesh that’s kept alive by natural blood. Natural flesh with blood flowing through to strengthen it can’t enter the realm of the resurrection. There’s another kind of flesh that we don’t know about. We will be very familiar with it not long from now. We will have a body like His with flesh and bones.

### **IT’S THE GLORY OF WHO THIS MAN IS THAT BECKONS US TO LOVE HIM**

He’s more than just the guarantee and the pledge. He’s the source. In the same passage, Paul says, “By one man, Adam, came death. In the same way, by a man came the resurrection” (1 Cor. 15:45-49). It’s by a man that the resurrection came. Remember the verse we looked at in Philippians 3 that says Jesus is able, by the working of His power, to subdue all death.

We say, “OK, Jesus is the source of the resurrection. Wow. It comes by a man.” You say, “So what?”

Here’s the “so what.” It’s the glory of who this Man is that beckons us to love Him and obey Him. Beloved, He’s worth it. His glory is beyond anything we’re capturing in this age.

### **EVERYONE IN THE GRAVE WILL COME FORTH BY HIS WORD**

Jesus talked about this: how the resurrection would come by Him. In John 5, He’s talking about Himself, and the moment when all who are in the graves will hear His voice. He’s talking about His own voice in the third person (Jn. 5:25). When the Son of Man speaks, everyone in the grave will come forth by His word. If they’ve done well, they will come forth to the resurrection of the life. Others will come forth with a resurrected body, but they’ll come forth to a resurrection of condemnation. Beloved, they’ll receive a supernatural body in which they’ll endure the judgments of God forever. That’s terrifying to me.

You add Daniel 12:2, where the angel told Daniel there would be a physical resurrection of the righteous and the unrighteous, and it will go on forever.

Paragraph F. You say, “Wait a second. You’re stressing that Jesus is the source of the resurrection.” The reason I’m stressing it is because several verses make it clear. However, it’s not the whole picture. I don’t want to spend too much time on this, though it’s awesome—the truth behind this paragraph, the divine truth: all three persons of the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit, all participated in Jesus’ resurrection.

In John 10, here’s what Jesus says: “I have the power to lay My life down, and I have the power to take it up again” (Jn. 10:18, paraphrased). He made it clear: “I have sufficient power to break the power of death Myself.”

Who are You? That’s not funny. I’m talking about in the most serious way. Who are You? The Scripture doesn’t end there. The Father raised Jesus from the dead. It doesn’t end there. The Spirit raised Jesus from the dead (Rom. 8:11). Well, who did it? It’s clear, at the end of paragraph F: each of the three persons of the

Godhead has a work that's unified, inseparable, and interdependent. They're fully involved—Father, Son, and Spirit—with every work of God from eternity past to eternity future. They're fully united, interdependent, inseparable, involved in every work. All three were involved in creation, incarnation, atonement, resurrection. That's the bigger picture.

I want to highlight in the context of the big picture that Jesus Himself is the Firstborn from the dead. He's the pledge and the source of resurrected power, and the preeminent heir over everything pertaining to the resurrection.

Paragraph G. Number two under paragraph G. Not only is Jesus the Firstborn from the dead; He's over the realm of the resurrection and He's the Firstborn over creation. He's over all the natural creation and the new creation both. He beckons us to join Him in partnership. We will be priests and kings, and we will reign with Him forever. In chapter 1:6, our destiny is connected to who He is, in the grandeur of the Man who was the Firstborn from the dead. We're raised from the dead, and we're kings and priests with resurrected bodies forever under His leadership. We owe it to the source of His goodness and His power.

### **JESUS WILL RULE OVER THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE EARTH FOREVER**

The third and final point. Jesus is not only over the realm of truth, the First and the Last; not only is He the First and the Last related to the realm of the resurrection. He's also the First and the Last related to the eternal government of the earth. This is the third category in chapter 1:5. They're all expressions of Him as First and Last. These three are all summaries together—you have to bring them all together—of who Jesus is in the book of Revelation. Read Revelation 1:5-7; we need all three of those together. I want to say it again: Jesus is the Captain of our salvation. I want to charge you to give yourself to long and loving meditation on who this Man is. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you with clarity. I mean, I would take months and years on those three verses, over and over. I don't mean that's the only thing you read, but you stay with it. Don't let go of it.

You say, "Lord how big is this?" The mountain range of these three verses is worth an entire life of investing ourselves into Him. Let's read chapter 1:5-6. Jesus is the Ruler over the kings of the earth. He's over the realm of the eternal government of the earth as a Man. He's the Ruler over the kings of the earth. Watch where this is going: He determined that the Father would have dominion. That's a very significant phrase. The Father only talks twice in the book of Revelation. In Revelation 1:8 and 21:3, both of the times when the Father speaks, He mentions that He wants to come and take over the earth. He's coming to the earth. That's how big this realm of truth is. Jesus is locked into this idea that the Father would have dominion on the earth.

### **"BEHOLD, THE TABERNACLE OF GOD IS WITH MEN"**

The seraphim around the throne in Revelation 4:8, the living creatures, cry out, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come" (Rev. 4:8)! That means He's to come to the earth. The seraphim, night and day forever, proclaim that the Father is to come. He's coming to the earth. He's coming to the earth. They never, ever cease to give witness to that truth around the throne.

The Father promises to set up His tabernacle among human beings on the earth forever (Rev. 21:3). Here John incorporates this vast idea. The whole point in Jesus' focus is that the Father would have dominion with His people, through His people, on the earth forever, through voluntary love in relationship with His people, under Jesus' authority. Imagine the Father with full dominion. It's not just an arbitrary rule in a vacuum. It's a

dominion that's exercised through people under' Jesus leadership, through their voluntary love, and their voluntary submission and obedience. The Father's dominion is manifest through them.

That's where this thing is going. That's what our life is about. Psalm 89 said He would be the highest of the kings of the earth. John expands this promise to reveal that He will rule over all the kings of the earth. Psalm 89:27 says He will be the highest king. The Holy Spirit says to John, "Not only that; He will be the highest and all the kings will be under Him forever."

Top of page four. Most of this is familiar territory—at least conceptually. I'll be brief. Paragraph B. The theme of the book of Revelation is the kingship of Jesus over all the earth.

Paragraph C. The Father decreed that all the nations would be His inheritance.

Paragraph D. In the Millennium, all the kings will worship Him.

Paragraph E. Daniel saw the vision of the Son of Man. All the nations will serve Him and obey Him.

Paragraph F. Jesus quotes Daniel 7, and He says, "I will come on a throne of glory. I will set it up in Jerusalem. All the nations will come to Me" (Mt. 25:31; cf. Dan. 7:13-14).

Paragraph G. One of the high points of Scripture concerning Jesus' human destiny in the age to come. All the power, the riches, the wisdom, the strength, the honor, the glory, the blessing, all of it will be His and openly seen for all the world to see throughout the entire millennial kingdom. All the power, all the governmental authority will be under one Man. All the wealth and natural resources will be under His leadership in the Millennium. All the wisdom and insight; all the strength; all the glory of every human being in the nation; all the honor and blessing. Every single government will bless His policies and fully cooperate with His leadership. That's where He's going. That's what His destiny is. He's the Ruler of the kings of the earth. At the end of the Millennium, the Father comes and all the nations are brought under Jesus' leadership. Jesus offers a submitted world and globe to the Father. Then Jesus submits Himself to the Father and says, "Father, I did it so that You would be all in all; so that You would have dominion over all things. That's why I came and obeyed. I wanted Your dominion to supersede Mine" (1 Cor. 15:28). I don't have that on the notes.

### **AGREEING, ASKING FOR REVELATION, AND KEEPING THE PROPHECY**

Roman numeral VI. How do you respond? It's the acronym I give each session: A-R-K. A, agree with Him. Be prepared to journal, whether you're typing it or writing it. I always have a notebook or a pad there—not always, but normally.

We simply agree. We say simple things like, "Jesus, You're the Faithful Witness. I love You. Thank You that You're the Faithful Witness."

Beloved, do you regularly declare that to Him? If you do, the Spirit will give you more. Even in your own mouth, while you're saying it, you'll say some other phrases, and the Spirit will be teaching you about it. Take time to say to Jesus, "You're the Faithful Witness," with adoration and gratitude. "You're the Firstborn. I rejoice in Your prominence and Your preeminence. You're the Ruler over the kings of the earth. All the kings of the earth will bow before You. I love Your greatness." Just make simple declarations. If all this is a sermon

and a handout and it never gets in your mouth and in your conversation with God, these truths will never move you. They'll just be verses you underline in your Bible, before you move on to other things. These phrases must get in your mouth, in your conversation with the Lord. Just say to Him, "You're the Faithful Witness." A few phrases will come as you say it.

R: "Lord, reveal Yourself to me as the Faithful Witness. Show me Your glory as the Firstborn from the dead."

It might be you've never asked Him to show you Himself as the Firstborn from the dead. I have this idea that many believers go their entire life and they've never asked Him once to show Himself as the Firstborn from the dead. It's the most glorious aspect of His human destiny. Our human destiny is related to it. We need to ask Him, "Show us the meaning of this vast mountain of truth and glory."

Paragraph D. K: Keep the prophecy. Respond to it. I like to say phrases like, "Lord, I want to be a faithful witness. I want to stand for truth like You did." Or, "You're the Ruler over the kings of the earth. I acknowledge Your kingship over my time, my money. I acknowledge Your kingship over my appetite, over my relationships. You're the King; I acknowledge that. I want to obey You. Help me to obey You, O great Ruler over the kings of the earth." Amen.