

3/9-15#38 Christ Having the Keys of Death and Hades: I. "I am the First and the Last and the living One" (Rev. 1:17b-18a):**A** Christ's being the First and the Last implies that He will accomplish what He has begun. **B** The Lord Jesus is not only the First but also the Beginning, and not only the Last but also the End. **Rev. 22:13** I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.**1** The First indicates that none is before Him, and the Last that none is after Him. **2** The Beginning indicates that He is the origination of all things, and the End that He is the consummation of all things. **3** The indication here is not only that there is nothing before or after the Lord Jesus but also that there is no origination or consummation without Him. **C** Christ is not only the First and the Last but also the Beginning and the End; this assures us that having started the church life, He will surely accomplish it: **1** The Lord Jesus will never leave His work unfinished. **2** All the local churches must believe that the Lord Jesus is the Beginning and the End. **3** He will accomplish what He has begun in His recovery. **D** The Christ who walks in the midst of the churches, who is the Head of the churches and to whom the churches belong, is the living One; hence, the churches also, as the expression of the Body, should be living, fresh, and strong. **II.** "I became dead, and behold, I am living forever and ever" (Rev. 1:18a): **A** The Lord suffered death and lived again. **Rev. 2:8** And to the messenger of the church in Smyrna write: These things says the First and the Last, who became dead and lived again:**B** Christ entered into death, but death could not hold Him, because He is the resurrection. **Acts. 2:24** Whom God has raised up, having loosed the pangs of death, since it was not possible for Him to be held by it.**C** Resurrection is the lengthening of the Lord's days; He will exist forever and ever in His resurrection: **1** Jesus Christ today is the living One, the One who is in resurrection. **2** For Christ to dispense life, He must be the living One. **D** The importance of Christ's being the living One is that He is living forever and is living in us: **1** He wants us to leave every kind of death and rise up to be the living church. **2** The more living we are, the more we are the testimony of the living Jesus. **III.** "In which also He [Christ] went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison" (1Pet. 3:19):**1**Pet. 3:18 For Christ ... being put to death in the flesh, but on the other, made alive in the Spirit; **19** In which also He went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, **20** Who had formerly disobeyed when the

long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah,...**A** The spirits here refers not to the disembodied spirits of dead human beings held in Hades but to the angels (angels are spirits) who fell through disobedience at Noah's time and are imprisoned in pits of gloom, awaiting the judgment of the great day. **B** After His death in the flesh, Christ in His living Spirit as His divinity went to the abyss to these rebellious angels to proclaim God's victory, accomplished through His incarnation in Christ and Christ's death in the flesh, over Satan's scheme to derange the divine plan. **C** Prison refers to Tartarus, the deep and gloomy pits, where the fallen angels are kept. **IV.** "I saw a star out of heaven fallen to the earth, and to him was given the key of the pit of the abyss" (Rev.9:1):**Rev.9:2** And he opened the pit of the abyss, and smoke went up out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit. **A** The star in Revelation 9:1 refers to Satan, who will be cast down from heaven to earth: **1** The angels are likened to stars. **2** Satan, as the archangel, was the Daystar. **B** "Who will descend into the abyss?" that is, to bring Christ up from the dead" (Rom.10:7):**1** In Greek the word rendered as "abyss" is abyssos. **2** This word is used in Luke 8:31 in reference to the dwelling place of the demons. **Luke8:31** And they entreated Him not to order them to depart into the abyss. **3** It also occurs in Revelation 9:1-2 and 11 to denote the place out of which the "locusts," whose king is Apollyon, will come. **Rev.9:11** They have a king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon; and in Greek he has the name Apollyon. **4** In Revelation 11:7 and 17:8 it signifies the place out of which the beast, which is the Antichrist, will ascend. **Rev.11:7** And when they have completed their testimony, the beast who comes up out of the abyss will make war with them and will overcome them and kill them. **17:8** The beast that you saw was and is not and is about to come up out of the abyss and go into perdition. And those who dwell on the earth, those whose names are not written from the foundation of the world in the book of life, will marvel when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will be present. **5** In Revelation 20:1 and 3 it specifies the place into which Satan will be cast and imprisoned during the millennium. **Rev.20:1** And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. **3** And cast him into the abyss and shut *it* and sealed *it* over him, that

he might not deceive the nations any longer until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be loosed for a little while. **6** In Romans 10:7 abyss points to the place Christ visited after His death and before His resurrection, which place, according to Acts 2:24 and 27, is Hades, for Acts 2:24 and 27 reveal that Christ went into Hades after He died and rose from that place in His resurrection. Act.2:27 Because You will not abandon my soul to Hades, nor will You permit Your Holy One to see corruption. **7** According to biblical usage, the word abyss always refers to the region of death and of Satan's power of darkness into which Christ after His death descended as into the lower parts of the earth (Eph. 4:9), which He conquered, and from which He ascended in His resurrection. **V. In Revelation 1:18b the Lord Jesus says, "I have the keys of death and of Hades":** **A** Due to the fall and the sin of man, death has come in and is now operating on earth to collect all sinful people and to bring them to Hades, the place where the dead are kept. **B** In the church life, however, we are no longer subject to death and Hades. Phil.3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, **11** If perhaps I may attain to the out-resurrection from the dead. **C** Christ abolished death on the cross, and He overcame Hades in His resurrection: **1** Although death tried its best to hold Christ, it was powerless to do so. **2** Christ is both God and resurrection, possessing the indestructible life. **3** Because He is such an ever-living One, death is not able to hold Him. **4** Christ delivered Himself to death, but death had no way to detain Him; instead, death was defeated by Him, and He rose up from it. **5** With Christ, therefore, death has no sting, and Hades has no power. **D** Because Christ is the One in the church who is the Holder of the keys of death and Hades, death and Hades should not have any power over us. **E** In the church life the keys of death and Hades are in the Lord's hand. **F** It is impossible for us to deal with death: **1** We simply do not have the ability to handle it. **2** Whenever death enters, many will be overcome by it. **G** If we give the Lord Jesus the ground, the opportunity, and the free way to move and act among us, both death and Hades will be under His control: Matt.16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. Rev.20:14 And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire.

This is the second death, the lake of fire. **1** When the Lord Jesus does not have the ground in the church, death immediately becomes prevailing, and Hades becomes powerful to hold the dead ones. **2** It is crucial for us to see that Christ has the keys, the authority, of death and Hades. **3** Death is subject to Him, and Hades is under His control. **H** We should praise the Lord that Christ has the keys of death and of Hades. **Testimony** When I first began working at a company, I was often attacked by death and Hades with thoughts like these: "You must work overtime like everyone else and join the drinking parties after work; otherwise, you will lose your job." "This company is not the church. Your president, supervisors, and coworkers are all unbelievers. This is my (Satan's) kingdom. You have no choice but to follow the people of the world and obey me (Satan)." Whenever I heard such speaking from death and Hades, my inward being became dark, and I felt controlled by death. After experiencing this kind of darkness and death many times, one day in my fellowship with the Lord I realized the following: ***"These thoughts may appear to be reality, but in fact they are Satan's deceptive schemes. I do not need to consider Satan's words at all. I do not even need to talk with him. I have been called into the fellowship of the Son of God, Jesus Christ. In the Lord I command Satan: Devil, get away from me!"*** At that moment I remembered Romans 8:5–6: For those who are according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but those who are according to the spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace. A footnote on verse 6 says that "When we are minding the flesh and setting our mind on the things of the flesh, the sense of death should serve as a warning to us, urging us to be delivered from the flesh and to live in the spirit." After that, whenever Satan tried to threaten me and make me feel dark, I prayed like this: ***"The flesh is a meeting place of Satan, sin, and death. If I converse with Satan in my mind, the result is always death. But I repent, turn my mind to the spirit, set my mind on the spirit, and use the Word to converse with the Lord."*** Through such prayers, I experienced being released in the Lord from the power of death and Hades. Furthermore, after this experience, in my business life I was able to break through various obstacles in the Lord and go forward strongly.