

## **CHRIST IS RISEN WITH THE KEYS**

Matthew 27: 62-28:10, John 20: 11-17, and Revelation 1: 17-18

Pastor Richard P. Carlson

Dearly beloved, today we see the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord as the day in history when sin and death were conquered. Jesus conquered evil, sin, shame, death, hell and destruction, so that we can lift up our heads and be bold and free as we await His soon return. Last night, in the night, and this morning I have been singing Chris Tomlin's song, "Jesus Messiah," based on II Corinthians 5: 21. "He became sin who knew no sin, that we might become His righteousness; He humbled Himself and carried the cross. Love so amazing (2X) His body the bread, His blood the wine, broken and poured out all for love. The whole earth trembled, and the veil was torn. Love so amazing (2X) Jesus Messiah, Name above all names, Blessed Redeemer, Emmanuel, the Rescue for sinners, the Ransom from heaven, Jesus Messiah, Lord of all. He is the Lord not only over sin, but over our shame, as Adam and Eve felt that shame the moment they sinned. He was stripped of his clothing at Calvary, and in shame He died in our place—Hebrews 12: 2, enduring the cross, despising the shame, which was our shame. The Lamb did it!

When I think of Resurrection Sunday morning, it seems the picture is totally hopeless. Jesus' body was laying in a cold stone tomb and soldiers were guarding a dead man whose face was more marred than any other man. The dead man's heart had burst into. His disciples were huddled in a room in fear and hopelessness. His women followers were bringing spices to anoint His dead body, but they needed someone to roll away the stone from the entrance of the tomb. Every human dream seemed wasted. Jesus' betrayer, Judas, after betraying innocent blood, in remorse, hung himself and fell headlong into a field called the Field of Blood, Hakeldama, where his bowels gushed out. Where was Satan early on Resurrection morning? He must have been licking his chops, yelling "Checkmate." The chessboard on that morning, when the dew was still on the roses, was a guarded lifeless tomb.

Who would have dreamed there was one more move? Yet, as that first day of the week was dawning, there was a move! There was a great earthquake, and an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. The angel's appearance was like lightning, and his clothing was white as snow. In fear, the soldiers trembled and fell down like dead men. But the angel, seeing the women come to anoint Jesus dead body, said to them, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, as He said. Come, see the place where he lay." The Lion of the tribe of Judah rose alive.

What happened that morning? Our main text today in Revelation has the words of our risen Lord Jesus Christ, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades." There are many popular views that speak of Jesus paying the devil the purchase price of our souls in Hades, and by Jesus taking back the keys stolen in the Garden of Eden, by paying for them with His blood. God truly has shrouded the death of Jesus from 3 PM on Friday until Sunday morning. What happened in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea from Friday afternoon until Sunday morning?

Some believe when Jesus died, He went to Hades and seized the devil and took back the keys of death and hell that Satan had stolen, before He arose triumphant Sunday morning. But I must remind us, beloved, that nowhere in Scripture are we told that Jesus lost the keys of Death and Hades. I submit to you today that Satan was foolish to ever think he could yell “Checkmate” to our Lord. God has always had the keys and He will ever have the keys to Death and Hades. This week I have approached this subject with awe, aware of the views many have about what happened while Jesus was dead in the tomb. I come today to proclaim to you that Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. He is risen with the keys of Death and Hades. Let’s examine three resurrection certainties about Jesus who is risen with the keys.

**JESUS HAS THE KEYS, HE’S ALWAYS HAD THE KEYS, AND HE’LL ALWAYS HAVE THE KEYS OF DEATH AND HADES.** (1.) Hebrews 13: 5.

Revelation 1: 17-18, says, “Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.” Look at who Jesus is! Rev. 1: 8 says, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.” Rev. 21: 6, says, “And He said, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning, and the end.” In Rev. 22: 12-13, we read, “Behold, I am coming soon, bringing My recompense with Me, to repay everyone for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.” Jesus is the Almighty, He was, He is, and He is to come. How do we know Jesus never lost the keys?

**The character of Jesus tells us He never lost the keys.** (1) Isaiah 22: 22, speaks of Eliakim having the key of David, when he became chief steward of the royal household, holding the keys of power. Isaiah said, “I will place on His shoulder the key of the house of David. He shall open, and none shall shut; and He shall shut, and none shall open.” Jesus takes this prophetic utterance of Isaiah and applies it to Himself in Rev. 3: 7 in His words to the Philadelphia church. We read, “The words of the Holy One, the true One, who has the key of David, who opens, and no one will shut, and who shuts, and no one opens. Christ, the Messiah, the root of David, (Rev. 22: 16) is the Answer in Rev. 5: 2, 5 when the question was asked, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? John started weeping loudly, because no one was found worthy, until one of the elders said to him, “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.” The character of the Almighty, of Jesus, is clear! He never lets go of what He has a hold of. Jesus said, in John 10: 28-30, “I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.”

**The words of Jesus tell us He never ever lost the keys of Death and Hades.** (2)

Jesus told us in Matthew 10: 28, “And do not fear those who kill the body and cannot kill the soul. Rather fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” Satan does not ultimately control the power of death. Remember the book of Job. Satan asked God to put forth His hand and to touch all Job had. Satan said Job would curse Him to His face. Then the Lord said to Satan, (Job 1: 12) “Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand.” Again,

in Job 2: 6, God said to Satan, “Behold, he is in your hand; only spare his life.” Who had the keys in Job’s life? God had them, and He’s never lost them. Hebrews 9: 27 tells us, “It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment.” Who makes the appointment for death? It’s not the angel of death. It is the Lord. Only God with the keys makes that appointment in our lives. In Exodus 12: 29 we read, “At midnight, the Lord struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt. Yes, first of all remember, Jesus has the keys, He’s had the keys, and He’ll always have the keys of Death and Hades. Turn to Hebrews 2: 8-15. Secondly,

### **JESUS HAS SOVEREIGN DOMINION IN THE KEYS OF DEATH AND**

**HADES.** (II.) These keys are the divine symbol of God’s authority and dominion, just as we speak of a city honoring a celebrity coming to their city. See Matthew 28: 18. I remember when Bob Harrison, once a Billy Graham evangelist, came to speak at our Sweetwater County Fairgrounds in 1994. Mayor Oblock sent a councilman to the crusade who publicly gave Bob Harrison the keys to the city of Rock Springs. Bob told me it was the 28th city where he was given the keys to the city across America. Mayor Paul Oblock paid Bob Harrison a high honor, but that huge key Bob was given didn’t fit any lock or open any doors at City Hall. When God gives a divine symbol, it always represents divine realities. David spoke in Psalm 9: 3, saying to God, “You lift me up from the gates of death.” We have seen many loved ones and friends hovering at the gates of death. David said to God, “O You who lift me up from the gates of death.” The Lord has the keys of Death. In Psalm 107: 28-30 we read, “They drew near to the gates of death. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them from their distress. He sent His word and healed them, and delivered them from their destruction.” David tells us in Psalm 23: 4, “Even though I walk thru the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me.” When we come close to death, in the valley of its shadow, whether we live or die, we as God’s born-again children belong to Jesus. We never walk alone. We walk with the King who has the keys of Death.

Do you remember Isaiah telling king Hezekiah he was on his death bed in Isaiah 38: 10, and he should set his house in order? Hezekiah prayed and cried out to Him, “In the middle of my days, I must depart; I am consigned to the gates of Sheol for the rest of my years.” Hezekiah wept bitterly. Beloved, the One with the keys, the One who never lost them when Adam and Eve sinned, the Lord heard Hezekiah and told Isaiah to go back and tell the king, “Thus says the Lord; the God of David, your father: I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Behold, I will add fifteen years to your life.” Jesus has full authority over death. Satan comes to steal, kill, and destroy, we read in John 10: 10, but Jesus, the One with the keys said, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” Jesus has the keys.

But what about the keys of Hades? What does it mean to have dominion and authority over Hades? Well, what is and where is Hades? Is Hades the same as hell? In the case of unbelievers, the issue is about the same. But there is a difference. The Greek translation of the Hebrew word Sheol is Hades. It generally means the abode of the departed in Old Testament times and in Jesus’ day. It spoke of an intermediate abode of the departed between death and the resurrection. Sheol or Hades was divided into two parts, the abode of the blest, who believed God by

faith and thus they sacrificed and the abode of the lost and damned. Sometimes Sheol or Hades in scripture means the grave. But the word Hades literally means unseen, the place of departed souls. If you have the King James Version, the translators translated two Greek words as hell, Gehenna and Hades. In Acts 2: 27, Peter on Pentecost spoke with David's words from Psalm 16: 8-11, saying, "For You will not abandon My soul (speaking of Messiah Jesus) to Sheol/Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption." The Bible never says Jesus went to Gehenna at death. The Greek word, Gehenna, means valley of the son of Hinnom—the place or state of everlasting punishment-hell or hell fire. Paul wrote in Ephesians 4: 9 that Jesus is the One who not only ascended, but also who descended into the lower parts of the earth. This is not a place to be dogmatic, but do you remember what Jesus said to the believing thief on the cross in Luke 23:43. He said, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise. We know that Jesus wasn't speaking about heaven, because Jesus said to Mary Magdalene, in John 20: 17, "Don't touch Me, stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Jesus had not yet been to heaven at that time after He arose early that morning. So, where was, this Paradise Jesus spoke of in Luke? At the time of Jesus' death, the only teaching we have about Sheol, or Hades is found in Luke 16: 22-26.

In Jesus' day, before His death, burial, and resurrection, there was one place of the departed souls and spirits—Hebrew was Sheol and Greek Hades. Between the believing righteous and the unbelieving, unrighteous was a great gulf, the righteous being comforted, as Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, while the unbelieving rich man was in flames, in torment. Jesus told the believing thief on the cross he would that day be with Him in Paradise, where were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (Eph. 4: 8) When Jesus ascended after He arose, He led captive a host of captives. Where is Paradise now? Paul said in II Cor. 12: 2-4 it was the place where Paul was caught up to, where he saw things which man cannot utter. At Christ's rising, with the keys of Death and Hades, Jesus made it possible for all who die in the Lord, to no longer go to the comforting part of Sheol or Hades—but straight to Glory to be with Him. Paul wrote in II Cor. 5: 8 that at death, we are absent from the body, present, or at home with the Lord. What are the keys of Hades for the unbelieving?

The keys Jesus has, keep the unbelieving in torment until the second resurrection, to stand at the Great White Throne, to be cast into Gehenna, Hell, the Lake of Fire. For the redeemed, Jesus with the keys of Death and Hades. He tells us in I Cor. 15: 23 that His resurrection is the first-fruits of those who sleep in Jesus. Paul tells us in Romans 6: 5, "For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be like Him in the likeness of His resurrection." Jesus has the keys. A. W. Criswell preached, "These who would not bow in His presence in this life, would not confess Him in this life, would not own Him as Savior and Lord in this life, in the life to come, shall bow in terror and in abysmal, abject horror. There are no infidels in hell. The moment a man dies, he ceases being an agnostic, or an infidel, or an unbeliever. They all believe in hell and bow down, confessing the lordship and the sovereignty of Jesus Christ. But the key has been turned. And when once the day of grace is taken away from a man, that key is turned forever and forever. You don't ever unbar or withdraw the lock and the gate and the door of hell, and damnation, and perdition." Charles Haddon Spurgeon, on

Oct. 3rd, 1869, said, "As for His saints, it is our consolation that our death is entirely in His hands. In the midst of fever and pestilence, we shall never die until He wills it; in the times of the greatest healthiness, when all the air is balm, we shall not live a second longer than Jesus has purposed; the place, the circumstance, the exact second of our departure, have all been appointed by Him, and settled long ago in love and wisdom. This is our comfort. We are "immortal till our work is done... Let us never fear death, then, but rather rejoice at the approach of it, since it comes at our dear Bridegroom's bidding." Jesus holds the keys! Thirdly, and lastly,

**JESUS PAID THE ENTIRE PRICE OF SIN AT CALVARY AND HAS ALWAYS POSSESSED THE KEYS OF DEATH AND HADES.** (III.)

Many people say Jesus had one more task after Calvary, to descend into the lower parts of the earth to take the keys of Death and Hades from the devil. In John 19: 30, Jesus said, "It is finished!" The price for our sins was paid in full! Where those keys were was never in doubt as Jesus died, after saying, "Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit." The Living One who was dead, is alive forevermore, He not only has the keys; He is the Key, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. On resurrection Sunday, between the time when Jesus said, "I have not yet ascended to My Father, and later, when He walked into the room of His fearful disciples, the doors being shut, John 20: 19, showing them His hands and feet and side, something happened. The One with the keys led captivity captive. He took every Old Testament soul and spirit who trusted in Him, and the thief on the cross to His new Paradise, where all our saved loved ones have gone to join them. There, our departed loved ones, are waiting as we are, for the Rapture of the Church, when the dead in Christ will rise first, with new bodies like unto His glorious body. As the dead in Christ rise first, then, we who are alive and remain until His coming, will be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Charles Haddon Spurgeon summed it up saying, "Jesus Christ went into the world of separated spirits, but not into the region of the damned. Well, it is not for us to speak where Scripture is silent, but why may it not be true... the Great Conqueror cast the shadow of His presence over the dens of His enemies as He passed in triumph by the gates of hell? May not the keepers of that infernal gate have seen his star, and trembled as they also beheld their master like lightning fall from heaven? Would it not add to Christ's glory if those who were his implacable foes were made to know of his complete triumph? At any rate, it was but a passing presence, for we know that swiftly Jesus sped to the gates of heaven, taking with Him the repentant thief to be with Him that day in Paradise. Jesus had opened thus the grave by going into it, hell by passing by it, heaven by passing into it, heaven again by passing out of it, death again by rising from it into this world, and heaven by His ascension. Thus passing, and repassing, He has proved that the keys are at His girdle. At any rate, by His achievements, by His doings, He has won for Himself the power of the keys." The devil tempted Jesus to give Him all the kingdoms of the world, if only Jesus would worship him, the devil never had them to give to Jesus. Jesus said, "Satan, be gone. You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve." (Matthew 4: 7-10) The Lamb of God arose in glory with the keys of Death and Hades in His hand. Listen to the words of a brand-new song by Austin Stone Worship, released on March 5, 2021, "Something Greater."

# SOMETHING GREATER – AUSTIN STONE WORSHIP WITH AARON, BRENT, AND ALEX, RELEASED MARCH 5, 2021

[Verse 1]

Beneath the broken shadow Where sin and death did reign The King of glory left his throne aside  
The clouds of heaven opened and mercy fell like rain To bring the darkened past a future bright

[Pre-Chorus]

Something greater, something greater has come

[Verse 2]

Upon the cross of sorrow The cup of wrath ran dry The dying Savior drinking every drop  
The sting of death accepted, the final breath of love Our greatest gain was heaven's greatest loss

[Pre-Chorus]

Something greater, something greater has come  
Yeah, something greater, something greater has come

[Chorus]

You are greater, greater Than anything I've known or seen You're stronger, stronger than the grave that  
once held me Your love is deeper and wider In the highest place be lifted higher still Oh You have and  
always will Be something greater, whoa oh oh Something greater, whoa oh oh

[Verse 3]

The silence there was broken On the third day in the tomb As the Savior's heart began to pulse again  
Then the Lamb arose in glory with fire in His eyes And the keys of death and Hades in His hand  
Now the kingdom of darkness will not stand For the King of kings has died and rose again

[Chorus]

You are greater, greater Than anything I've known or seen You're stronger, stronger Than the grave that  
once held me Your love is deeper and wider In the highest place be lifted higher still Oh You have and  
always will Be something greater

[Bridge]

The mourner's gonna dance, the blind are gonna see The lame is gonna run, the sinner's gonna sing  
The mourner's gonna dance, the blind are gonna see The lame is gonna run, the sinner's gonna sing  
Because Jesus is alive, He's won the victory So let the prodigal come home, let the captive be set free  
The kingdom's gonna come and the church is gonna sing Because Jesus is alive and He's won the  
victory

[Refrain]

You are greater, greater than anything I've known or seen  
You're stronger, stronger than the grave that once held me

[Chorus]

Yes, You are greater, greater Than anything I've known or seen You're stronger, stronger than the grave  
that once held me Your love is deeper and wider In the highest place be lifted higher still Oh You have  
and always will Be something greater, whoa oh oh Something greater, whoa oh oh

[Outro]

You're something greater, whoa oh oh  
Yes, You are, You are, whoa oh oh  
You're something greater