

## "The First and The Last"

Text:- Revelation 22: 13. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last".

Introduction:- Discouragement is the number one weapon of the adversary of our souls. Satan is ever seeking to convince the Christian that Christ is through and is no longer working in situations where the outward situations seem unfavorable.

The outward circumstances were quite unfavorable, when John the last of the apostles was banished on the lonely Isle of Patmos. Martyrdom had come to all the apostles, but one, which was John, and he was banished on a lonely isle of the seas. John's banishment was a part of a severe and determined persecution that was set upon blotting out the Christians completely.

A more discouraging situation could hardly be imagined than that which confronted the last remaining apostle. However, there came to John a glorious vision of Christ, in the midst of his trial and loneliness on the barren and desolate isle. He had a vision of seven golden candlesticks and of one stood in the midst like unto the Son of Man.

The one whom John saw was clothed with a garment down to his foot. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

John was overwhelmed with the majestic grandeur of the one whom he saw, "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, "Fear not: for I am the first and the last".

### I.

What John saw in the outward look was in direct contrast to what he saw in the inward look. The outward look was not bright, but the upward look was glorious. Christ's message to John was "Fear not". There is no need of fear when we have the

presence of Christ, with his strong arm beneath us. Christ can banish every fear, subdue every obstacle, and retrieve every defeat. Jesus, realizing that fear is the forerunner of defeat, exhorted his disciples on numerous occasions, not to be afraid. In connection with these exhortations he promised his abiding presence with his disciples even unto the end of the world.

Satan is ever endeavoring to persuade the Christian that God is through and is no longer working in the discouraging situation with which he may be confronted. Satan obtains the victory and the Christian goes down in defeat, the moment he listens to this delusion. God is never through and never quits working in our behalf so long as we remain in this life.

Christ is the Alpha and Omega. The beginning and the ending, the first and the last. It is not Satan but Christ who writes the last chapter for those who trust him. The last chapter had not been written for Job when his dire afflictions included the loss of his health, the loss of his children through death, the loss of his wife, or rather the favor of his wife, and the loss of all his earthly possessions. In the midst of all these things Job wavered not. He even praised God, saying, "The Lord hath given, and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord". There was yet another chapter and another day for Job, in which all of his former possessions were restored and even doubled in increase.

## II.

Christ offers himself as the first and the last in all of our personal problems and relationships. Christ holds the priority claim upon our lives because he is "the first". "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and in earth. ...And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." Christ created us. He staked us out. He was the first in relation to our very existence. No other one had such a claim upon us as Jesus Christ. He expressed his rightful claim when he

said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you".

### LII.

Christ can be the last in the victories and triumphs which he can bring to our lives, only as we make him first in our allegiance and consecration. When we make Christ first in our lives, he will always be "the last". He will write the last chapter in our behalf. He will speak the last word, and he will give us a crown of righteousness that fadeth not away. The faithfulness of Christ is a sure guarantee that he will never fail those who make him first in their devotion and consecration.

Christ was the first in the creation of the world and in the beginning of human history. He will be the last in the consummation of history and in the destiny of the world. It is not Satan who will be the center in placing the capstones of history. It is Christ who will come in the clouds when every eye shall see him and they that pierced him. It is Christ who shall descend from heaven with a shout and the authority of whose voice, like the sound of many waters, shall break open the graves and cause the dead to come forth with a new and resurrected body like unto his own glorious body.

Death and the grave are not the last, when our lives are anchored in Jesus Christ. Death cannot be the last, because Jesus conquered death, the king of terrors. Jesus said, "I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive forever more, and have the keys of hell and of death". Yes, Christ is the first and the last. The Alpha and Omega. Have you made him first in your life?