

Ephesians 15-01-11b

Let's pick up our study now on this 11th day of January in the year of our Lord 2015. In the fifth chapter of Ephesians we're looking specifically at Paul's use of the analogy to illustrate the function of authority in a marriage to the function of the authority of Jesus Christ for the church. But to really understand that, we need to be sure we've got a good grip on what the church is.

Is he only talking about the church universal? Is he including functions within local churches? What exactly does he mean? So we're looking at the term ekklesia, e-k-k-l-e-s-i-a, compound word, the preposition ek, e-k, out from. The klesia part comes from the verb kaleo, which means to call. And this word has a history that goes far earlier than the time of Christ.

You can see echoes of this, for example, in Acts chapter 19 and verse 39 where the old use of this word occurs. This is the whole Diana of the Ephesians controversy in the town of Ephesus, which our letter doesn't really directly address. But the crowd, all of the silver artisans, when Paul starts preaching Jesus, they say, well, you're cutting into our trade here because nobody's going to buy our idolatry stuff related to Diana.

And so the guy trying to quell the crowd says, the city clerk quiets the crowd. He says, men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple guardian of the great goddess Diana and of the image which fell down from Zeus? There's indications that this whole temple of Diana thing was centered around a meteorite that hit the earth and was invested with supernatural meaning by these pagan people. Therefore, these things cannot be denied.

You ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly for you have brought these men, Paul and his associates here, who are not robbers of temples nor blasphemers of your goddess. Therefore, if Demetrius and his fellow silversmiths, his fellow craftsmen, have a case against anyone, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another.

And if you have any other inquiry to make, it should be determined in the lawful assembly. It should be determined in the lawful ecclesia. Call together people who can make this determination, who can meet for this purpose.

Ecclesia, nothing to do with the worship of Jesus. This is the old use of the term and you find it still being used that way by secular Greeks. You remember when we talked about Ecclesiastes? We did our study of Ecclesiastes and the alternate name for that, the book's name in Hebrew, is Kohelet.

Remember that? They call it the preacher, but Kohelet comes from the verb kahal, which means to assemble. This is the one who calls people to assemble. Come and listen to my story, listen to my presentation.

Kahal. And the Septuagint translators regularly used ecclesia to translate the noun form of kahal, the congregation or assembly or community of Israel. And that's the sense that you find Stephen using it, as I mentioned earlier in Acts 7:38, when he says that Moses was in the congregation of Israel and the assembly of Israel, he says, the ecclesia of Israel.

And Stephen, of course, is in the church age. Pentecost has already happened. The apostles are already presenting church age truths in Acts chapter 7. So Jesus uses the term, as we saw in Matthew chapter 16 verse 18, Peter, this hasn't been revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father who is in heaven.

Simon Peter says, you are the Christ, you are the Mashiach. This is my question. I know it's kind of a, seems like a fine distinction or why bother, don't we all know what the church is? But think about this now.

Let's just start with what the Bible says. Who do you say that I am? Jesus asks his disciples. Simon Peter answers and says, you are the Christ.

You are the Messiah. Christos is the Greek translation of Mashiach. You are the Messiah, the son of the living God.

Jesus answers Peter and says, blessed are you Simon, son of Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. My Father in heaven has revealed this to you. This is a divine truth.

And I also say to you that you are Petros. I just got through calling you Simon bar Yonah, Simon son of the dove, but you are Petros now. You are Peter and on this rock, Petra, the confession of Jesus being the Messiah, the son of the living God, a truth that came from the Father in heaven.

I will build my ecclesia. I will build my church. Now this is in Matthew chapter 16.

Jesus hasn't given up on Israel. He hasn't stopped proclaiming the kingdom. He hasn't stopped preaching in and around the environs of the people of God.

It's a long time before the tragic entry. It's a long time before the crucifixion. And he says, I will build my church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. This truth has been revealed to you that I am the Christ by my Father in heaven. I will build my church on this confession, this truth that was revealed to you.

And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven so that whatever you bind on earth has been bound in heaven and whatever you loose on earth has been loosed in heaven. There is heaven. There is earth.

There are people on earth who need to be in the kingdom of heaven. But there is an obstacle. There is a gate, right? People on earth can't get into the kingdom of heaven.

It is shut in some fashion. Now, how do I know this? Jesus himself talks about it when he is talking to the disciples because there is a gate. If you have the keys of the kingdom of heaven, that implies that there is a locked gate that needs to be unlocked and opened.

In the same context, the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. So there are gates into the kingdom of heaven and there are gates into Hades. So do you see the picture that Jesus presents here? You are Peter.

On this rock, I am going to build my assembly. Where is the assembly? Where is the ecclesia? It is here on earth. You are going to get into whatever the ecclesia is as you are alive and are confronted with the confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And on the basis of that foundation, that rock, Jesus is going to build the ecclesia. You make the decision about that confession whether or not to accept it and adopt it here on earth. And based on that, on that foundation, there are gates through which you can go into the kingdom of heaven.

And Jesus says, I am going to give you those keys to unlock that door to the kingdom of heaven. Right? That is what he says. And the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.

So just imagine it. Have a little sort of spatial picture here. Here you are on earth confronted with the great confession.

You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. This is the foundation on which Jesus is going to build some kind of group called the ecclesia. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven, which seems to be defined by this ecclesia or to be synonymous with the ecclesia.

I am going to give you the keys so that you can get from here into the kingdom of heaven. I am going to build my church and it is going to be in the kingdom of heaven. It is the kingdom of heaven.

And the gates on the other side, the gates to Hades might be wanting to swing open and have everybody drop down to Hades. Those gates are not going to prevail against the kingdom of heaven to which I am giving you the keys, synonymous with my assembly. Make sense? Two sets of gates.

You have the kingdom of heaven. You have the gates to Hades. Apparently, this is a new group.

He says, I am going to build my assembly. So it is not something that already exists. He does not say, I am going to add to my assembly or I am going to enlarge my assembly or I am going to diversify my assembly.

He says, I am going to build it. He is going to build it from scratch. In the same way that God built Eve out of what he took out of Adam's side, Jesus says, I am going to build this assembly.

And it is going to have the kingdom of heaven open to it with the keys that I am going to give you. And the gates that go the other direction are not going to prevail against it. If you are in that ecclesia and the gates of the kingdom of heaven have been opened to you, then the other gates are not going to suck you through and take you to Hades.

Fairly clear, right? Well, this is highly illuminating because we have keys. And keys always mean doors or gates, something that grants or denies access. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven.

Notice, if I give you the keys and you open the gates, now the same conditions prevail. If it is bound down here, it is bound in heaven. If it is loosed in heaven, it is loosed down here.

There is no separation. The gate has been opened. It is now all one thing.

If you are in the ecclesia on earth, you are in the kingdom of heaven because the gate has been opened. The gate is unlocked. I have given you the keys so that it is unified.

Conditions are the same. Decisions are the same. Adjudications and declarations are the same.

If it is bound on earth, it has been bound in heaven. Whatever has been loosed in heaven is loosed on earth. I have given you the keys to unite these two realms.

The ecclesia now is a part of the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven is now a part of the ecclesia. Make sense? Well, this is an amazing thing because it all depends on noticing the keys and understanding what the keys are and what they do.

Now, it doesn't say anything about the keys to Hades, the keys to the gates of Hades. If you don't need the keys, what does that tell you about the gates? I got to work the other day, Monday. I had a rough weekend.

I got there without my badge and without my keys. Very unusual for me. I am usually very methodical.

I have a routine that keeps me from messing up because I can't really function on intellect in the mornings. So, I have a routine. My routine was disrupted and I got there no badge, no keys.

So, what does that mean? I don't have access. Now, usually on those rare occasions where I don't have my keys, my fellow worker has already gotten there ahead of me and the door is open. So, I don't need my keys.

Why would I not need a key? Door is not locked. Door is already open. Why would you not need

a gate key for Hades? Gates open.

How much trouble does anybody have going to Hades? Gates open, right? However, let's take a look at the concept of keys. This is the word kleis, K-L-E-I-S. Door in Greek is thura, T-H-U-R-A.

And to lock or open a door, you need kleis. In the ancient world, it was believed almost universally that heaven was closed off by doors, thura. And this by the way is coming from the theological dictionary of the New Testament under kleis.

I'm giving you pretty much what this article says. Deities or angelic beings disposed of the power of the keys to heaven. In Babylon, Shemash has the key to heaven in his left hand.

In Greece, you can trace back to the 7th century B.C. the notion that decay keeps the key. In Italy, Janus has the key, the god for which our current month is named. January comes from Janus.

Well, in ancient Roman mythology, Janus had the key to heaven. In Mithraism, Ion Kronos. And in Neoplatonic thought, Helios, the sun deity, had the key to heaven.

In some of the Judaistic writings, it's not in the Old Testament, but in some of the Mishneic and rabbinical writings, for example, 3rd Baruch, you have a reference to the angelic prince Michael. Michael, your prince, contending and so on in the book of Daniel. In 3rd Baruch, it says that Michael is the keeper of the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

That was Judaistic thought. In 3rd Enoch, the angelic prince Anaphiel. They have other angels beside Gabriel and Michael, Mikael.

They have Ariel and Anaphiel and a bunch of other ELs in that writing. And he is the keeper of keys to palaces in the seventh heaven. They've got another reference in 3rd Enoch that Metatron has been given the keys to all the treasure chambers of heaven.

So this is a...all I'm trying to get across here is that there was a common understanding that there were keys to heavenly realms floating around. So when Jesus says, I give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, this isn't a novel concept. It has been a mythological and an assumed context going back for centuries in the ancient world.

In Luke chapter 4, verse 25, we have an allusion back to the days of Elijah that we've recently studied where the heavens were shut up and there was no rain. And Jesus says in Luke 4, 25, I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah when the heaven was shut up three years and six months. These are the doors of heaven.

The windows of heaven are shut and locked. And the implied notion here is that God gave Elijah the key. At his prayer, the heavens are shut and at his prayer, the heavens are opened and the rain comes again.

Remember, it was triggered by...now who actually shuts and opens heaven and provides rain? Elijah doesn't have a rain machine. He is not a rain maker, but he has the key. It is his prayer that stops up the heavens and creates the drought and it is his prayer that God responds to and opens the windows of heaven and ends the drought.

So heaven was shut up three years and six months and there was a great famine through the land. This is an allusion to this idea of a key that was held by Elijah the prophet. So not only did you have this idea that there were keys to heaven, and this is where it gets interesting.

If you've been floating, here's where to grab a raft and come to shore. Not only were there keys to heaven, there were keys to the underworld. We just talked about the gates of Hades not prevailing.

The gates. If you have the keys to these underworld gates, you have the power over the underworld. You are some sort of a ruler of the underworld.

This is along the lines of Dante's Inferno. This is the whole notion even to the present day. People think that Satan is kind of the gatekeeper and the authority over the fiery realms of hell and you fall under his power and he's running a kingdom down in the fiery environment.

And again, you can have all kinds of examples from the Babylonians and the Greeks and others. But think about the book of Revelation. Revelation chapter nine, verse one, the fifth angel sounded.

These are the trumpet judgments. Remember that? Revelation chapter nine, the fifth angel sounded and I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him, to this star, i.e. this angel, this angelic authority, was given the key to the bottomless pit.

The key. You think it's a pit. Where's the door to the pit? Well, this is metaphorical language.

This is describing things that in their literal truth wouldn't be some big hole in the ground. But it's called the bottomless pit. It has got a gate.

It has got a lockable portal. And this fallen angel, this angel that descends, that falls from heaven like a star, is given the key to that pit in Revelation 9.1. It is mentioned again in Revelation 20, verse one. Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

Right? He lays hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan and binds him with the chain for a thousand years and casts him into the bottomless pit and shut him up. This is not keeping him from talking. This is locking him in and set a seal on him.

He cannot emerge and deceive the nations until a thousand years have elapsed. Revelation 20, verses one and two. An angel has the key to the bottomless pit and a chain.

He binds Satan. He puts him in the bottomless pit and he shuts him in. He locks the bottomless pit with the key that has been given to him.

Make sense? So far, so good. What does this got to do with the church? Why are we talking about the church? We're back to Matthew chapter 16. I give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

By whose authority do these keys function? Who grants the possession of these keys? The angel that comes from heaven is in heaven given this key, right? He is operating on instructions from God himself. This is delegated authority. Okay.

Now turn back in Revelation to chapter one, verse 18. John is in the spirit on the Lord's day and he hears behind him a loud voice. Revelation 1 10.

As of a trumpet, you got trumpets associated with the angel and the key. John hears a voice like a trumpet saying, I'm the alpha and omega, the first and the last. What you see right in a book and send it to the seven what? Churches.

These are clearly local assemblies. They are named by location. You're about to see some things.

You are to set them down in writing and give them to send them to these seven churches, Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and our target audience, Laodicea. I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. Having turned, saw the lampstands in the midst of the seven lampstands, one like the son of man, clothed with a garment down to the feet, girded about the chest with a golden band.

His head and hair were white like wool, white as snow. His eyes like a flame of fire. His feet were like fine brass, refined in the furnace.

Voice sounded many waters. Has in his right hand seven stars. Out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, countenance like the shining sun and strength.

I saw him. I felt as his feet as dead. He laid his right hand on me saying to me, do not be afraid.

I am the first and the last. I am he who lives and was dead. And behold, I am alive forevermore.

Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of death. Why this? I am the one who lives.

I was dead, but look, I am alive forevermore. I am alive never to be dead again. And I have the keys of Hades and of death.

Now, here's the thing that I learned this week that in all of my perambulations in the past I did not know, didn't figure out. Do you notice that Hades and death are capitalized? Why? Is it because

they are place names like you would capitalize Dallas or you would capitalize Chicago? Well, that doesn't work because the Bible doesn't capitalize heaven and it's a place, doesn't capitalize hell and that's a place. You can say, well, Hades, that comes from a proper name that's like Caesar or something.

Hades is a known god of the ancient Greek speaking cultures. But why is death capitalized? Here's why. These are personifications.

Jesus says, I have the keys belonging to the person Hades. I have the keys belonging to the person death. You say, how are you getting that out of this passage? Well, as we continue forward, first of all, grammatically speaking, this is not an objective genitive.

This is a genitive of possession. I have the keys belonging to Mr. Hades. I have the keys belonging to Mr. Death.

So these were keys formerly possessed by the mythical lords of the underworld, Mr. Hades and Mr. Thanatos. And it would really be better to use the Greek terms in both cases. They often translate Hades as hell and they'll translate Thanatos as death.

But Hades and Thanatos, these are the Greek names of the gods of the underworld as they were understood in Asia Minor. These letters are being written to assemblies in Asia Minor. And when you say, I have the keys of Hades, I have the keys of Thanatos, they see these with capital letters.

They see these as underworld authorities. Jesus says, I've taken their keys away. That's why I will never be dead again.

The gates of Hades, the gates belonging to Mr. Hades are not going to prevail against the church founded on the confession of Christ. The gates belonging to Mr. Hades that he formerly controlled are not going to prevail against the gates of the kingdom of heaven that I control, Jesus says. And I have given you the keys to my gates to the kingdom of heaven.

You see the contrast here? And because of this, death is no longer sovereign. Death is no longer an authority. Death no longer prevails.

Jesus uses the term keys in one other context I'll cover real quickly in Luke 11, 52, when he's giving the woes. Woe to you, scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites. Jesus announces this many times.

In Luke 11, 52, he says, woe to you, namakois. Namakois is the law. You law experts, you lawyers.

Now this would be the law of Moses. These who parse and tease and twist and try to get the law of Moses to justify all kinds of things. Woe to you, lawyers, we'll say, because you have taken away the keys of knowledge.

See that? 11, 52 of Luke. Woe to you, lawyers. You have taken away the key of knowledge.

You did not enter in yourself and you have hindered those who were entering, those who were going in. The key of knowledge. Knowledge of what? Entering into what? Not entering into knowledge, entering into the kingdom of heaven.

The key that is given to Peter, I give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. This is knowledge of who Christ is, acceptance of who Christ is. It is a key of knowledge.

The ones who should have been explaining that, communicating that knowledge so that the people of God could enter the kingdom of heaven, as Jesus talks about extensively in Matthew chapter 5 and following, the sermon, the Beatitudes, Sermon on the Mount. What does he talk about? Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth. Seeing the kingdom of heaven, entering the kingdom of heaven, he talks all about that.

How do you get there? It is by knowing the will of God so that you can do it. It is by knowing the promises of God so that you can believe them and lay hold of righteousness by faith. It is knowledge that is the key.

When Jesus says to Peter, I give you the keys, he's actually talking to the disciples, I give you the keys to the kingdom. And what you bind on earth has been bound in heaven. How do you know to bind it on earth? Because you know what has been bound in heaven.

What you loose on earth has been loosed in heaven. How can you loose something on earth? It is because you know the declaration of forgiveness. You know the declaration of freedom.

You know the declaration of redemption. You know the declaration of atonement. And because you know that and proclaim it, what you bind and loose on earth has already been bound and loosed in heaven and you're doing it on earth because you know what has been bound and loosed in heaven.

It has already been done. It is a key of knowledge. And for those who should know that, i.e., the scribes, the Pharisees, the teachers of the law, the lawyers, law experts, to have that knowledge and not act on it themselves and inhibit those who are trying to use knowledge to get into the kingdom, Jesus condemns them for that.

That's the key. The key is a key of knowledge. So, what we see here is that the key talks about a door.

Back to Revelation, Revelation 3, verse 7. As soon as I say Revelation 3, you think letters to the seven churches, right? That's Revelation 2 and 3. To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, this is Revelation 3, 7, these things says he who is holy, he who is true, he who has the key of David, he who opens and no one shuts, he who shuts and no one opens. The key of David.

This is a reference more or less directly to Isaiah chapter 22, verse 22, talking about the appointment of Eliakim as the royal treasurer.

We've been through this portion of Isaiah. It's been a while back. And verse 20, it says, it shall be in that day I will call my servant Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah.

I will clothe him with your robe. I will strengthen him with your belt. I will commit your responsibility into his hand.

He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. The key of the house of David, I will lay on his shoulder so he shall open and no one shall shut and he shall shut and no one shall open. I will fasten him as a peg in a secure place and he will become a glorious throne to his father's house.

This is a messianic prophecy. There was an actual Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, just like there was an actual king of Tyre in Isaiah 14 and in Ezekiel 28, but he is used to reflect higher truths, truths that pertain to the Messiah. He will have the key of the house of David.

And this is what Jesus says in Revelation chapter 3, verse 7, I have the key of David. I am he who shuts and no one opens. I am he who opens and no one shuts.

Make sense? How does this relate to our passage in Ephesians chapter 5? The opening and shutting of gates in a city was dictated by the authorities over that city. That could be delegated. It is by the king's authority that things are opened and shut, but he doesn't run around with the keys opening and shutting.

He hands the keys to somebody and says, I am putting you in charge and I want you to open what I tell you to open and I want you to shut what I tell you to shut, loosing what I have already decreed as loosed, binding what I have already decreed as bound. So now finally when you get to Revelation chapter 20 and turn there for our final thought this morning, all of this is going to bear directly on our understanding of Ephesians chapter 5. Let's talk about the great white throne judgment. Remember now where is the Ecclesia? It is here in the middle.

There are gates above to the kingdom of heaven to the final destination of the Ecclesia and there are gates of Hades going the other way, right? Mr. Hades, Mr. Death. Verse 11 of Revelation 20, I saw a great white throne and him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. From whose face, where is the kingdom of heaven? In heaven.

Where is the kingdom of Mr. Hades and Mr. Death? In earth. Him who sits on the throne, from his face the heaven and the earth flee away. I saw the dead small and great standing before God.

Books were opened. Another book was opened, that of life. The dead were judged according to their works by the things which were written in the books.

The sea gave up the dead who were in it and capital D Death, Mr. Death and Mr. Hades. Did Jesus not say he had the keys? He has taken the keys from these guys. So they must now give up what they formerly had secured with their keys.

Mr. Death has to give up what was behind his gates. Mr. Hades has to give up what was behind his gates. That's why they are capitalized.

And those who were secured behind those doors, behind those gates are judged according to their works, each one. Then verse 14, Mr. Death and Mr. Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second and final death.

There will be no more death because Mr. Death has been cast into the lake of fire. There will be no more Hades or anybody under the power of Mr. Hades because he has been cast into the lake of fire. Now, the book of Revelation is metaphorical.

Am I saying that this is a literal demon with the name Mr. Hades or another demon with the name Mr. Thanatos? These are concepts that have been personified. These are personifications. These are simplifications.

These are illustrations communicating a deeper truth. I don't have time this morning to go into the distinction. Why would you be behind one gate or another? What is the difference between that? But the keys that Jesus states that he possesses because he is alive forever more at the beginning of the book have been permanently taken away from these guys at the end of the book.

It is a realm. It is a realm of authority. It is a realm of fate determination.

God reserves that power and pulls that power back to himself, Jesus Christ. God has allowed Mr. Hades and Mr. Thanatos to have these keys, right? But the Lord Jesus Christ in his work on the cross, in his resurrection and his life forever more has taken away those keys. They were granted for a time.

They are taken away. Satan has been made the God of this earth for a time. He has been granted an authority on this earth for a time but that authority is removed from him at this time and taken away.

It is all about authority. It is all about when God grants it and when God removes it. So when you talk about the ecclesia, whether you are talking about the local assembly or whether you are talking about the body of Christ at large in the local assembly, this is a group just as in the Greek world, a group that assembled for some purpose to adjudicate a dispute like in Acts.

It is a body that is governed by authority. There are city elders. There is a town council.

There is someone who calls everyone to order. There is a judge in the courtroom and that defines

that ecclesia. In a local church, it is not an equal democratic body.

It is a group that meets under authority, under authority delegated by God. The body of Christ at large in the general sense, the church general is that group defined by recognition of the authority of Jesus Christ. Assembled and brought together, he is the head of all things to the ecclesia, right? So the aspect, when we say church, we do not think, well that is that group that gets together and sings hymns or it is that group that all has Bibles and meets or it is everybody that believes in Jesus.

The aspect that is emphasized by the term ecclesia is this is a group defined by authority that is God's to grant. God has given the Lord Jesus Christ, believers in this age to be his body, to be his church and he is going to present to himself a glorious church, cleansed, unwrinkled, unspotted. The group is defined by that authority.

So when you come back to Ephesians chapter 5 and Paul uses the relationship between Christ and the church to illustrate and to amplify the relationship between husbands and wives, this is why and how he is doing it. And in that sense, we are not trying to draw a distinction between Israel and the church. Israel in the Old Testament day was also a group defined by authority.

Originally, it was a theocratic group and God was the direct authority. Later on, it was a monarchical group ruled by God's king. I have the key of David.

This is an Old Testament authority. The key of David does not pertain to you and me. The key of David is that royal authority that defines in the eternal time sense, the nation of Israel.

Yes, there were a thousand years worth of them that lived before David but in the resurrection, who are they ruled by? All of them raised and in the millennial kingdom, they are not ruled by Abraham, they are not ruled by Isaac, they are not ruled by Jacob. Resurrected Israel who passes under the rod and enters into the kingdom is ruled by whom? David, the house of David, the sons of David depending on which passage you look at, the son capital S of David. But it is defined by that ruling authority.

So in this context, it makes sense, doesn't it? And that authority is illustrated by these keys. There are gates to the kingdom and not everyone is allowed to enter. There are gates by the way in the New Jerusalem and not everyone is allowed to enter.

Jesus says there are keys. I have the keys to what was formerly ruled by Mr. Hades and Mr. Thanatos. I have taken their keys away.

So when it says O Thanatos, where is your sting? O Thanatos, where is your victory? Those are also capitalized. Why? It is that personification. Mr. Death, you don't have a victory.

Mr. Death, you don't have a sting. Your authority has been removed. We have that freedom in Jesus Christ.

We choose his authority and Paul will use this in other places to talk about why would you go back under that old law, that old authority. Why would you return? A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. When he dies, she is free.

Why would you go back under the law when you have been made free from the authority of the law and you are under a new authority? It is a consistent picture all the way through. Well next time when we return to Ephesians chapter 5 and we move through the remaining portions of this 10 verse section, with this as background, looking at the relationship between Christ and his body, as the head of the body, he has authority. Your brain controls what your body does.

He is the head of all things to the church. He has a loving, nurturing relationship with that over which he exercises authority. And that is part of the legitimate exercise of authority is to be a benefit to that which you rule.

The house of David is supposed to be beneficial to the kingdom. The husband is supposed to be beneficial to his wife. The father is supposed to be beneficial to his children.

The king is supposed to be beneficial to his subjects. It is a consistent picture all the way through. So not only in the past, but also in the future when you look at the book of Revelation, these concepts are lights that shine to help our understanding and help our motivation and our orientation to not only our present situation in handling authority, but also the future and what we can expect.

What has authority over us? Not death, not the grave, not the debilitating effects of sin in this creation, but the Lord Jesus Christ who has taken the power and the sting of those things away. He holds them in his hand and ultimately they are going to be not just confined, not just consigned to eternal conscious torment. Mr. Death and Mr. Hades are going away.

They are gone to function no more, to be no more, to have authority no more. And it is the same lake of fire that they are cast into that unbelievers are cast into. This is the foundation then for the new heaven and the new earth where the Lamb is the light.

Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the treasury of truth that we have in your word from Genesis to Revelation. We see the consistency and the self-interpretation, the contextual clues and illuminating descriptions and content that helps us to understand who we are, why we are here, and how we can best live our lives to please you.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will enliven these things in our hearts, help us to see their pertinence and their application as we seek to exercise authority and function under authority in all of the different spheres in which you have delegated it, so that in all things we can reflect our worship of you, our respect for your plan and purpose, and the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray these things in his name. Amen.

