

Dear Heavenly Father,

### **Praise**

Jesus said, “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” (Rev 1:17–18). Hallelujah! I praise you today for Jesus, the matchless, eternal Son of God. He died once-for-all, and you raised him from death to everlasting life. He has broken the power of Satan and redeemed the captives with his blood. Through him, I too, will live forever. Glory to God!

### **Today in Your Word**

Today you shared with me the first part of the revelation (*apokalypsis*) which you gave to Jesus “to show to his servants the things that must soon take place” (Rev 1:1). Jesus showed these things to the apostle John on the island of Patmos, and John wrote down what he saw and sent it to the seven churches in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey). As I read, I noticed that the one who reads, hears and keeps what is written in Revelation is blessed (Rev 1:3). This is the only book in the Bible that contains this unique promise, and it teaches me that instead of avoiding this part of Scripture, I should be studying and carefully obeying what it teaches. What struck me next was John’s vision of Jesus. John was privileged to see beyond the flesh and blood of Jesus’ resurrected body, and as on the mount of transfiguration, he was again an eyewitness of the true glory and majesty of the Son of God. Oh, that this vision would forever fill my heart and mind! Oh, that Jesus’ flaming eyes and shining face would always be before me, reminding me of the glory of my Savior and calling me to a life of faithful obedience! I follow in the steps of the One whose words are like a sharp two-edged sword, and he holds my life in his powerful right hand. Hallelujah! Jesus gave John a message for seven different churches, and his choice of these congregations was no accident. There were other churches, such as Corinth, Philippi and Berea, but Jesus chose these because what he said to them needed to be heard by everyone. The message to Ephesus teaches me that it’s possible to abandon the love I had when I first believed (Rev 2:4). When Jesus said, “Repent, and do the works you did at first” (Rev 2:5), he showed me that obedience is the heart and soul of love. If I’m no longer obeying your commands, then I’ve left my love for you. The message to Smyrna teaches me that the believer who is poor in this world’s wealth is rich in the glorious treasures of the next. There is a crown of life waiting for the one who will trust you and be faithful unto death. The message to Pergamum teaches me that each church will be held responsible for allowing false teaching in their midst. Believers have a duty to call false teachers to repentance, and if they refuse, to expel them from the congregation. The message to Thyatira teaches me that each church will be held responsible for tolerating moral compromise. Those who promote immorality and sexual indulgence must be confronted, and if they will not repent, they must be cut off from the church. The message to Sardis teaches me that it’s possible to have a godly reputation and yet be spiritually dead (Rev 3:1). The Spirit said, “Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead” (Jam 2:17), and Jesus commands me to show my faith by my works. The message to Philadelphia teaches me that it’s possible to live in such a way that you have *nothing* against me (they and Smyrna had no rebuke). My responsibility is to believe your Word and patiently endure the persecution of the world. If I do, you will keep me from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole earth (Rev 3:10). The message to Laodicea teaches me about the self-deception of “lukewarm” works (Rev 3:15–18). Such works have the appearance of faith but lack the obedience of love. If I’m neither hot nor cold, I’m in danger of being spewed out of your mouth!

### **Reflection**

Jesus said, “The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels” (Rev 3:5). This means that the one who does *not* conquer *will* be blotted out of the book of life (cf. Matt 10:32–33)! Am I taking Jesus’ words seriously? “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (Rev 3:6)!

### **Request**

Father, help me to hold fast what I have until Jesus comes (Rev 2:25). Fill my heart with a zeal for your Word, and help me to remember and keep what you have commanded.

### **Thanksgiving**

You told the Laodiceans: “Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline” (Rev 3:19). Thank you for your reproof and correction! It keeps me on the path of life and guards me from the snares of Satan.

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

*Suggested Hymn: “Onward, Upward” – Thomas Nelson.*

*Meditation Verse: Revelation 3:21.*