

## **Easter: The Meaning of the Scroll**

Revelation 5

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### **Prayer**

Help us to preach the Truth. In Jesus' name we ask it, Amen.

### **Message**

One Sunday, toward the end of the first century AD, an old man was in prayer in a Roman penal colony on the island of Patmos, in the Mediterranean Sea. He heard a voice—huge—like a trumpet and a waterfall all in one. It said, “Write what you see and send it to the seven churches. He turned to see the Word and saw a man with eyes of fire and a face that shone like the sun. Immediately, he fell down as if dead until Jesus bent down and touched him saying, “Don't be afraid, John, I am alive forever, I hold the keys of death and Hades.”

Because of the amazing content in the Gospel of John, and the Epistles of John, I believe that the John on the Island of Patmos was the very same John that wrote the Gospel and ran to the tomb on Easter morning. And now, decades later, it was Easter once again.

What John saw and wrote down, we now refer to as “The Revelation.” It is not titled “The Revelation of Tribulation For Those Left Behind in 2000 Years.” It's titled, “The Revelation of Jesus.” (In chapter 1 verse 9, John was already getting “tribulated.”)

The Revelation begins with seven letters (not to the seven churches) but to the seven angels of the seven churches. These seven little churches in Asia Minor were facing persecution, poverty, and the seductions of a wealthy pagan society.

After dictating the letters to the seven angels of the seven churches (in each of which there is a call to conquer) Jesus calls to John from a door in Heaven saying, “Come up here, and I will show you what must soon take place.”<sup>1</sup>

“Show you”—that's what John sees, the vision. The seven letters are to the seven spirits of God in the seven churches. But the vision is for the seven churches. And the vision is for us. It reveals how we conquer.<sup>2</sup>

In Revelation 4:1-2, Jesus says to John, “Come up here,” and at once John sees a throne and One seated on the throne.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Soon,” not what will take place in 2050 years, but soon. I think The Revelation is the Gospel according to Jesus. It's the conquest of Good News from the perspective of Heaven.

<sup>2</sup> John writes, “Blessed is the one who reads aloud and those who hear the words of the prophecy.” That's what John sees. They get blessed, and now you get blessed—even if my sermon stinks. Because we read aloud the words of the prophecy you get blessed!

<sup>3</sup> It is reminiscent of the Mercy Seat on the ark of the temple.

Over this throne, there is a rainbow, and around it twenty-four elders on twenty-four thrones. The twelve sons of Israel and the twelve disciples, which means that, very likely, John saw himself. Go figure!<sup>4</sup>

Lightning and thunder emanate from the throne. Before it, burn seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God. Four amazing creatures surround the throne. And everything seems to be constantly animated by music as it's a dance!

In Revelation 4:8b-11, John writes,

...and day and night they never cease to say,  
*"Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty,  
who was and is and is to come!"*

And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

*"Worthy are you, our Lord and God,  
to receive glory and honor and power,  
for you created all things,  
and by your will they existed and were created."*

His will must be His Word, for in seven days, with His Word, God created all things. We are talking about ALL THINGS!

Revelation 5:1-4

*Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?" And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.*

John weeps (actually wails) because no one is found worthy to open this scroll. John must've seen something like this:



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<sup>4</sup> Saint Paul said that we're already seated in the heavenly places with Christ.

It's in the strong right hand of God Himself, and it's sealed with seven seals. In that day, official documents were sealed with wax seals bearing official imprints in the wax, and when they were opened, the words of the scroll were enacted.

Some have speculated that the scroll is a "last will and testament" to those that inherit the Kingdom. Some speculate it's the Lamb's scroll or Book of Life, but that scroll is opened in chapter twenty. Some say it's the Bible or the rest of The Revelation. Maybe it's all that and more. I think it is "all things." Everyone is singing about God creating "all things," and the scroll is sealed with seven seals.

God creates "all things" including you—in seven days or six days. And on the seventh He rests. Obviously He is still creating you (I can tell), and so obviously it's still the sixth day of creation.

Physicists, like Gerald Schroeder, point out: If the universe is fourteen billion years old from the standpoint of the earth, then it's actually about six days old from the standpoint of the Big Bang. In other words the seven days of creation are the history of all space and time.

I published a book on that this last summer titled *The History of Time and the genesis of you*. Thirteen years ago, I published a book on The Revelation titled *Eternity Now*. From Genesis to Revelation, it's all about the number seven. Every week is seven days long, and the seventh day is the Sabbath. The Jews were commanded to observe seven feasts each year. In The Revelation, besides seven churches, seven lampstands, torches, and spirits, there are seven seals, seven trumpets, seven thunders, and seven bowls.

Seals, trumpets, thunders, and bowls are all events that happen in the span of chronological time. But at seven, something incredible always happens or ceases to happen.

In Revelation 10, an angel that looks like Jesus swears that at the seventh trumpet "time (*chronos* in Greek—chronological time) will be no more."<sup>5</sup> Unlike the other days of creation in Genesis 1, the seventh day is not said to have an evening or morning. Zechariah prophesies that a day—"one peculiar day," is coming with no "day" or "night."

At the end of the seventh day of the seventh feast, the Jews were commanded to observe one more Sabbath "*shemini atzeret*" an eighth day like an endless seventh day. Easter is the eighth day, an eternal seventh day.

Already, in The Revelation, God has said (in Revelation 1:8), "*I am the Alpha and Omega*," and Jesus will also say (in Revelation 22:13), "*I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.*"

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<sup>5</sup> Rev. 10:6 literally translated from the Greek is "time (*chronos*) will be no more," rather than "there will be no more delay" (ESV).

Scripture says that when we come to Christ, we come to “the end of the ages.” And from Christ we receive eternal life. That’s life from beyond the ages—life from God’s age—the endless seventh day where “everything, everything, everything is very good.”

What I’m trying to say is that the scroll in the strong right hand of God, sealed with seven seals is space—time. It’s all of space and time. It’s the creation. So, where are John and Jesus and the twenty-four elders? Well, They’re not in space and time as we experience space and time. Human words utterly fail us here, but they’re like on the other side of the Big Bang.

Astro physicists like Gage Perez Giz on PBS argue that space-time isn’t even objectively real, but something he calls “causality” is. And, strangely enough, consciousness causes things as if there’s a consciousness behind all reality, just as there is a consciousness in you.

Quantum physicists like Neils Bohr pointed out that all matter is relative to “meaning” in the mind of a conscious observer. The Biblical Word for meaning is “Logos” or often translated “Word.” Astro physicist Albert Einstein pointed out that time is relative to light. God is Light, and He created all things with His Word.

At Neils Bohr’s funeral, Albert Einstein stood up and said, “Now he has departed from this strange world a little ahead of me. That means nothing. People like us, who believe in physics, know that the distinction between past, present, and future is only a stubbornly persistent illusion.

Well, people like us who read the Bible also know that the distinction between past, present, and future is only a stubbornly persistent illusion...” The Creator is named “I am that I am,” AND SO this strange little world of space and time [Peter picks up a scroll from a small table beside him] is like a bubble of nothing in an eternal something . . . almost like a womb.

And now, John is outside of it—looking at it. He’s looking at all creation, beginning to end. And he’s weeping uncontrollably because no one is found worthy to open the scroll and know its meaning.<sup>6</sup>

The sealed scroll is creation without Meaning—events with no purpose—a story with no plot.

John is weeping for the same reason Mary wept outside the tomb. All her hopes had been crucified, and now the body was missing, and everything was absurd.

John is weeping for the same reason that Peter wept when he heard the cock crow; Christ was crucified, and Peter’s ego was crucified—obliterated.

John is weeping because his friends are devoured by lions in the arena, in places like Smyrna and Rome. He is weeping because all other disciples have now been executed,

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<sup>6</sup> Opening the scroll reveals the meaning of all things and only the Meaning of all things could open the scroll.

and he is exiled to a rock, alone in the Aegean Sea. And he doesn't know what any of it means.<sup>7</sup>

He is not weeping because he doesn't understand the *Left Behind* series, and the Ten Nation European Confederacy. He is weeping because he sees no "Logos," and so all is "chaos." He is staring into the abyss (what we loosely call Hell).

In the words of Bertrand Russell, before he died, "I have nothing to hang on to but grim, unyielding despair."

Because I'm a pastor people will come to me and ask me to "unwrap the scroll," namely their scroll. We don't use scrolls anymore, but we do have books, and people seem to assume their life is a story recorded in a book. And they want to know what it means. Sometimes they'll be stuck on a particular page, terrified as to what it means—terrified that they'll hate the plot, or worse, that there is no plot.

Sometimes it will be a page of neglect or abuse. Sometimes it will be the death of a loved one, or a group of people in a place like Brussels Belgium. Sometimes it will be a very evil death, symbolized by something like this:



And I don't know what to tell them. I am not worthy to unwarp their scroll. I am not the author of their story.

In one of my favorite stories, an abused orphan boy sobs into the night, "I am the most unfortunate boy that ever lived." And a voice answers—out of the darkness. It is the voice of a lion.

In Revelation 5:4, John stands weeping and wailing for no one is found worthy to open the scroll.

Then, the next verses:

*And one of the elders said to me, "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"*

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<sup>7</sup> "Despair is suffering without meaning," said Viktor Frankl.

A LION—the most powerful and ferocious beast known in John’s day! The Lion has conquered!

*And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain...*

(Revelation 5:5-6b)

At the end of his life, Albert Einstein said, “*Now I see that the only question is, ‘Is the universe friendly?’*” John looks at the throne of God, beyond the event horizon of the Big Bang, and he sees a lamb standing as if it had been slain. The Lion is a Lamb. And John knows this Lamb. His friend Jesus, whom he had watched crucified, the Lion is a bleeding Lamb.

Hebrews 10:19 claims that His body broken and blood shed is “*a newly sacrificed and living way*”—as if He is always bleeding.

That sounds so gruesome, but in the Revelation there is blood that’s wine and wine that’s blood. And as the seals are opened it seems to flow throughout space and time: People wash their robes in the blood. They conquer evil by the blood. It fills the land of Israel to the depths of a horse’s bridle, stopping the warhorses in their tracks.

It appears to be poured out in bowls as wrath, but not wrath without meaning, but wrath that gets things done and accomplishes God’s will. With the seventh bowl: “*It is finished.*” Then, after the seventh bowl, seventh trumpet and seventh seal, the blood appears to have transformed into a river of eternal life, which flows from the throne, on which the Lamb is standing—a river that gives life to an entire new creation. Maybe we shouldn’t run from the blood. We ought to drink it!

Well . . . the Lamb on the throne can open the scroll. In his Gospel, John goes out of the way to point out:

Jesus is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.

Jesus is the Word of God, through whom all things are created and sustained.

Jesus is enthroned and glorified on His cross, where He: “*draws all people to himself.*”

Saint Paul writes, “[God has made known to us] *the mystery of His will, according to his purpose, which He set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Him...* (Ephesians 1:9-10). “*In him all things hold together*” (Colossians 1:17) “*...and through him God was pleased...to reconcile to himself all things...making peace by the blood of his cross* (Colossians 1:20).

See? The Lamb can open the scroll.

And the scroll is all space and all time. AND THAT REALLY MATTERS...

For that means that the scroll contains all of your space . . . and all of your time!

So think of the very worst moment in all of your space and time . . .

Maybe it was a day in which you wept and wailed harder and louder than you ever had wept and wailed before as you wondered: “What the hell does this mean? Why did this happen?”

Maybe it’s a moment for which you have yet to weep, for fear that you’ll never stop.

Well, that moment, and every moment, is on the scroll. And the Lamb is worthy to open the scroll.

Revelation 5:6-14

*And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying,*

*“Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals,  
for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God  
from every tribe and language and people and nation,  
and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,  
and they shall reign on the earth.”*

*Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice,*

*“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain,  
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might  
and honor and glory and blessing!”*

*And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying,*

*“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb  
be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”*

*And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.*

John hears, “Every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and in the sea, and all that is in them...” wildly, ecstatically singing praises to the Lamb. And since John is a creature, he is singing too. So John has gone from abject weeping and wailing to ecstatic and effusive singing in a symphony of praise.

What happened?

He saw the slaughtered Lamb, standing on the throne.

He saw Easter—truly saw Jesus Christ crucified and risen from the dead.

The Lamb on the throne gives new meaning to every event in space and time, even to the *worst* event in space and time.

Think of John: According to the Gospels, he was the only disciple who stood at the foot of the cross with Mary and Mary. And he watched Jesus suffer the most unspeakable tribulation (physical and spiritual). He watched Jesus suffer and die.

Can you imagine an event—a moment—more evil than the day the children of Adam crucified the best Man that ever lived—the day *we* took the Life of God on a tree, in a garden? But now, look at the Lamb on the throne! Can you imagine an event more beautiful and good than the day God gave His own Life on that same tree.

God in Christ Jesus takes the greatest evil and transforms it into The Revelation of the Greatest Good. That’s what John sees.

In 1373, Julian of Norwich had her famous encounter with Christ crucified and risen from the dead. She then wrote: “This is what the Lord meant: Since I have turned the greatest possible harm into good, it is my will, that you should know from this, that I shall turn all lesser evil into good.”

Understand?

It’s not just one event in the life of Jesus that turns from evil into good. It’s all events in the life of all God’s creatures that turn from evil into good. John has already written in Revelation 1 that Jesus is “firstborn of the dead” (Revelation 1:5). Saint Paul writes, “firstborn from the dead” (Colossians 1:18), “firstborn of many brethren” (Romans 8:29), “firstborn of all creation” (Colossians 1:15), which implies that all creation is being born as Jesus is born!

Jesus is the Plot that gives meaning to every page in your book—every event in your story, for we’re each being born out of this creation and into that place where everybody can’t help but sing.

And when you see that truth—who is *The Truth*, the Truth changes everything (past, present, and future) right here and right now. Kind of like this scene in the TV show *Monk*. Adrian Monk is a brilliant but neurotic detective who, in this episode, can’t do his job or live his life because of a page in his story—an event in his past that cripples him now.

## Clip from *Monk Darker*

[The scene opens with two men talking quietly and sitting in chairs in a sunlit windowed office area.]

Monk: *Something I never told you. Something happened, when I was a boy. There was an incident – with a – with a man.*

Therapist: *Who was that?*

Monk: *I'd never seen him before. Stranger. (He looks down).*

Therapist: *How old were you?*

Monk: *I don't remember. Young. I was – so small. . . I remember . . . I remember (broken voice) I was naked!* [He stands and grabs a tissue from the coffee table nearby].

Therapist: *Take your time.*

Monk: *I was so naked! I – hated being naked. And I remember, I was crying, and then, - he hit me.*

Therapist: *Adrian, I'm so sorry.*

Monk: *There was blood. There was blood – everywhere. I was screaming. I wanted 'em to stop. And my mother, . . . my mother was smiling (wipes a tear with tissue).*

Therapist: *Wait . . . Your mother was there?*

Monk: *Why didn't she stop him? She was supposed to protect me! He kept hitting me, swinging me around, upside down (leans forward and voice breaks as he pauses).*

Therapist: *You were upside down?*

Monk: *(nods affirmatively and puts face in hands.)*

Therapist: *Was he wearing a mask?*

Monk: *(Points with his right pinky as he nods) Yeah... (clasps hands in front of face and leans his elbows on his knees again) I never . . . wanted to be naked again!*

Therapist: *Adrian, that man was a doctor. You're remembering your own birth!*

Monk: *(looks in astonishment at the therapist) Doctor? . . . Doctor?*

Therapist: *Anybody else, and I wouldn't have believed it, but (gestures with both hands towards Monk) You?*

Monk: *Doctor?*

Therapist: *Um-hmm.*

Monk: *Well, that would explain a lot, actually! Lights, and my father (gesturing to different places) in the doorway holding a . . . balloon?*

Therapist: *(Nods and smiles.)*

Monk: *(Sighs and sits back in relief.)*

Therapist: *Do you feel better?*

Monk: *Yeah. I do! Wow . . . that only took eleven years!!*

Therapist: *(Nods and smiles understandingly.)*

Maybe it takes a lifetime to be born from above, and no matter what, birth hurts, but once you see the Truth, everything changes.

But . . .

How do you know “the truth?”

How do you trust “the truth?” or come to love “the truth?”

Is the truth a law, formulae or physics equation?

Is the truth a force or power you can't resist?

Is the truth simply great knowledge or great power?

John records Jesus as saying, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). That means The Truth is a Lion that chooses to be a Lamb in order to bleed for you.

In Revelation 5, they all sing: “Worthy are you to take the scroll and open its seals for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God...” In other words: “You

are worthy to give meaning to my life because you bleed for me.” In other words: “I trust you; I put faith in you because you bleed for me.”

If you were to line me up with Albert Einstein and Barak Obama—great knowledge, and great power, and then ask my wife and kids: “Who is most worthy to tell you who you really are?” I think they’d pick me, because they’ve watched me bleed for them.

When my children were little, they’d fall and hurt themselves and come running to me weeping and wailing. They’d show me their wound, and I’d kiss it. And they’d stop weeping and start singing and dancing once again.

My kiss changed the meaning of the wound. And the older we get, the less we trust the Father’s kiss, and the more we trust our own knowledge and power, and the less we dance and sing. And it’s true that in this world some children have terrible fathers, and some wounds are incredibly deep, and the abuse of some is far more than just a misperception on a TV show.

This is all so very real to me because, for about fifteen years, my wife and I spent a great deal of time praying for a friend who had been abused in the most horrifying of ways. Her healing consisted of surrendering painful events in her past to Jesus.

We would usually have communion—wine that’s blood, and blood that’s wine—and she would usually have a vision, in which, she would see Jesus in a past event. And seeing Jesus, the Lion, having become the Lamb, and now bleeding for her, entirely changed the meaning of each event.

In the lostness, she’d see the Way.  
In the lies, she’d behold the Truth.  
In death, she’d watched the Life conquer!  
In her shame, she’d see the Lion is the Lamb who bleeds with infinite love for her!

I think every event, and certainly every sin in space and time, is an invitation to see the Lion, who is the Lamb . . . that bleeds for you. He is *WORTHY* to unwrap your scroll. So when you come to worship, I don’t tell you who to vote for. If you want rules I’ll say something like, “Go read the Ten Commandments, those are some pretty good rules.” If you ask for practical application points, I actually get nervous: Why? Because I am not worthy to open your scroll. At best, I can point to the One who is and say, “Look at Him! Worship Him!” And then you’ll start dancing to His tune.

Saint Paul wrote, “*I chose to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ and him crucified*” (1 Corinthians 2:2). That’s the slaughtered Lamb standing on the throne.

On one occasion, my friend remembered actual pictures. They were so horrifying; I knew I couldn’t give them meaning. They appeared to mean that she could never be what she longed to be, and that God would always forsake her.

I asked Jesus to destroy the pictures, but He wouldn’t destroy the pictures. He filled the pictures with Himself, and in the places she thought she was forever forsaken, He

revealed that He was holding her and telling her who she truly is.” And in the place she thought she would never be, what she truly desired, He revealed: “You are, and will always be, my little angel.”

What she had always desired, since she was a little girl, in the very place where she thought she was: “*not my people*”—to use the words of Hosea and Saint Paul (Romans 9:26) He revealed that she was “His people!” She was “His daughter,” and even “His Bride,” and “His own Body!”

He revealed her story was His story, and His story . . . her story. It was as if every moment passed through His cross, and the very worst would become the very best. And when we would see it, we couldn’t help but worship.

I asked Jesus to destroy the pictures, but in the vision, Jesus filled each picture—framed each picture—and then handed each picture back to my friend. She heard Him say, “These pictures are our pictures.” It was like reading a great book. When you get to the end of the story, you see the Plot, and the Plot changes the meaning of every page in the book. Jesus is the Beginning and End: He is the Plot!!

In the *Chronicles of Narnia*, Shasta, the “unluckiest boy in the whole world,” finds himself to be lost and confused, walking down a narrow path in the dark all alone. He begins to weep, when suddenly he senses someone next to him and realizes it’s huge.

Terrified he whispers, “Who are you?”  
And he hears, “One who has waited long for you to speak.”  
The Voice says, “Tell me your sorrows.”  
And Shasta does, saying, “I must be the most unfortunate boy that ever lived...”

“I do not call you unfortunate,” said the Large Voice.  
“Don’t you think it was bad luck to meet so many lions?” said Shasta.  
“There was only one lion,” said the Voice . . . “I was the lion.”

And as Shasta gaped with open mouth and said nothing, the Voice continued: “I was the lion who forced you to join with Aravis. I was the cat who comforted you among the houses of the dead. I was the lion who drove the jackals from you while you slept. I was the lion who gave the horses the new strength of fear for the last mile so that you should reach King Lune in time. And I was the lion you do not remember who pushed the boat in which you lay, a child near death, so that it came to shore where a man sat, wakeful at midnight, to receive you.”

“Then it was you who wounded Aravis?”  
“It was I.”  
“But what for?”  
“Child,” said the Voice, “I am telling you your story, not hers. I tell no one any story but his own.”

“Who *are* you?” asked Shasta.  
“Myself,” said the Voice, very deep and low so that the earth shook: and again.  
“Myself,” loud and clear and gay: and then the third time “Myself,” whispered so softly you could hardly hear it, and yet it seemed to come from all round you as

if the leaves rustled with it...

Of course the lion is the lamb and the lamb is a the lion. In C.S. Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia*. At the end of the world, the children encounter a lamb and ask it for directions.

"There is a way into my country from all the worlds," said the lamb; but as he spoke his snowy white flushed into tawny gold and his size changed and he was the Lion himself, towering above them and scattering light from his mane.  
"Oh, Aslan," said Lucy. "Will you tell us how to get into your country from our world?"

"I shall be telling you all the time," said the Lion—"all the time."

[Peter points to the scroll on a small table next to him.]

I think that's why God made time—so you would see that the Lion is the Lamb who bleeds for you. [Peter points to the communion table.]

Jesus is the meaning of all space and time.  
And all of space and time is the Revelation of Jesus.  
And Jesus is the Revelation of God.  
And God is Love—who creates you with His own Will and Word: Jesus.

So what happens if you run from His Will and Hide from His Word—who is the Plot to your very own story?

In the next chapter, Revelation 6, Jesus begins to open the seals on the scroll and, as He does, history happens. We see conquests, wars, famine and death ride out across the face of the earth. Yet, in Heaven they see the Lamb standing and won't stop singing for seeing the Lamb, they see the glory of the Plot.

When He opens the sixth seal, there is an earthquake, the sun goes black and the moon turns red . . . Jesus is crucified at the sixth hour, on the sixth day of the week, in the sixth day of creation, and when He is, there is a great earthquake, the sun goes black and the moon turns red.

The Lamb opens the sixth seal, and now I quote, "The Kings of the earth—and everyone— they all hide in caves calling to the rocks and mountains to fall on them and hide them from, "the wrath of the Lamb" (Rev. 6:15-16).

The wrath of the Lamb is the blood of the Lamb, and the life is in the blood.  
When you run from Jesus, you run from the Way, the Truth, and the Life.  
You hide yourself in lostness, lies, and death.  
You hide in the depths of the earth.  
You hide in the bowels of space and time.

The Bible calls that place Hades; it begins here and it continues, for many, after the body dies. But you see, that place, Hades, is part of space and time. And in

chapter 20, it comes to an end in a lake of eternal fire, and God is Eternal Fire. Jesus the man on fire, the Lion and the Lamb, is the end of death—the death of death.

So in chapter 21, we hear a voice cry from the throne, “Look, I make all things new.” We see a New Heaven and New Earth. And New Jerusalem coming down. And the kings of the earth, who once hid themselves in the depths of the earth, whose flesh was eaten by the birds of the air bring their glory into it.

But then, in the last chapter, there’s a bizarre statement: “Outside...[is] everyone who practices falsehood.” That is, “everyone” who hates the Truth.

See? As long as you hate the Lamb, you hate the Truth and hide from the Life, lost in death. You hide from Eternal Life in the depths of space and time.

So I am absolutely *not* saying that you don’t need Faith. Salvation is Faith. I’m just saying that time comes to an End, whose name is Jesus. And in Revelation 5, John saw every creature in Heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea and all that is in them singing. That song they sing is Faith.

I’m saying that even if you write yourself out of His Story, which is your story, He writes you back in . . . and that’s *the* story.

You know Jesus had a friend named Judas? Judas betrayed the Lamb and hung himself in the Valley of Gehenna, just outside of Jerusalem. Maybe you know someone like that, and now you’re terrified of the Lamb. You’re even terrified that I bring it up in church on Easter morning because you think to yourself, “There’s no way Jesus can make that person new.”

Well, I’m not saying that they don’t descend into Hades; I’m not even saying that they won’t be consumed by Eternal Fire. I’m just saying that nothing is more powerful than the Word of God, who is the Lion, who chose to be the Lamb—to bleed for you, and them, and all of creation. And if Judas is a creature that God created, then John heard him . . . singing. Maybe he even saw him, sitting on a throne, casting his crown, along with twenty-three other elders. I’m saying that even if you write yourself out of His story, which is called sin, He writes you back in . . .and that’s *the* story—good news—grace!

That’s why Christ is crucified. That’s why a slaughtered Lamb stands on the throne bleeding. Nothing is more powerful than the blood of the Lamb. It judges you, cleanses you, and is Life in you. His Blood creates your Faith. John wrote: *“This is the victory that conquers the world—our faith.”* (1 John 5:4)

Your Faith is expressed as worship and that’s how you become who you truly are. You have been *“destined and appointed to live to the praise of His Glory”* (Ephesians 1:12). You have been created to enjoy Him forever and ever and beyond the evers.

So can the Lamb even make something like this new? [Peter picks up a noose.]

...That really is an odd question... For most of you came to church this Easter morning with something like this hanging around your neck. We call it a cross.

You know a cross makes a noose look like a walk in the park. And now you wear one, around your neck, as the ultimate symbol of faith, hope, love, and life—eternal life!

If you take your life, as if you were the Lord of your own life, you trap yourself in death and Hades. But when you surrender your life to the Lamb on the throne, you die with Him and rise with Him to eternal life. God's commandment *is* eternal life, says Jesus—the Word of Life, and the Gospel of John. The life flows between you and your neighbor, like blood flows in one body. And the Body can't stop singing: "*Holy Holy Holy!*" and "*Worthy is the Lamb.*"

### **Communion**

And so He took bread and broke it saying, "This is my body which is for you." And He took the cup saying, "This is my blood of the covenant. Drink of it all of you."

This is the Lamb. [Peter points to the communion table.]

This is the Throne. [Peter points to the cross.]

Jesus is worthy to unwrap your scroll. [Peter picks up a scroll and places it on the communion table.]

When you see it—when you *truly* see it—you will start singing. And you can start singing even here, even now.

Pray with me:

Lord, Jesus, thank You for Your life. Thank You that You give Your life so that Your life would be in me. I give you my life so that my life would be in you. I give you that moment that I thought of before, that I would be in you. Thank you Father, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Paul wrote, "*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new*" (2 Corinthians 5:17–NKJV). So, we invite you to come to the table for communion. If you don't want communion with Him, you can stay in your seat or pass by. But understand this: He *wants* communion with you!

The wine is wine that's blood and blood that's wine.

The bread: Take a piece of Lamb and ingest it.

See? It turns out the throne of God is in you. That's the Gospel!

In Jesus' name, let's worship!

### **Prayer**

So Lord God, we praise you because you are good. Long, long, long ago we wondered what the good was, and we tried to know the good, and low and behold: The Good is knowing us! You have known us and revealed Yourself to us. You are Good. We praise you in Jesus' name

**Benediction**

May you keep your eyes on the Lamb standing on the throne.

In other words: Believe the Gospel and live!

In Jesus' name, Amen.

*Disclaimer: This document is a draft and has not been edited by the author. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt, please refer to the audio version of the sermon on this website and don't be shy about informing us of errors.*