

## Waking to the King of Kings

Revelation 1

#3 in our series The Gospel According to Jesus: The Revelation

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“Starman” by David Bowie

There's a starman waiting in the sky  
He'd like to come and meet us  
But he thinks he'd blow our minds  
There's a starman waiting in the sky  
He's told us not to blow it  
Cause he knows it's all worthwhile

He told me:  
Let the children lose it  
Let the children use it  
Let all the children boogie

I know that's kind of a weird offertory, but I asked for it because it reminded me of what we read in Revelation 1 Just last week. [Peter begins singing “Starman”.]

John sees Jesus with seven stars in His right hand, and a face shining like the sun in full strength—the sun is my favorite star. John sees Jesus, it blows his mind, and he drops to the ground as if dead.

Last week, we wondered,

“Is John dreaming?”

“Is *this vision*—the revelation of Jesus—just a dream...

Or is *this world* the dream, and John is waking up to reality?”

If this world is a dream, then waking up would be downright apocalyptic!

Clip from *Inception*

Cobb: *When we're asleep, our mind can do almost anything...*

Ariadne: *Such as?*

Cobb: *Well, imagine you are designing a building. Right? You consciously create each aspect. Time feels like it's almost creating itself if you know what I mean.*

Ariadne: *Yeah. Yeah. . . like discovering.*

Cobb: *Only one aspiration right?*

Cobb: *Now, in a dream, our mind continuously does this. I mean we create and perceive our world simultaneously. [Cobb draws a diagram]*

*Our mind does this so well that we don't even know it's happening. Dreams . . . they feel real while we're in them, right? It's only when we wake up that we realize something was actually strange.*

*Let me ask you a question: You never really remember the beginning of a dream do you? You always end up right in the middle of what's going on.*

Clip from *Inception* continued . . .

Ariadne: *I guess . . . Yeah.*

Cobb: *So how did we end up here?*

Ariadne: *Well, we just cam from the . . . uh . . . (confused)*

Cobb: *Think about it Ariadne, how did you get here? Where are you right now?*

Ariadne: (Looking around bewildered) *We're dreaming?*

Cobb: *You're actually in the middle of the workshop, right now. This is your first lesson in shared dreaming.* [The table that Ariadne and Cobb are sitting at begins to shake. A newsstand explodes and then the reality around them begins to crumble to pieces as Ariadne realizes she is in a dream. Ariadne watches in wonder as "reality" crumbles around her.]

Ariadne: *If it's just a dream then why are you with...?* [Ariadne suddenly awakens to find herself in the workshop with Cobb talking to her.]

Cobb: *It's never really "just" a dream is it? A face full of glass hurts like hell when you're in it. It feels real.*

[Ariadne gasps for air as she recovers from her dream and tries to make sense of what she has just experienced.]

If this world is a dream, then the sky might roll up and the stars might fall from the sky as we woke from the dream.

Waking would be downright apocalyptic from the perspective of the dream world. But from the perspective of the waking world, it might look something more like this:

[Image from *Snow White* (The prince awakens Snow White with a kiss)]

That was our sermon last week. Now, let's go deeper.  
Let's pray!

### **Prayer**

Father, we pray that you would help us to preach.

### **Message**

Revelation 1:1-3

*The revelation (apokalypsis) of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time (kairos) is near (eggus; "at hand").*

God's time—eternity—is pressing in on our temporality, our chronology.

In Revelation 10:6 an angel that looks just like Jesus swears that in the days of the seventh trumpet call, *chronos* will be no more.

Well, “*The time is at hand.*”

And Jesus came preaching, “*Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.*”

The Kingdom is the sovereign *dominion* of the King.

Last week, we talked about Flatland.

I held Flatland an inch from my body and said, “King Peter is at hand.”

And that was true at every point of space and time in Flatland.

“At hand” means at hand. The King is at hand, whether you see Him or not.

A few years ago, on my day off, my son Coleman and I explored the new sewer pipes under the Home Depot they were building a couple blocks from our house. We crawled a couple hundred yards in pitch black—in cement pipes buried deep underground. At one point, I quietly crawled ahead and stopped. Coleman followed.

After a while, Coleman said, “Dad, where are you?”

And I didn’t answer. “Dad, where are you?”

Soon he was yelling, “Dad! Dad! This isn’t funny! Dad, where are you?!”

I was like an inch from his face.

I let him scream, and then he fell silent, and I said: “Hey Coleman!”

I blew his mind . . . It was awesome!

I think most folks like the idea of God . . . somewhere, but not literally “*at hand.*”

One day, I was working out next to this guy at the gym for like an hour.

Out of the blue, he said, “So Peter, how are your kids?”

Ahhh!!

It turned out to be a guy from church; it blew my mind!

I’m cool working out next to general people, but a person who knows me that I don’t know . . . or know that I don’t know knows me . . . that’s freaky—I don’t want them *that* “at hand.”

H. G. Wells told a story about a pious clergyman who pontificated about God to thousands on a regular basis. He didn’t pray much for he seemed to understand his theology and he had everything in his world under control.

But one night, for some reason, he decided to kneel and pray at the front of the church: He folded his hands and said, “Oh God...” Immediately, he heard a voice, clear and crisp: “Well, what is it?” It blew his mind. His parishioners found his dead body the following morning.

The first time I ever saw a demonic spirit cast out of a person and I knew it wasn’t fake—thirty-five years ago at Hollywood Presbyterian Church—I really wasn’t stressed about the demon, but Jesus, the Word of God in flesh . . . who obviously bound it and drove it out, and knew my every thought. I didn’t want Him and His Kingdom to be *that* “at hand.” It blows my mind.

Jesus came preaching, “Repent the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.”

That means, “Repent the King is at hand.” But I’m not so sure we want the King of Kings to be *that* “at hand.”

It seems to me that liberal Christians are cool with God being large as long as He's vague. So, for a liberal . . .

- God is love, light, way, truth, and life.
- But love, light, way, truth, and life are not person but principles, values or forces.

You see with science and technology, we can harness forces and use them for our purposes.

- So, Jesus is the savior.
- But He doesn't actually save us, we apply His principles and values to save ourselves (according to the liberals).

Liberals like a God that's large as long as He's vague and impersonal— but not a person at hand . . .

Conservatives like a God that's personal and well-defined as long as we can keep Him small and in a box: our box, our temple, our tribe . . . under our control. It's like Ricky Bobby says in the movie *Talladega Nights*: "I like the baby Jesus best." We like a God we can keep in a manger in our barn. And if He gets out, we'll try to nail Him down . . . like to a tree:

- He can be the savior . . . of the people we tell Him to save, but not of whomever He wants to save—not tax collectors, prostitutes, and Romans.
- He can't save them because He's supposed to save us *from* them. That's why we want His Kingdom to come because it's really ours.
- He can be at hand, as long as He stays in our box."

Jesus said, "*Repent. The kingdom is at hand.*" "Repent" doesn't mean, "Try harder." It literally means, "Change your mind."

- You think the Kingdom is not here and so you try to make it come—with politics and power, but it's at hand.
- You think the King is not here . . . because He won't fit in your box, but He's standing in front of you.
- You think you're the King and God should serve your kingdom—that you could use God like a thing.
- You're dreaming . . . a very dark dream . . .

Wake up! Repent!"

The religious leaders did not repent and grew furious with Jesus for he wouldn't take up arms against the Romans and make their Kingdom come.

They did not repent, and so they crucified the King and missed the Kingdom.

Sometimes, I wonder if we're not just the same. We didn't like the King, or His Kingdom the first time around, so we imagine the Kingdom and the King to be pretty different the second time around.

[Image of the statue "Christ the Redeemer" in Brazil holding a machinegun with the caption "JESUS IS COMING And boy is he pissed!"]

The Bible ends with the great *apokalypsis*—the great unveiling, *The Revelation*. It's the unveiling of Jesus, but it's the same Jesus—John's best friend Jesus.

The Lamb doesn't change into the Lion as if He's no longer the Lamb.

The whole point is that the Lion is always was Jesus the Lamb.

The Bible ends with the great *apokalypsis*...

And it begins with the great *katakalyptis*—the great veiling.

You remember how it happened: God spoke His Word.

Satan tempted the Adam with a lie. He said, "*You will not surely die. If you take of the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, for your eyes will be opened and you will be like God.*" He tempted them with the dream of their own sovereignty.

God had said, "*Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness...*" "Let us make them kings," right? Because God is the King. Satan tempted man saying, "You can make yourself in God's image . . . make yourself king . . ." "Just take the life of the Good, hanging on the tree in the middle of the garden."

God spoke His Word. And satan tempted the Adam to reject God's Word.

Now we know that God's Word is Jesus.

And Jesus means "God is Salvation."

Satan tempted Eve and Adam to renounce "God is Salvation"

And believe "We are salvation."

So, God said, "Let us make man..."

And man said, "No thanks, we'll make ourselves."

Satan tempted humanity with the dream of their own sovereignty. And once they acted on the temptation they could no longer bear the presence of the Sovereign . . . who was at hand . . .

Remember, He went walking in the garden in the cool of the day, calling to the man and the woman—"Where are you?" But they had covered themselves and hid. They were veiled: *katakalypto*. It means, "to cover with a veil," like a woman is veiled and then unveiled, by her groom, on her wedding day (1 Cor. 11:6). Paul writes that the minds of all unbelievers have been veiled (*kalypto*) to the glory of the Gospel, which is Jesus—our bridegroom (2 Cor. 4:4).

Adam and Eve made clothes and hid. They veiled themselves. They were already dead—cut off from the Life, who came walking in the garden, in the cool of the day, for He wanted to be with them, humanity, His Bride. They were already dead, for they would not, and then could not see Jesus.

You'll remember that God kicked them out of the garden so they would no longer take life from the tree in the middle of the garden. He placed two cherubim to guard the way to the tree of Life. Jesus is "the Life," and "the Word of God."

You'll remember that "the Word of God" would rest on top of the Ark of the Covenant, between two cherubim, behind a veil. And when we sleep our mind is veiled to reality. When we wake, the sky rolls up and the stars fall from the sky—in our dream world. We wake to the reality that is at hand, or *WHO* is at hand. We are unveiled—*apokalypto*.

Well, this is the point: when you dream "you are salvation," you cannot see "God is Salvation"—who is Jesus, and He is the Life. In other words, you're dead, even if you dream that you're alive.

So, Paul writes, "*Awake o sleeper and rise from the dead...and Christ will shine on you...*"

Death is our dream, even if, in our dream, we dream that we're alive.

Death is our dream, which God has allowed us to dream for a time...  
for a space and a time.

Maybe "hell," or at least Hades, is to be trapped in that dream, that is a veiled mind, an unrepentant mind, a mind dreaming of its own sovereignty. At first, we may like our dream, but soon our dream becomes troubled and turns into a nightmare.

In *The Great Divorce*, CS Lewis asks an angel:

"Are Heaven and Hell only states of mind?" "Hush," says the angel. "Do not blaspheme. Hell is a state of mind—ye never said a truer word. And every state of mind, left to itself, every shutting up of the creature within the dungeon of its own mind is, in the end, Hell. But Heaven is not a state of mind. Heaven is reality itself... The choice of every lost soul can be expressed in the words 'Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.' ...The whole difficulty of understanding Hell is that the thing to be understood is so nearly Nothing... A damned soul is nearly nothing: it is shrunk, shut up in itself. Good beats upon the damned incessantly as sound waves beat on the ears of the deaf, but they cannot receive it. Their fists are clenched, their teeth are clenched, their eyes fast shut. First they will not, in the end they cannot, open their hands for gifts, or their mouths for food, or their eyes to see."

"Then no one can ever reach them?" Lewis asks.

"Only the Greatest of all can make Himself small enough to enter Hell.... Only One has descended into Hell."

"And will He ever do so again?"

"... All moments that have been or shall be were, or are, present in the moment of His descending. There is no spirit in prison to whom He did not preach."

Death and Hades are the dream of our own sovereignty. And fear is the desperate desire to keep dreaming, for what do we fear, but the loss of control. We fear the death of death. In other words, we fear . . . the Life and Jesus is the Life..

Jesus says, "Repent for the kingdom is at hand." But we don't repent for we trust the illusion of our own control... We trust our dreams and we're terrified to wake up, for we don't know what or who we will wake up to. We trust our dreams and we're terrified of God's Dream—eternal Life.

Revelation 1:3 "*...the time is near (at hand).*"

Revelation 1: 4-8

*John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead...*

“Firstborn of all creation,” writes Paul, and “firstborn of the dead,” which clearly implies that none of us are entirely created and all of us might actually be dead, only dreaming that we’re alive.

*and the ruler of [the] kings of earth.*

The Greek is very clear He’s “the ruler of *the* kings on earth.”

The ESV translators just took out the word “the,” and you can see why.

He doesn’t seem to be the ruler of Kim Jong Un, or guys like Adolph Hitler and we wonder about Donald Trump...

We think, at best, He’s ruler of *some* of the kings on earth.

But John writes “*the* kings on earth.” “...ruler of the kings of earth.”

*To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins...*

No one seems to be free in the Revelation except Jesus and these little churches.

*by his blood and made us a kingdom.*

Some ancient manuscripts read, “made us kings.”

Well, depending on how you understand chapter 20, we either *are* kings or *will be* kings who reign on earth with Jesus.

Kings don’t dream of being sovereign; they are sovereign. They are free. But the kings of the earth are ruled by Jesus, and Jesus has made us free.

Verses 5b-8

*To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.*

*“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.” Almighty!*

If God is Almighty, then you are not at all mighty; you’re no-mighty.

Unless, of course . . . God is like mighty . . . in you.

But anything other than that is just a dream.

Verses 8 & 9

*“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who*

*is to come, the Almighty.”*

*I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation [the suffering] and the kingdom [the sovereignty] and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.*

Do you see how weird this is?

If God is Almighty and John is in the Kingdom—and even in Jesus—then, why is he getting tribulated?

Surely, this is a problem that will need to be fixed by the *Left Behind* movies. And it's a problem we try to fix each and every day.

We say things like,

“God has done his part, now you have to do your part...”

“He's 99% mighty, and you're like 1% mighty... and you screwed up.”

But John said, “the Almighty,” The *pantokrator* in Greek—*panto* is all, and *krator* is power. It's very clear.

“*He accomplishes all things according to the council of his will,*” writes Paul. And all the prophets would say—and did say, “Amen.”

He never loses control.

-Even when He surrenders control . . . He's in control.

-Even when we disobey, it's only because He consigned us to disobedience.

-Even when we took the fruit, it's only because He first made the tree, forgave us the fruit, and put us in a garden with a talking snake.

-Even when we took His life on the cross, it was only because He first *forgave* His life on the cross—according to plan—such that, what appears to be His greatest loss of control, is the ultimate victory of His Will.

-Even when we dream evil dreams, we are still God's dream.

Well, in Revelation there is never any question of God's victory . . . every when, every where, and every how.

I know this is weird and it hurts your head to think about but . . .

- There is never any question of whether or not God is in control
- There is never any question about what the *dragon* will do.
- There is never any question about what the *beast* will do.
- There is never any question about what the *harlot* will do.
- There is never any question about what the kings of the earth will do, or whether or not there will be famines and plagues and earthquakes and hurricanes. They *will* all come according to plan.

None of that is in question...

The only question in the book of the Revelation is . . . *you*.

The action is not with the kings of the earth.

It's with you—a seemingly powerless insignificant little church that is *you*.

The dragon, beast, harlot, and kings of the earth have no choice, but it seems that God is giving us a choice.

In the next two chapters there is a call to conquer And so this is the question, who will we conquer, and how will they conquer?

- In Ephesus will they return to their first love and conquer?
- In Smyrna will they remain faithful unto death, which is to conquer?
- In Pergamum how will they renounce idols and so conquer?
- In Sardis will they wake from the dead and conquer?
- In Philadelphia will they hold fast and conquer?
- In Thyatira will they turn from immorality and conquer?
- In Laodicea will they humble themselves and conquer?

At first, it sounds like God is saying you have to “try harder and do your part.” But that’s not how we conquer . . .

Revelation 1:10

“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet.”

In Scripture, trumpets wake people up.

In the New Testament, the trumpet wakes people from the dead.

Revelation 1:10-11

*I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet saying, “Write what you see [that’s the vision] in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.”*

Now, this is wild, but the part of The Revelation that makes sense to us is not sent to us. And the part of the Revelation that makes no sense to us, and seems like a ridiculous dream, is the part that is sent to us. (The part that seems practical to us is not sent to us. And the impractical bizarre part *is* sent to us.) The vision is sent to us—the Church. And the assignment, what we are to do, is sent to the *angel* of each church.

In the next two chapters we’ll read what people refer to as the letters to the seven churches, but the letters are not addressed to the seven churches, but the angels of the seven churches. The seven angels are seven stars, that must shine like the sun from the seven lampstands that are the seven churches. I suspect the seven angels are also the seven spirits of God (1:4), that are the seven eyes of the lamb, and we know that He is the Starman— “*I am the bright and morning star*” (Rev. 22:16).

Get the picture? Because that’s your job: pay attention to the vision.

The seven letters are addressed to the seven angels—the seven stars. And the vision is given to us—the seven lampstands.

In the vision, we'll discover that there's only one that conquers, and He is the Lamb.

He is 100% mighty. He's *all*-mighty.

So if we conquer, it must be His might in us.

If we shine, it must be Him in us.

If we choose, it must be God's good will at home in us.

And in the vision, we discover: we do choose, we do shine, and we do conquer. John sees it in Revelation chapters 4 and 5. He sees the slaughtered lamb standing on the throne of God. And he hears "*every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea and all that is within them*" *worshiping* the one who sits on the throne, and the lamb, for he has conquered. He has ransomed men for God. That's what it says.

That means that every creature has conquered because their hearts have been conquered by the Lamb. They worship the Lamb, for He has ransomed people for God. John sees God's dream, which is reality and the eternal Seventh Day in which everything is very good. John sees God's dream, which is the eternal reality.

Then John sees how it happens (Revelation chapters 6 through 22). He sees the Gospel according to Jesus. The Lamb opens the seven seals. John hears seven trumpets and seven thunders, and watches seven bowls poured out upon the earth, and then John sees the New Jerusalem coming down like a bride adorned for her husband.

Her husband, Jesus is the Light. And she is filled with light.

She is the lampstand, and He is the Bright and Morning Star.

We conquer by the "blood of the lamb and the word of our testimony" (Rev.12:11).

He is the Word of our testimony. It's his blood that flows in our veins.

He is the Light in the lampstand that is us.

Seven is a reference to the seven days of creation, which are the seven days of space and time. In those series of sevens, we witness a lot of darkness, death, Hades, and fear. That's not God's dream . . . and yet, we are God's dream, and darkness, death *hades*, and fear are our dreams . . .

They are the dream of our own sovereignty.

They are our self-centered dreams in Flatland.

They are our dreams in space and time, and yet even our bad dreams exist inside of God's good dream, for we, the dreamers, are, in fact, God's dream.

God is so sovereign that He even arranges our bad dreams to reveal His good dream. He uses our Kim Jog Uns and Pontius Pilates and even our old sinful selves to reveal Himself, and even our new selves.

- He uses our dark dreams to romance us to the Light . . . that shines in the darkness . . . where we discover no darkness can conquer the Light—the Starman. The Starman shines His light and transforms all our dark dreams into His dream. [Peter turns and looks at the cross.] Just as Jesus risen from the dead transformed the greatest evil into the greatest good.

Well, darkness, death, *hades* and fear are the dream of our own sovereignty.

We cannot conquer those dreams, with more of the very same dreams.

Let me say that again: Darkness, death, *hades* and fear are the dream of our own sovereignty. We cannot conquer those dreams, with more of the very same dreams. We can only conquer those dreams by waking up.

About seven years ago, I was having a really tough day. At that time it had been about ten years since I preached this chapter in The Revelation. Those ten years had been really hard. The more I preached, "God is Salvation," the more I offended people who believed that they were salvation. I lost an awful lot of friends, a lot of respect, and a lot of sleep wondering if maybe I was a heretic or just plain nuts. That day I poured my heart out to God. And that day Susan received a word from God for me. This is what she heard:

Peter,

I am waking them up. My People have been asleep too long. Some will wake up easier than others. Some won't want to wake up at all. But all will have to wake up eventually because I will cause them to have restless dreams. I will send others to help. You are not alone in this. Be glad you are not asleep otherwise there are many things you would have missed along the way. Yes. You will get tired and be tempted to sleep but in the end, your only rest is in me.

~Abba

We conquer by waking up. In verse 11, John hears the trumpet saying, "write what you see and send it to the churches..."

Revelation 1:12-17

*Then I turned to see the voice [like a Word!] that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.*

Last time, we noted that if you wake a person too quickly from a dream you can give that person a heart attack. And if you wake them quickly from a dream, you better hope that they know who you are.

I've told you about a night back in 1987 when Susan and I were newly married, and I came home unexpectedly, from a great distance, at an hour Susan did not anticipate. It was 3:00 in the morning, she was sound asleep and dreaming her own dreams. In our dreams, we are in complete control—even though that control is an illusion.

I had been driving all night because of a crisis in my friend's marriage. I dropped him off and went home to my new bride. I would be entering like a thief in the night. But I wasn't a thief in the night—I am her husband. I tried not to startle her. But trying not to startle a person at 3:00 in the morning makes you seem to be, all the more, a thief in the night.

I remember thinking, if only I could enter her dreams and tell her, "Honey, I'm coming

home like a thief in the night. But I'm not a thief in the night, I'm your husband, and you're about to wake up." [Peter looks at the cross.] Imagine if a Person could do that!

I worked at the lock; the key in the door made a sound. And then I heard a voice of absolute terror, coming from the other room: "Is somebody there? Who is it! Oh my God who is it?" And I knew in that moment that my bride believed that whoever had opened that door and wakened her from her dreams, was in absolute control, and would most likely rape her.

Waking from a dream is waking from the illusion of sovereignty. Rape is stolen sovereignty. God will mess with your dreams, arrange for the destruction of your city and even your temple, just to wake you from your illusions. But He will not rape you.

"Is somebody there? Who is it? Oh my God who is it?" Susan exclaimed. I called out—as quickly as I could, "It's me. It's me. It's me. I love you." And she knew my voice... She knew me, and I knew her. She's my dream . . . and I'm her star man.

In Revelation 1:17-20 John writes,

*When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, 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. Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this. As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.*

I love that scene, The Starman walked over to John and touched him... "at hand." Just like He did twice to the prophet Daniel, (Daniel 10) in the Old Testament. He appeared in just the same way, Daniel fell as though dead, and the Lord touched him saying, "*Oh man deeply loved—beloved—fear not.*"

John referred to himself as the beloved. Jesus touched John, and John knew him. In fact, this had happened once before on the mount of transfiguration. Jesus shone like the sun, John dropped, and Jesus came and touched him...

Now, Jesus touches John with His right hand—the hand that held the seven stars. Now, He touches him as if to say, "John you know me; you laid your head on my chest at supper. We used to go fishing. John, I'm your best friend, Jesus... AND John, I am the Almighty."

Do you see why it's so important that you get to know Jesus *now*? In 1 John 2, John writes, "*And now little children abide in him, [we will talk more about what "abiding in Him" looks like next week] so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.*"

Those that refuse to wake up to Jesus only hide themselves deeper in Hell—in *hades*.

Well, after imagining that it was not me, Susan was so glad that it was me that she gladly surrendered her dreams, her sovereignty, and her unveiled temple to me. She got pregnant and gave birth to life, my life in her and through her. She became fruitful and multiplied, not by seizing control, but by surrendering control like a dancer surrenders to the rhythm of a dance.

I don't mean to be crass, Bride of Christ; I mean to point out, just how it is, that we conquer. We conquer, by being conquered, by Love. We conquer by waking up to the Starman.

[Peter begins singing]

There's a starman waiting in the sky	He told me:
He'd like to come and meet us	Let the children lose it
But he thinks he'd blow our minds...	Let the children use it
	Let all the children boogie...

I have no idea what David Bowie was thinking, but I do think he was tapping into something very profound: In order to conquer we have to become like children. It's much easier for children to surrender sovereignty. And it's much easier for children to dance, for children live in the now, and now is where we surrender and start to dance.

"Let the children lose it... lose control."

"Let the children use it... or be used by it."

"Let the children boogie."

When children surrender to a song, they start to sing.

When they surrender to music, they start to dance.

I think Jesus would like us to sing and dance.

He'd like us to join the song that John saw in chapters 4 and 5: "*...every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them...*"

singing and dancing, at the sight of the lamb on the throne." It's one song, but a different dance in each and every city, each and every part.

When we dance to His Rhythm, we become His Body, His dancing Body.

His will becomes our will and, yet, we are absolutely free.

His dream becomes our dream, and that dream is reality.

He is the dreamer and it's our choice—a choice given to us by Grace—to always be His dream. He is the King, and we rejoice that He is always at hand.

One day, you will hear a voice like a trumpet. And you will turn to see the Word that you heard—the Starman. And you will suddenly realize that you only exist because the Starman constantly dreams you into existence. At that moment, it is absolutely critical for you to know that the Starman is your best friend, Jesus.

### **Communion**

So, on the night He was betrayed—in the very depths of our darkest dream—He took

bread and broke it, saying this is my body given to you; take and eat.  
And He took the cup, saying this is the covenant in my blood poured out for the forgiveness of sins; drink of it all of you.

You're about to wake up, but let's surrender to Him right now. Would you pray with me?

### **Prayer**

Almighty God, we have suspected that someone is at the controls of the universe. We've suspected there's a Starman so we even write songs about it. Thank you that when we see Jesus we see you. Thank you, Jesus, that you are the Starman.

Now, join me quietly in your heart: "Jesus, to you I surrender my body. To you, I surrender my heart, my soul, my mind, and my strength. To you, I surrender the lampstand. Be the Spirit that inhabits my temple. You are my Savior. You are my Lord.

### **Benediction**

In case you're thinking:

*"Those are nice words. I sure wish they were true, but I watched the news this morning. I'm worried about people in Puerto Rico not getting enough to eat. There are famines and wars; the kings of the earth are threatening to nuke each other. There are storms. This world just seems like a bad dream."*

Right. So, read the Revelation—the vision.

And I know what people say,

*"Well, I read it and it freaks me out because there are famines, storms, earthquakes, and kings at war with each other. I worry that might happen."*

But don't you see that it *is* happening?

Read the Revelation—the vision. Keep reading it until you realize it's a story about how God conquers. He conquers the whole God-damned thing—with a Lamb—who makes it all a God-blessed thing. You are already awake and beginning to see.

Blessed are you who read aloud the words of the vision and hear the prophecy: Jesus wins. He always wins. He's the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords and your friend.

Believe the Gospel. In His 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.*