

How to Conquer the World: The Meaning of Your Scroll

Revelation 4:8-11& Revelation 5

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#12 in our series “The Gospel According to Jesus: The Revelation”

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Prayer

We thank you for who you are: overwhelming, endless, absolute Love. We pray that through the work of Jesus the Christ and the power of your Holy Spirit we would see you and that you would help us to preach. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Message

Since we stopped getting the paper, it’s become my habit in the morning to make some coffee, grab a protein bar, and watch the CBS morning news, which always begins like this:

CBS THIS MORNING “Eye Opener” Clip

Newcaster: “We begin this morning with a look at today’s eye opener—your world in ninety seconds.”

[Several headlines are briefly brought to the viewer’s attention accompanied by rapid images of each topic: views of the current president, issues of racism and immigration, potentially dangerous weather, updates about the search process of a local disaster, and highlights in pop culture.]

Newcaster: “All that, and all that matters.

Announcer: “This morning’s eye opener is presented by Toyota. ‘Let’s go places.’”

“The Eye Opener: Your world in ninety seconds . . .”

“All that and *all* that matters . . . Toyota, let’s go places.”

And I wonder where are we going? Is that all that matters? And what does it mean . . . my world in ninety seconds?

I watch the Eye Opener, and then I have my own eye opener:

I think about my kids, my mom, and all their challenges.

I think about y’all and all the stuff you’re going through.

I think about the sermon and trying to figure out what God wants me to say.

I think, “Life is hard. My world is chaotic and filled with pain.”

It’s stressful and I feel like an idiot.

I wonder: “*What does it all mean?* And then, “*Can I quit?*”

In the summer of 1979, I got a job as a lifeguard at the Green Oaks Community Pool in Littleton. I use the term “lifeguard” rather loosely because safety wasn’t my strong suit. I was more into fun . . . and the diving board was a lot of fun. And the kids at the pool loved to share my joy—so to speak.

That year in Physics at Heritage High School, I had learned that momentum is transferable, which means that if a 200 lb. eighteen-year-old boy and a fifty pound seven-year-old kid time their steps correctly a whole lot of momentum can be transferred from one to the other through a diving board.

Momentum is mass times velocity. This means that if we both (a seven-year-old and I) jump together, but I quickly buckle my knees, a seven-year-old can experience all my momentum in the form of a greatly enhanced velocity.

In other words, I could bounce a seven-year-old twenty or thirty feet into the air and all the way to the shallow end... where they would often belly, back flop or side flop in a very big way.

It was chaos and pain.

- They would surface with this stunned look on their face—eyes wide open.
- Then immediately they’d spin around looking for me—their eyes begging for explanation.

I learned that, at that moment, I had incredible power. If I looked away in distress or if I panicked in fear—if I screamed, “Oh my gosh . . . Are you OK? I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have bounced you so high.” They’d all at once break into huge sobs, run home, and tell their mom. I’d get in big trouble and they’d quit . . . coming to the pool.

Sometimes, after the morning Eye Opener, I just want to quit. I don’t know what that looks like for you—maybe it means getting drunk, maybe it means turning to porn, or going shopping, or having an affair, or holding a grudge and refusing to forgive; maybe it means suicide.

I don’t know what exactly quitting looks like for you . . . But I think for all of us, quitting is giving up on Love.

You know all that God asks of us is love—it’s the entire commandment. And Love is like momentum—It’s transferrable.

“We love because he first loved us.”

And yet Love does not feel safe—learning to love is chaotic and painful.

If you love with all the momentum of Jesus, you will probably get crucified. But Jesus is a lifeguard—and not a bad one like me...

The name Jesus means, “God is Salvation.”

Well, like I was saying, the moment that the kids surfaced—after experiencing

my momentum and then a bunch of chaos and pain—the moment they looked at me, I had incredible power.

1. If I screamed, “Oh No!” they’d weep, wail, and quit.
2. But if I stood tall, looked in their face and screamed, “Yes! That was awesome. You flew like superman. It stings, I know, but . . . Dude! You were amazing!” Instead of crying, they’d laugh and scream back “Do it again!” And the other kids would yell, “Do me too. Do me too!”¹

I was probably a bad lifeguard, but I think I was a better father. And what I learned at Green Oaks community pool was also true with my kids. When they were little, every time they experienced a little chaos or pain, they’d come running to me or to Susan, weeping and wailing. If we panicked, it only got worse, and they’d quit whatever they were doing. But if we smiled and kissed whatever was hurt, if we blessed the pain, they would usually be like . . . instantly healed.

I remember one day after church, the kids were running around the Sanctuary while I was talking to some folks. One of them fell and then ran to me screaming, “Kiss it Daddy, kiss it! Kiss my owie.” I did. And immediately, she jumped up, kissed me back, and ran away laughing. The person I was talking to said, “Wow it’s like she was actually healed by your kiss.” Well, maybe she was . . .

John was on the island of Patmos in the Mediterranean Sea.
He had loved because Jesus first loved him, but now . . . chaos and pain.
All the other disciples were probably dead—tortured and executed.
John was imprisoned and the churches that he pastored were facing all manner of challenges.
I’m sure they were all tempted to quit.

In the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, John turned and saw Jesus.
Jesus then dictates seven letters—each is an eye-opener.
Jesus then says, “John, I have something to show you. Come up *here*.”

Through a door opened in Heaven, John sees what we began to preach on last week. He sees the throne and around the throne twenty-four elders who never cease to cast their crowns before the throne, which means that the One on the throne never ceases to crown them.

He sees the Great Dance that is Eternal Life and the unbroken Communion of Love... and Love is everything we’re commanded to do.
He sees worship—in Greek, *proskuneo*—it literally means something like

¹ 1. If I apologized, they quit.
2. And if I eulogized, it was a party.

bow and kiss, and it's everything commanded of us.
Love *is* what it means to conquer.

Revelation 4:10-11

...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."

They're worshipping Him for He created all things, with His will, which is His Word—"All things," not "some 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 [literally: mourn and wail] because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.

John must've seen something like this:



I made this one for Easter two years ago. It's in the strong right hand of God, 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, you could discern the meaning of the scroll and 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.
- Some say it’s the Bible or the rest of The Revelation.

Maybe it’s all that and more. Everyone is singing about God creating “all things,” and the scroll is sealed with seven seals.... God creates all things in seven days . . . or six days and on the seventh, He rests.²

Perhaps the scroll is creation... and John weeps, for no one knows what it means.

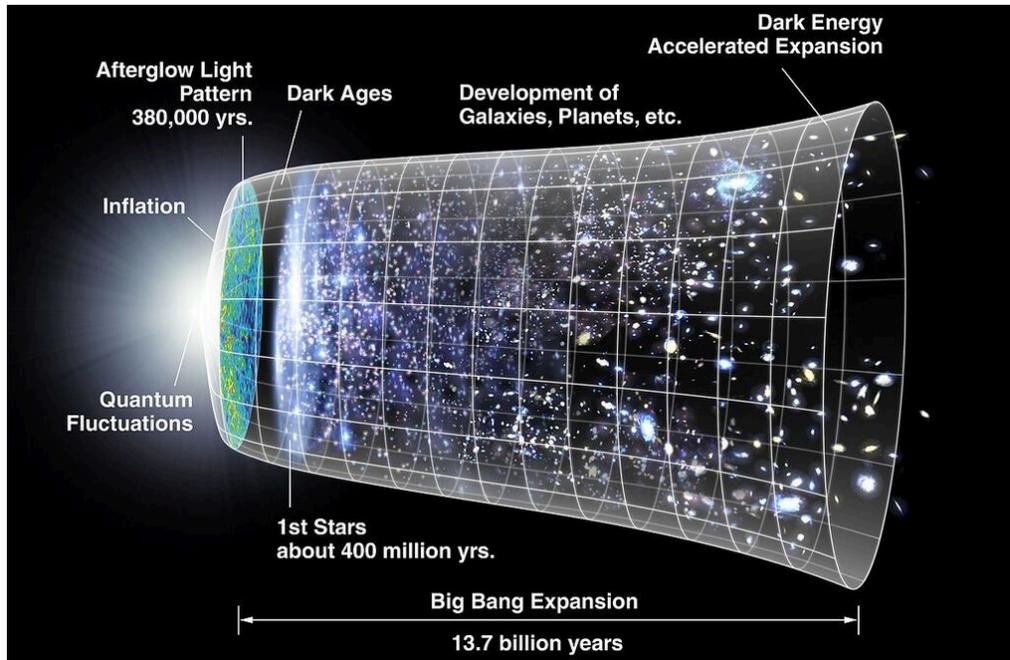


Figure 1 Image credit: NASA / WMAP science team

Have you seen this picture?

This comes from NASA and can be found on their website explaining the WMAP—Wilkinson Microwave Anisotropy Probe—a probe that was launched in 2001 to map all of the Cosmos or the universe, and now it’s work is complete. So, this is the best representation from the best scientists of the history and shape of our Cosmos.

The long horizontal axis represents time and the circles represent space. It looks kind of like a giant burrito.

The point on the left side is the beginning of space and time.

The inside of the giant burrito is all of space and time.

² God creates with His Word and the scroll is filled with words, written words, not Living Word, and nobody knows what they mean, for the scroll is sealed.

It's an incredible picture for it's a picture of all nature—all space and time. It's incredible for a million different reasons.

For **1.** It shows that everything natural is actually supernatural.

All physical laws are descriptions of cause and effect in space and time. The picture reveals that all cause and effect is the effect of an uncaused cause.

For thousands of years philosophers have called that God.

This is a picture of the creation of all things by something called God.

So **2.** What's outside of creation (this "giant burrito") is *not* actually no-thing...

It's that uncaused cause, that we call "God."

God is *not* nothing, but the absolute *something*. Yet...you could say that He's nothing like all the created something—He's Holy.

And **3.** This means that the Big Bang is not really an explosion of something in the nothing, but more like the explosion of nothing in the something. Think of an empty space in God . . . almost like a womb.

Then, into that nothing, God speaks His Word or shines His Light.

Scripture says that God is light... and His Word is the Light of the World.

God creates all things with His Word.³

So **4.** God creates all things. . . but evil is not a something, but a nothing.

Like darkness is the absence of light.

Like loneliness is the absence of Love.

Like lies are the absence of truth.

Like "I am not" is the absence of I AM

Like chaos is the absence of Logos—Which is God's Word, Will and Judgment.

So God's Judgment is creation. So *final* judgment is the finished creation.

5. The finished creation ("giant burrito") is like all things no-things, filled with all the fullness of God.

In the creation story, in each of the six days, we read that "there was evening and there was morning." Even a pre-scientific idiot would know you can't have

³ Scientist can't figure out what light is, but they know that light does not experience the passage of time, in fact space and time are relative to it.

Scientists ask what everything means, but they don't know what meaning is.

Scripture claims that everything was created with an idea, a meaning, a logos—which gets translated word.

Werner Heisenberg, Nobel Laureate in Physics, once stated: "The smallest units of matter are, in fact not physical objects in the ordinary sense of the word; they are... ideas." The diagram calls that a "Quantum Fluctuation," but Werner Heisenberg, father of Quantum Mechanics would call it an idea.

a sunrise without a sun. Well, the Hebrew word for evening comes from a root meaning darkness and implying chaos... and the word for morning implies order that comes through light. So, each day in the creation story there is order spoken into chaos until, on the Seventh day, all is filled with the goodness that is God Himself.

In Scripture there are six days of creation. But Scripture says that for the Lord a day is as a thousand years and a thousand years is as a day... and in ancient times "thousand" often just meant the highest denomination in which we count (you won't find the word "million").⁴

It was a common idea at the time of Jesus that God created in a Sabbath week of these creation days. That is . . . He created in six eons and in the seventh everything would be good.⁵

We begin to live in God's seventh day rest, when we have faith in God's Grace and submit to creation in the image of Love.

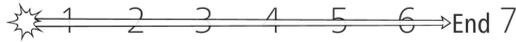
According to Scripture, this "giant burrito" could be divided into six complete eons or maybe seven.

The English word "eon" comes from the Greek work *aion*, which means age. The ages inside the burrito are *aions*, and the age outside the burrito, is an age unlike any of those ages inside the burrito. Scripture describes that age as *aionios*, which is an adjective meaning something like "of the age" and usually refers to God's age. *Aionios* is often translated eternal. God is Eternal. Light is eternal. Love is eternal.

So, all of time looks something like this:

⁴ So, Church Fathers like Augustine taught that clearly these days of creation were not our usual twenty-four hour days.

⁵ The Church Father Irenaeus taught that humanity sinned on the 6th day and was redeemed at the end of the 6th day, as Jesus cried, "It is finished" on a tree in the garden.



The Seventh Day is a bit confusing. Scripture mentions no evening and morning on the Seventh Day. It's like the end that never ends; in Hebrew thought the Eighth Day is an endless Seventh Day.⁶ Scripture claims that we have come to the end of the *aions* in Christ Jesus; He is the End. At His cross eternity invades time and at His cross we inherit Eternal Life.

So maybe time looks something like this:



Or maybe it looks something like this:⁷ (See the next page.)

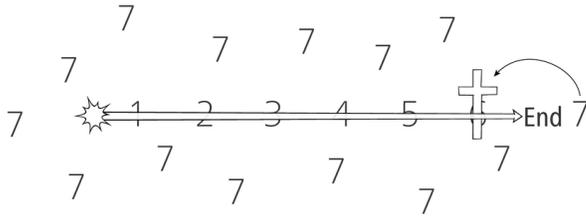
⁶ And on the Seventh Day everything is good.

So, the Seventh Day is the end of God's creation—it's like the presence of eternity in time. And Scripture claims that we can have *aionios* life, that's eternal life, now.

⁷ Jesus is the Beginning and End. He is the Word of God spoken into the void creating all things. And He is the Word of God spoken into you creating you in the image of God and you are finished at the cross, which is a tree in a garden, where we took knowledge of the Good and God gave us the life that is Himself.

Since the Enlightenment, most institutions of higher learning began teaching that space and time had no beginning and would have no end. About fifty years ago, schools just started teaching what science had just discovered—that space and time had a beginning and might very well have an end.

And not only that, space and time were relative somehow to light, and then with the advent of Quantum theory... even relative to meaning or idea.



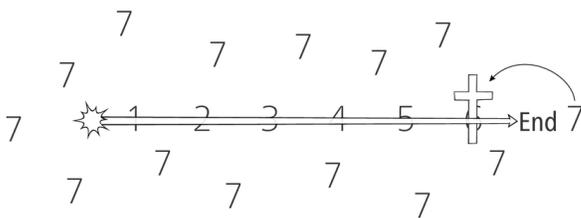
All of time exists in Eternity, like a scroll in the right hand of God Almighty.

About twenty years ago, Physicist Gerald Schroeder asked the question, “If the Cosmos is measured to be 14 billion years old from the standpoint of the earth, how old would it be from the standpoint of the big bang or quark confinement... in specific the Cosmic Background Radiation [Cosmos]—that’s the “afterglow light pattern” in this picture.

He did the math and came up with the answer of six to seven days. Not “your world in ninety seconds,” but your world in seven days.

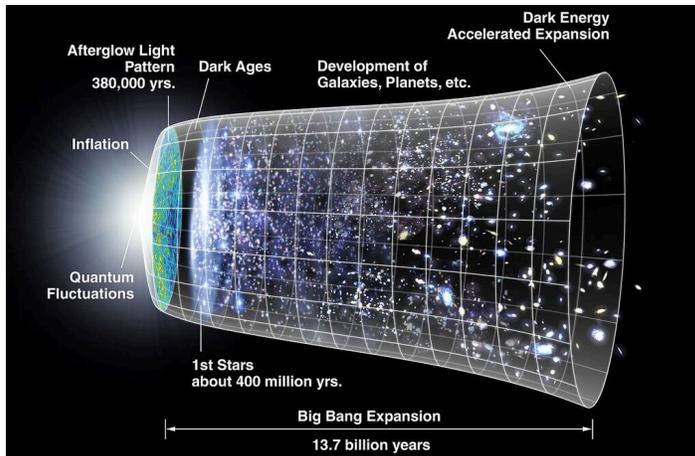
Whether he got his physics correct or not, all physicists would agree that depending on where you’re standing “A day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day.” In fact, if you’re traveling at the speed of light, there really isn’t time at all.

You see, I’m just saying that this:



Looks an awful lot like this:





In fact, if you tie seven strings around it and seal it with seven seals and it would look an awful lot like this:



6. I'm saying that the Cosmos is like a seven-sealed scroll in the right hand of God.⁸

⁸ Time does not exist, Barth concludes, apart from eternity's embrace. Eternity embraces time on all sides, preceding, accompanying, and fulfilling it. To say that God is eternal means that God is "the One who is and rules before time, in time, and again after time, the One who is not conditioned by time, but conditions it absolutely in his freedom" (II/1, p. 619). . . . God's eternity is so to speak the companion of time, or rather it is itself accompanied by time in such a way that in this occurrence time acquires its hidden center, and therefore both backwards and forwards its significance, its content, its source and its goal, but also continually its significant present. Because, in this occurrence, eternity assumes the form of a temporal present, all time, without ceasing to be time, is no more empty time, or without eternity. It has become new. This means that in and with this present, eternity creates in time real past and real future, distinguishes between them, and is itself the bridge and way from the one to the other. Jesus Christ is the way." (II/1, p. 627)

The real future that eternity creates in time is the future of eternal life in communion with God. The real past, in turn, is the past of sin and death as abolished in the cross of Christ. This old reality of sin and death is "continually opposed" by the new reality of eternal life, even as the new reality "comes breaking in triumphantly" again and again (II/1, p. 628). Jesus Christ stands between the

That raises an amazing question: where, and when, is John standing in Revelation 5?

- He was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day.
- He was like, out-carnated rather than *incarnated*.
- He sees twenty-four elders and four living creatures and surely they were created in the Cosmos.

Jesus is the "first born" of all creation—but He's not the only one. It appears there are first born and latter born. And the Gospel is not just that we go to Heaven but that heaven comes to us.

You cannot understand all of that, but Scripture and science *both* can help you to believe. And this is what I'm asking you to believe:

[Peter begins singing:



"He's got the whole world in His hands."

"He's got the whole Cosmos in His hands."

"He's got space and time in His hands. He's got the whole world in His hands."

And yet John is weeping and wailing. . . because the scroll is sealed and no one is found worthy to open its seals. In other words, no one can tell John what it all means.

It's ***one thing*** to come to believe that the God of the philosopher's and physicists exists, but it's an *entirely different thing* to come to know who He *is* and what He *means*.

It's ***one thing*** to know that someone or something created you and launched you into all this chaos and pain, but it's *another thing* to know what it *means*—what *HE* means—just who it is that stands on the throne, diving board . . . or whatever . . .

A sealed scroll is creation without Meaning—chaos and pain with no purpose—a story with no plot.

old reality and the new. "In him the equilibrium between them has been upset and ended. He is the way from the one to the other and the way is irreversible. He is the turning" (II/1, p. 628).

George Hunsinger, *Disruptive Grace*, p. 205, 207

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 because his friends are being martyred, in places like Smyrna & R He is weeping because all the other disciples are dead, he is exiled to a rock, alone in the Aegean Sea. **And** he doesn't know what any of it means.

- He is not weeping because he doesn't understand the *Left Behind* series or know dates of the great tribulation.
- He's weeping for He sees no purpose in Life.
- And if there is no purpose, there is not conquering, and there is no hope.
- He is weeping because he sees no "Logos," and so all is "chaos."
- He is staring into the void (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."

"Despair is suffering without meaning,"

Wrote Victor Frankel.

All creation is that scroll and you are part of that scroll.
Your life is like a scroll; your life *is* a scroll.

Because I'm a pastor people will ask me to unwrap their scroll and I feel completely unable . . . and not only unable, unworthy.

Several years ago a woman came to me with hundreds of horrifying pictures stuck in her mind and heart. Each picture was a memory, which is like a slice of the scroll—a moment in space and time. She had been ritually abused and was being assaulted by demons. Since then I've met several women with similar stories.

In one picture, she had been dressed as a little angel on Halloween. She explained that as a child it had always been her dream to be an angel. Her mother had dressed her in little wings and gave her a halo . . .

But when her father found her, he grew furious, ripped off her costume and abused her in the most horrific ways.

How could I speak meaning into such chaos and pain?
I've never been abused; I'm not worthy.

In prayer, she had a vision and I asked Jesus to destroy that picture—to erase that slice of space and time—for I couldn't even begin to open that portion of her scroll.

John weeps for no one is found worthy to unwrap the scroll. Next verse:

Revelation 5:5-6

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, [nikao is the verb] so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals." And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain...

On the night that He was betrayed (which is the beginning of the day that He was slain), John records that Jesus said, "*In this world—Cosmos, in Greek—you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have conquered [nikao] the cosmos*" (John 16: 33).

See? The seven-sealed scroll is all creation.
And He conquered it that day as He cried, "It is finished," on the cross.

It's breathtaking . . .

Can you think of a greater tribulation, a worse slice of space-time than that?
. . . than the day that humanity took the life of the Good in flesh on a tree in a garden?

Can you think of a worse day?
But now can you think of a better day?
. . . than the day God gave His own life on that tree in the Garden?

The day we *took* knowledge of the Good, has now been transformed into the day that Jesus *gave* us the knowledge of Himself, and He is Life.

In 1373 Julian of Norwich had her famous encounter with Jesus. She claimed Jesus taught her this and I quote: "Since I (Jesus) 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."

Jesus is the Beginning and the End; He's the plot.
Once you get to the end of a book you know the plot.
And the plot gives meaning to every page in the book.⁹
Jesus is what God means.
Jesus is worthy to unwrap the scroll because He has conquered.
But what a strange, bizarre, and holy way to conquer—the Lion *is* a little

⁹ Daniel received some amazing vision but was told, "These words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end." Jesus is the End and He's giving meaning to the entire story—He's gonna break the seals and open the scroll. He's the Living Word that is the meaning of every written word in the scroll.

slaughtered Lamb, and that little slaughtered Lamb *is* the Lion.

Revelation 5:5 And one of the elders said to me (I wonder who that elder was? It could've been Peter, James, John? Is the New John speaking to old John?)

Revelation 5:5-10

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." And between (or "in the midst of") 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" (or "do reign on the earth,"
according to some ancient manuscripts).*

Whatever the case, John looks and sees an *arnion*, it means "little precious lamb."

But this lamb has seven horns—which symbolize all power.

And it has seven eyes—this lamb knows all.

And the seven eyes are the seven spirits of God sent into all creation.

Everyone worships the lamb just as they worship God. John tells us He is the Logos, the Meaning, the Word that was in the beginning *with* God that *is* God, *through whom* all things are created. And John knows him because He knew John. He became flesh and went fishing with John and loved John, such that John would even rest his head upon His breast at the supper.¹⁰

As the Lamb unwraps the scroll, He smells your prayers; they are eternal and so are you.

He is able to unwrap the scroll because He created the scroll. And He is worthy to unwrap the scroll because He bleeds for John, and He bleeds for *you*.

¹⁰ Jesus from the bosom of the Father—he has made him known. (John 1:18)
Literally "He exegetes the Father." He is what God means.

Verse 9-11

And they sang a new song, (in eternity everything is always new. And in Hebrews it says a sacrifice is constantly newly sacrificed) saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed (you purchased) people for God..."

It's not just that He has all power and all knowledge, but that He sacrificed it all for you. He bled for you and bleeds for you every moment of your life.

When my children were little, they always ran to me or Susan to kiss their owies—to give knew meaning to their chaos and pain.

If you would've lined me up next to Albert Einstein—who knew so many things, and Donald Trump—who has so much power, they would've picked me, or Susan, every time because they *knew* that we would bleed for them and in some ways already had.

They knew because they'd been known. They didn't understand, they only had to believe in me, and then they would know—and live. I was worthy, in a little way, to unwrap that part of their scroll.

But years ago, this friend came to me, and she wanted me to unwrap her scroll. And I was entirely unable and unworthy.

The pictures were so horrifying that not only would she be stuck, I would also get stuck—afraid to live, for fear that they had no meaning, that God was not the author of the scroll, and Jesus had not conquered all things.

One night as we prayed, Jesus appeared to her in this vision.

I asked Him to hold her and he would not.

She wept, "I just want you to hold me."

And she heard Him say, "You have to give me those pictures."

(She was utterly ashamed of the pictures, and I just wanted Jesus to destroy the pictures.)

I prayed, "Jesus, please show her how you see her."

And she heard Him say, "Those pictures are part of who you are."

I really wondered if it was Jesus that she was talking to, but we began to give Him the pictures. It was a battle: she'd have to choose to surrender, and yet each choice was a gift, purchased with His blood.

He had shown her that He cried her tears, felt every wound and that whatever was done to her was also done to Him.

And He sent His Spirit into her heart crying, "Abba Father."

So she handed Him each picture. One after another He'd reveal His presence in each picture; He'd fill each picture with Himself.

- Where there was darkness she would see a brilliant light.

- Where there were lies, He transformed them with truth that is Himself.
- Where there was death, she saw resurrection.
- And in the place of sin, He would reveal the beauty of His Grace.

Each time, He would take the picture, frame the picture, fill the picture and hand it back to my friend... each picture now like a frame in a movie telling a beautiful story.

The last picture was that Halloween night. Jesus entered like a warrior. He came to her, covered her, and tenderly dressed her in her angel outfit, which she realized was also a white robe.

He sat her on His lap, rocked her, and held her. He told her how He hurt for her. He told her how hard He, the King of Glory, had fought for her. Then He said this: "You are always and will always be my little angel." She told me this and I said: "He is holding you and telling you who you truly are." As she wept in gratitude, she heard Him say: "Your pictures are my pictures."

After a time, she looked at me and said, "How do you think it makes Him feel when we're ashamed of those pictures." I said, "I guess that means we're ashamed of Him."

You know? Jesus didn't just redeem one moment of your life when you prayed a prayer at camp. He redeemed *all* your life, past, present, and future. In such a way that your story is actually His story. He filled it with Himself when He offered His life on the tree. It's how He creates you in His own image. He fills all of you with Himself. You *are* His body.

So, "The revelation you receive will come to you as reality, rather than knowledge..." writes the French Mystic Jeanne Guyon.

That means the revelation will come to you through your own particular life, as you offer it up and Jesus fills it with His meaning.

"This is the way it was in the life of Paul." She continues, "He did not ponder the sufferings of Christ; he did not consider the marks of suffering on the Lord's body. Instead, Paul bore in his own body the experiences of his Lord. He even said, 'I bear in my body the marks of Jesus Christ'"—the wounds.

And I hope you see that those wounds can even be wounds in your past. With forgiveness, God transforms the past.

Your wounds become His scars.

Your sins are the stage that reveals His Grace.

With faith, He transforms the past.

With hope, He transforms the future.

With Love, He sets us free to LIVE right NOW.

In Romans 8:28 Paul wrote, "*We know that all things work together for good*

with those who love God and are called according to his purpose.” But we wonder, “are there some that aren’t called according to purpose?”

Then Paul wrote, “*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors (hypernikao is the Greek word)—we are hyper conquerors through Him who loved us!*”

But we wonder, are there some that Christ doesn’t love? And could we choose to separate ourselves (from Him forever with out end)? Or maybe we’ve already chosen?

1 John 5:4-5, John writes “*This is the conquest that has conquered the cosmos—our faith. Who is it the one conquering the cosmos, but the one trusting that Jesus is the son of God.*” And we think, “See we have to have faith.” And we do. We do. We do. We do. But is it our faith that creates Jesus—that is God is salvation? Or is it Jesus that creates our faith?

I wasn’t a very good lifeguard, but imagine if I only saved kids who first professed their faith in me? And yet, by saving kids that didn’t have faith in me, I might create some faith in me in them. Actually, kids that had no faith in me probably wouldn’t even get in the pool or dare to get bounced on the board. They wouldn’t even try.

If you have no faith in Love, you won’t even try to live. In fact, you’re already dead—a slave to sin and trapped by hell. You need someone to push you into the pool. . . so you can get saved . . . and grow some faith.

I had a favorite kid that summer at Green Oaks pool. His name was Mikey. He was about five, and I saved him a lot. I tried to teach him to swim, but he always sank like a rock. Shallow end or deep end it didn’t matter—he was that short.

I’d give him these talks, “*Mikey, you could drown.*”
And he’d say, “*Does that mean I couldn’t swim anymore?*”

Routinely he’d get this wild look in his eye and just run into the pool laughing.
As he was drowning—He’d be laughing.
When I’d pull him out he’d be laughing.
When I gave him the talk he’d say, “*I’m sorry,*” but he’d smile.
He’d look at me . . . with these big trusting eyes as if to say, “*Peter why should I be worried, every time I start to drown. You save me.*”

That’s faith—faith in the wrong savior, but faith, and it melted my eighteen-year-old heart. My point is that Jesus is a better savior than me, and faith is what He’s after.

But it's not *our* faith that creates our savior.
It's our *Savior* that creates our faith.
In fact, that's what He's doing right NOW—in space and time.

Revelation 5:11-14

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 . . .

(Now let me just stop and say, there is no place else)

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!”

That's called Faith and it manifest as the great dance of Love that is Life...

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

So, most mornings, I drink my coffee and watch the morning Eye Opener. I wonder what it all means and I find myself tempted to quit. But then I usually remember to look at the throne. I'll shut off the TV, and I look to Jesus.

Lately, I've been picturing myself sitting next to Jesus on a beach. He's not worried. He's not stressed. When I think of things that stress me out, I don't say much but I just picture us putting these things in a boat and pushing them out to sea. He controls the sea, even though it looks like chaos

I don't need to understand; I just need to know that I'm known—by Him. I usually place my head on His chest for a time. And then I get up and live. Let's look to the throne:

Communion

On that night, which was the beginning of that Day, He took bread and He broke it saying, “This is my body given for you; take and eat. And in the same manner, after supper and having given thanks, He took the cup saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it all of you.

I suspect that right now he's not sitting. He's standing.

He's standing the way I stood on the diving board.

His eyes are locked on you ... and He's speaking:

*That was awesome! Yeah! Way to go!
I know it stings... but you were flying like an eagle!*

Don't stop loving. Don't stop living. Don't quit!

We can do this.

Just look at my hands; look at my side.

I believe in you. I am the belief that's rising within you.

Come to the table.

Now feast on me and . . .

Let's go conquer the World.

Let's love and never stop—even if they nail us to a tree.

Amen

Closing Prayer

Lord God, we thank you! Lord Jesus, we thank you for the apocalypse that you are. Thank you that it was your flesh that was ripped like the curtain in the temple, revealing the heart of God, and what everything means; it means Love. You are the definition of love.

We thank you that you are good. We cast our crowns before you with the knowledge that I am not salvation. *You* are salvation. You are Jesus, and you are holy. May our worship continue with every breath we take, and with every move we make. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Benediction

Listen to this in closing. This is what Jesus says. Do you remember Laodicea, the seventh church, the lukewarm church? This is what He says at the end: "The one who conquers, I will grant Him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

And Paul writes this: "We are *hypernikao*." "We are *hyper conquerors THROUGH HIM who loved us*." May you believe the Gospel and get back on the diving board. Don't stop. Don't quit. Yes, this world is full of chaos and pain, but you are full of Jesus. In His name believe and live.

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 or video version of the sermon on this website and don't be shy about informing us of errors.