

## The Hope of Easter

**Revelation 5:1-4** <sup>1</sup>And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. <sup>2</sup>And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? <sup>3</sup>And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. <sup>4</sup>And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

- John is watching the endtime unfold before his eyes (in one place in Revelation, he uses the phrase “I saw” 36 times in 34 verses!).
- At this point, he is overcome by anxiety and desperation because he doesn’t know how things will end.
- From John’s limited earthly perspective, it seems that destiny is hanging in the balance because no one is worthy to open the seals of this scroll of judgment which will vindicate the redeemed of all ages.
- There is no one in heaven (dominion of God), in earth (dominion of man), or under the earth (dominion of Satan), found capable of completing the task.
- This veteran of intense personal persecution, and countless battles with religious leaders, Roman emperors, and Satan himself is now reduced to tears because the outcome of the ages is so uncertain!
- John says, “I wept much” – “to sob and wail aloud ... MUCH!”
- THE THINGS OF GOD ARE OFTEN FAR DIFFERENT FROM THE WAY THEY APPEAR TO US WITH OUR EARTHLY PERSPECTIVE
- One of the worshipping elders steps over to John and says, “Do not weep ... behold the Lion ...” John looks and says, “I see a Lamb!”
- **Revelation 5:5-6** <sup>5</sup>And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. <sup>6</sup>And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.
- THE PROBLEM ISN’T JOHN’S EYESIGHT, IT’S HIS PERSPECTIVE – what he sees is correct, but what he understands is incorrect!
- THE ONE WHO WAS WAILING HAD HIS EYES ON THE PROBLEM, WHILE THE ONE WHO WAS WORSHIPPING HAD HIS EYES ON THE SOLUTION!
- Have you ever felt hopeless, overwhelmed, trapped or helpless? That’s simply because you haven’t seen the end of the story!

- Before you chide the disciples for their unbelief, berate them for their lack of vision, and scold them for not hanging around to see the miracle on that first Easter morning, remember that you didn’t go through the agony they did. You weren’t there on Friday when Jesus died! They didn’t have an inspiring drama, a stirring concert or a beautiful sunrise service to attend; there had never been an Easter Sunday. Only a Friday that was far, far from “good.”
- They had been with Him at the last supper as He spoke mysteriously of “one who would betray me” and struck fear into their hearts as they asked “Is it I?” They had been with Him in the garden as He prayed in agony for so long that they finally fell asleep from exhaustion. They were there when Judas came to betray Him and they realized the horror of what His earlier words really meant. They tried to defend Him, but who could stand against a Roman legion? They felt a burst of hope when Jesus said, “I can pray to my Father and He can give me twelve legions of angels,” then instant despair when He continued, “But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled?”
- They had followed Jesus at a distance, lurking in the shadows and outside the gates as He was put through the mockery of six trials between night and morning. They heard with everyone else the fabricated evidence and outright lies against Him, and their hearts sunk at the resounding verdict of “guilty” that echoed from each trial:
  - Before Annas the high priest (John 18:13)
  - Before Caiaphas (Matthew 26:57)
  - Before the Sanhedrin (Matthew 26:59)
  - Before Pilate (Matthew 27:2)
  - Before Herod (Luke 23:7)
  - Before Pilate (Luke 23:11-25)
- They had seen Jesus scourged until He could no longer stand under His own power, His skin literally ripped off in huge gaping patches. They had seen the makeshift crown of thorns pressed into His scalp until His face was dripping with blood; they had seen Him slapped, pummeled and punched until His countenance was permanently marred and He seemed only a grotesque caricature of a man.
- They had hoped beyond hope that when Jesus was taken before the crowds that this nightmare would finally be over. Surely the thousands He had taught and the hundreds He had healed would stand up for Him and convince the Romans that He was harmless to their empire! But with growing horror they watched the mob, under the evil influence of the Sanhedrin, turn a convicted murderer loose and scream “Crucify Him!” until Pilate was pressured to act.

- They had watched, engulfed by the angry mob, scared for their very lives, as Jesus was nailed to the cross and hoisted in the air, hanging naked and humiliated as He writhed in agony. They had watched his labored breathing and groans of pain, fully aware that crucifixion was really death by suffocation. They had heard the last cry, "It is finished," but all their ears heard was, "I am finished."
- They were there when a Roman soldier pierced Jesus' rib cage with a spear, one final injury that screamed the final verdict: He's dead! They were there when His unrecognizable body was unfastened from the cross and laid on the cold ground to be wrapped for burial. They were in the weeping, mourning, grieving procession that carried Jesus to a borrowed tomb. They were there when the huge stone was rolled in place. They had to take that long, long walk home to a life that no longer existed.
- Have you ever felt hopeless, overwhelmed, trapped or helpless? That's simply because you haven't seen the end of the story! Heaven's "Script of the Ages" is called "the mystery of God" (Revelation 10:7) because Satan can't understand it. He's also powerless to change it! And he wants to convince you that God has left you just as much in the dark as he is!
- **GOD HAS GIVEN US A KEY CALLED WORSHIP THAT CHANGES OUR PERSPECTIVE ON HEAVENLY THINGS.** Satan cannot even begin to understand it, because he lost his keys a long time ago! He lost all access to the purposes of God the moment he rebelled. And he has been frantically trying to bluff his way to victory ever since!
- **1 Corinthians 2:7-10** <sup>7</sup>But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: <sup>8</sup>Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. <sup>9</sup>But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. <sup>10</sup>But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.
- Worship is the key that lifts you up to God's perspective. The higher you rise in worship, the smaller the devil and his kingdom look! When you see things from Heaven's perspective, the one opening the scroll which controls the ages is not just a slain Lamb but a strong Lion! Once John understood this, he could stop weeping!
- Jesus was not just the Lamb slain in Revelation 5, or the Lamb slain at Calvary – He was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world! (Revelation 13:8) His "temporary defeat" had ALWAYS been part of God's plan for ultimate victory! **AND SATAN TOOK THE BAIT!**
- After Calvary, Satan and his demons had just three short days to celebrate their killing of God's latest "prophet" before GOD WALKED INTO HELL. Satan was puzzled and asked, "God, what are you doing here? You said that, since the fall of man, death, Hell and the grave would be my domain! Who gave You the authority to come in here?"
- God replied, "Don't you know? YOU gave me the authority you crucified me at Calvary!" Satan screamed, "What do you mean? That was just another prophet named Jesus!" God said, "No, that wasn't just another prophet – it was ME!" And at that moment, Satan understood a Scripture that had gnawed at him for centuries!
- **Deuteronomy 6:4** Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:
- **James 2:19** Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.
- ALL SATAN DID THE DAY HE KILLED THE LAMB WAS TO UNVEIL THE LION! And what he didn't know has been revealed to us by God's Spirit – 1 Corinthians 2:10.
- **Revelation 1:17-18** <sup>17</sup>And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: <sup>18</sup>I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.
- If Satan doesn't even have the keys to his own kingdom, how can he lock me up? Satan can't even lock up his own house!
- Jesus has absolute power over physical death and spiritual death. When He said to the thief on the cross, "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43), He was speaking of the abode of the dead. It had been under the control of Satan since the Garden of Eden (Job 3:17-19). Jesus went through death into the grave, but He came out with keys to both!
- **Psalms 68:18 - JEHOVAH:** Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them.
- **Ephesians 4:8 - JESUS:** Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.
- **Ezekiel 37:13** And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves,
- If Satan is powerless in the realm of your death (our "last enemy" – 1 Corinthians 15:26), then he is powerless in the realm of your life! His only "power" is deception! **Stop wailing and start worshipping!**