

“THE IMPERIAL DAY OF THE LORD”

LESSONS 1 & 2 • by Bishop David W. Kramer • February 10, 2016

REVELATION 1:1-3,

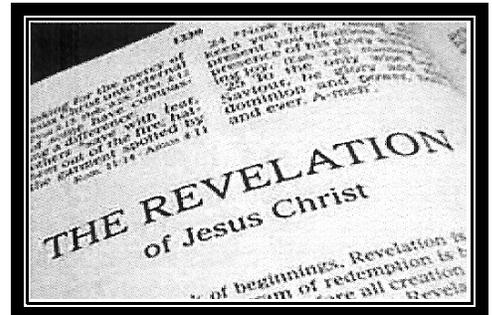
- 1 *“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John,*
- 2 *who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.*
- 3 *Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.”*

1. IT’S TIME TO STOP BEING AFRAID OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

A. I believe that it is a trick of the enemy for believers not to read and study the book of Revelation.

1) First, we must acknowledge that the book of Revelation is the revelation of Jesus Christ.

- a. Why would we not want to know about Jesus?
- b. He is the truth and the sure foundation that we build our lives upon.
- c. We should not want to “skip” or “miss” anything that reveals Jesus Christ to us.



2) There’s a blessing promised to those who read the book of Revelation and who keep the things written in it.

- a. How can we “keep” what we have not read or understood?
- b. I implore you to start reading the book of Revelation.

3) It’s human nature to ignore those things we do not understand.

- a. However, we do not have the luxury of ignoring the Word of God.
- b. We are the ones living in the Last Days. We cannot afford to be ignorant of what the Word of God—especially the book of Revelations—says about the days in which we live.

B. The time has come to boldly go where we have feared to tread in the past.

1) Keep this thought in mind: The book of Revelation REVEALS WHO JESUS CHRIST IS.

- a. No wonder Satan tries to keep us intimidated and confused about it.
- b. He wants us to be ignorant and to live below what God wants for us.

2) The book of Revelation is the Word of God.

- a. II Timothy 3:16, ***“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”***
- b. We do not have the right to ignore any book of the Bible! ALL SCRIPTURE is given for our benefit. The book of Revelation is the inspired Word of God!

C. The book of Revelation is incredible! It gives great instruction and information about the Last Days. It tells us emphatically that we win in the end! It tells us what to expect, how to prepare, and how to remain faithful to the end. No wonder Satan wants us to avoid it.

1) One of the key scriptures is found in Revelation 22:18,19,

18 *“For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book;*

19 ***and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*”**

2) Do we realize that we become one of those who “takes away” from the Word of God when we do not read or study the book of Revelation?

- a. I suppose Satan has himself a good laugh over that!
- b. He works to keep us intimidated and confused about a book that promises to reveal Jesus Christ to us.
- c. Let’s take authority over Satan and make it our mission to read and understand the book of Revelation!

D. In this lesson we want to discuss when it was that John received the vision which he wrote about in the book of Revelation.

1) The Church of God does not believe that John received this vision while he was exiled on the Isle of Patmos in AD 96.

- a. John was exiled to Patmos by the Roman Emperor Domitian because he refused to quit preaching about the vision of Jesus Christ he had received many years before.

2. WHEN DID JOHN RECEIVE THE VISION HE WRITES ABOUT IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION?

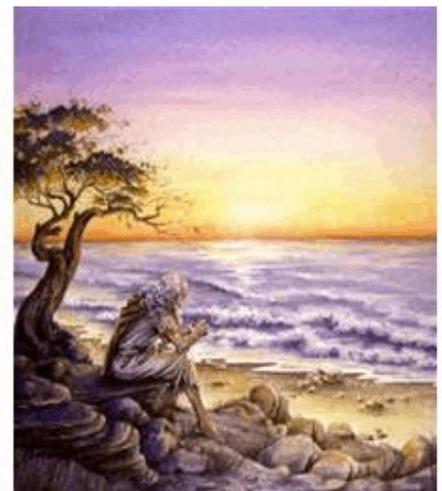
A. Most Bible theologians believe that the Apostle John received the vision while on the Isle of Patmos around 96 AD.

1) John had been banished to the Isle of Patmos in his old age (born AD 6 died ~ AD 98-100).

- a. Historians estimate that he was approximately 90 years old when he was exiled to Patmos.
- b. It was near the end of his life that John was being punished for a lifetime of preaching the Gospel.

2) Why was he exiled?

- a. Revelation 1:9, *“I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, **was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.**”*
- b. The original Greek is interpreted *“on account of the word of God and the witness of Jesus.”*
- c. In other words, John was not exiled to Patmos to receive a revelation.
- d. He was exiled because he refused to stop preaching the revelation and testimony of Jesus Christ. He had already suffered tribulation because of his sharing the Word of God long



after the other apostles had been killed/martyred.

3) According to church history, the Apostle John lived in Ephesus (modern-day Turkey—called “Asia” in the Bible) after his exile on the Isle of Patmos.

- a. It was at Ephesus that John is believed to have written all 5 of the New Testament books which he authored (Gospel of John, 1,2,3 John, Revelation).
- b. So, the book of Revelation was written by John (probably using a scribe) shortly after his return from the Isle of Patmos in AD 96. John is believed to have died between AD 98-100.
- c. While John wrote the book of Revelation in his old age, he received the original vision some 65 years earlier and spent a lifetime teaching about it.

B. If you want to read the book of Revelation chronologically, you need to understand when John the Revelator received the vision.

1) The truth is that John had received the vision long before he was on Patmos in AD 96.

- a. How do we know that for sure? Because John shared the vision with the Apostle Paul who historians say died approximately AD 65 (some 30 years before John was on Patmos).

2) In II Corinthians 12:1-4, the Apostle Paul mentions that he knew a man who told him about being caught up into the 3rd heaven and into paradise, and he states that it happened 14 years ago.

- a. There is only one man referenced in the New Testament that reported such an incident and that was the Apostle John in Revelation 4:1,2.
- b. Since Paul was led by the Holy Spirit to record this event, we can be sure that we are permitted to connect any relevant Scriptures to this account. The only relevant account found in the Scriptures is the one of John being caught up into heaven in Revelations.
- c. Remember, Paul was talking about “visions and revelations of the Lord” in this passage.
- d. We know that John was caught up to heaven to receive the revelation of Jesus Christ.

C. In II Corinthians 12:1-4, the Apostle Paul recounts his encounter with John the Revelator—the man who was caught up into heaven.

1) II Corinthians 12:1-4,

1 “It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord:”

- Remember the first scripture of Revelation 1:1—“*The Revelation of Jesus Christ...*”
- So, the context of this passage is talking about “visions and the revelations” of Jesus Christ.

2 “I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven.”

- Paul is referring to the Apostle John—the author of the book of Revelation.

3 “And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—”

- Paul is saying he was not sure whether or not John physically went to heaven or just in his spirit. However, John says in Revelation 4:2 that he was in the spirit (“*Immediately I was in the Spirit...*”). In other words, John had a vision.

4 “how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.”

- There were some things that John viewed but was not permitted to write down.
- Revelation 10:4, “*Now when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to*

write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, **“Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them.”**

2) Some contend that Paul was speaking about himself in II Corinthians 12:1-4.

- a. However, in verse 5 of the same passage, Paul clearly refutes that theory: “Of such a one I will boast; **yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities**” (II Corinthians 12:5).

3) Others contend that Paul never met the Apostle John. However, Paul clearly states in Galatians 2:1,9 that not only had he met the Apostle John, but he also received John’s blessing on his ministry.

- a. Galatians 2:1,9, Paul speaking, “Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me...[9] and when James, Cephas, **and John**, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, **they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship**, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.”
- b. We believe that Scriptures support the fact Paul received his understanding of the Last Days from the Apostle John. Notice that it is Paul who writes about the Last Days, the AntiChrist, and the return of Jesus in I & II Thessalonians.

4) Notice that it is Jesus, John, and Paul that write about “trumpets” in the New Testament. The use of “trumpets” in the Last Days is clearly defined in the book of Revelation.

- a. Matthew 24:31, Jesus speaking, “And He will send His angels **with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.**”
- b. I Thessalonians 4:16, Paul writing, “**For the LORD Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.**”
- c. Revelation 8:2,6, John writing, “And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets...6 **So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.**”

D. The first mention of Paul/Saul in the New Testament is found in Acts 7:55 when he witnessed the stoning of Stephen which took place in AD 34 (which was approximately 3 years after Jesus had been crucified).

1) At this time, AD 34, Jesus was already seated at the right hand of God which was apparent when Stephen gazed up into heaven before his death.

- a. Acts 7:55, “But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, **and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.**”

2) It is important to note that Jesus was already in heaven at the right hand of the God in AD 34. So, it must be noted that John had to have had the vision before this date.

- a. When John was caught up to heaven in the spirit, and stood in the throne room of God, JESUS WAS NOT THERE AS THE LAMB SLAIN FOR THE SINS OF THE WORLD.
- b. Revelation 5:1-4,
- 1 **“And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals.**
 - 2 Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?”

- 3 ***And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it.***
- 4 ***So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it.***

- 3) **If the Apostle John had received this vision on the Isle of Patmos in AD 96, Jesus would have already been seated on the right hand of God—just like He was in AD 34 when Stephen was stoned.**
 - a. In AD 96, Jesus had already been slain and been victorious over death and the grave and therefore He would have been worthy to open the scroll.
 - b. The truth is that John received this vision in AD 31—not some 65 years later in AD 96.

3. SO, WHEN DID JOHN SEE THE VISION THAT HE WROTE ABOUT IN REVELATIONS?

A. The Apostle John received his vision of the book of Revelation starting on the day that Jesus Christ was crucified—Passover—which occurred on Wednesday, Abib 14, in the year AD 31.

- 1) **Since Passover and the crucifixion of Christ took place on a Wednesday, and Jesus' subsequent appearance in heaven occurred on the following Sunday, Abib 18, the Apostle John apparently received the vision during this 4-day span. The Bible does not specify the length of the vision or give any further details.**
 - a. While the Apostle Paul was uncertain whether or not John bodily went to heaven, in Revelation 4:2 John states emphatically that he was *"in the Spirit"*.
 - b. Revelation 4:2, ***"Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne."***
- 2) **Notice that the Scriptures do not give an account of what the apostles did after the crucifixion of Christ.**
 - a. The last mention of John was by Jesus on the cross who instructed him to take care of His mother (read John 19:25-27). While numerous accounts tell of the women at the tomb, no Scriptures mention the whereabouts of the apostles until Sunday, Abib 18.
- 3) **The first mention of the apostles happens on Sunday Morning, Abib 18.**
 - a. In John 20:1-10, Mary Magdalene discovers the empty tomb early in the morning. She runs to tell Peter and John who race to the tomb. After viewing the empty tomb, the disciples return to their homes while Mary returns to the tomb.
 - b. Later that same day, Jesus appears to the apostles who were hiding behind closed doors according to John 20:19, ***"Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you."***

4. THE IMPERIAL DAY OF THE LORD.

A. There seems to be much confusion concerning the phrase *"on the Lord's Day"* found in Revelation 1:10.

- 1) **Revelation 1:10, *"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet."***
 - a. The key to understanding this scripture—and subsequently the timing when the vision was

received—is to determine what the Apostle John meant when he said “the Lord’s Day”.

2) Many scholars interpret this passage to mean that John received this revelation on a Sunday—which they call “the Lord’s Day.”

- a. They try and use the fact that this phrase was not used elsewhere in the New Testament to establish their belief that it was already the practice of the Early Church to gather together on Sunday to worship. This, however, is purely conjecture and theory which is not supported by Holy Scripture.

3) Others say that John received this revelation on a Sabbath—“the day of the Lord.”

- a. The scripture does not indicate or specify the 7th day of the week.

4) Most theologians agree that the original Greek phrase in Revelation 1:10 that was interpreted as “the Lord’s day”, is only used once in the New Testament.

- a. This particular Greek word interpreted as “Lord” is used only twice in the New Testament.
- b. It is used in I Corinthians 11:20 to refer to the “Lord’s Supper”.
- c. It is used in Revelation 1:10 to refer to the “Lord’s Day”.
- d. Regardless of one’s particular interpretation of this phrase, its interesting to note that the very fact that it was only used once in the entire New Testament gives it special importance to the Bible student.
- e. There was something unique and special about this day, so much so that the Apostle John used a very particular and unique Greek word to describe it.
- f. Please review the Greek to English interpretation for yourself.

Ἰησοῦ. of Jesus.	10	ἐγενόμην	ἐν	πνεύματι	ἐν
		I came to be	in	[the] spirit	on
τῇ	κυριακῇ	ἡμέρᾳ,	καὶ	ἤκουσα	ὀπίσω
the	imperial*	day,	and	heard	behind
μου	φωνῆν	μεγάλην	ὡς	σάλπιγγος	
me	² voice	¹ a great(loud)	as	of a trumpet	
11	λεγούσης·	ὃ βλέπεις	γράψον	εἰς	βιβλίον
	saying:	What thou seest	write	in	a scroll
καὶ	πέμψον	ταῖς	ἐπτὰ	ἐκκλησίαις,	εἰς
and	send	to the	seven	churches,	to

* See I. Cor. 11. 20.

This is the literal Greek to English interpretation of Revelations 1:10,11. This is a photocopy from the book INTERLINEAR GREEK-ENGLISH NEW TESTAMENT (Nestle/Marshall, 1958).

B. The original Greek passage was interpreted as “the imperial day”.

- 1) The word *imperial* means *relating to an empire or an emperor*. The word also refers to a “kingdom”.

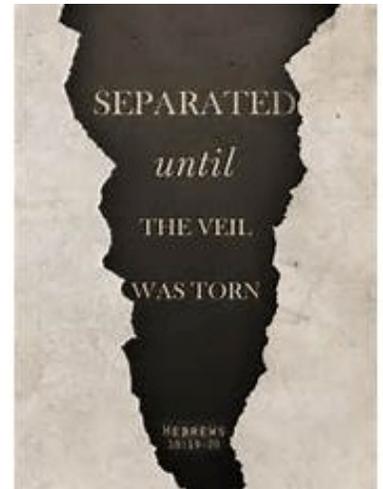
- a. When Jesus Christ offered Himself as the eternal sacrifice for sin on the cross of Calvary, it was the beginning of a new era—a new empire or kingdom—on this earth.
- b. This new kingdom could only be acquired by placing your faith in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ—the Messiah who had been sacrificed for the sins of all mankind.
- c. The only way to enter this kingdom was to be born-again just as Jesus explained to Nicodemus.
- d. John 3:1-3, *“There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” 3 Jesus answered and said to him, **“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”**”*

2) Before Jesus Christ arrived, salvation had only been offered to the Jews.

- a. In fact, Jesus instructed His apostles not to go to the Gentiles, but only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 10:5,6).
- b. It was not until after Jesus died on the cross that salvation was open to the Gentiles.

3) Upon His crucifixion, the wall dividing the Jews and the Gentiles was torn down.

- a. Galatians 3:26-29,
[26] **“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.**
[27] *For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*
[28] *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; **for you are all one in Christ Jesus.***
[29] *And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”*
- b. Ephesians 2:11,13-16,
[11] *“Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—*
[13] *But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*
[14] **For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,**
[15] *having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, **so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace,***
[16] *and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.”*

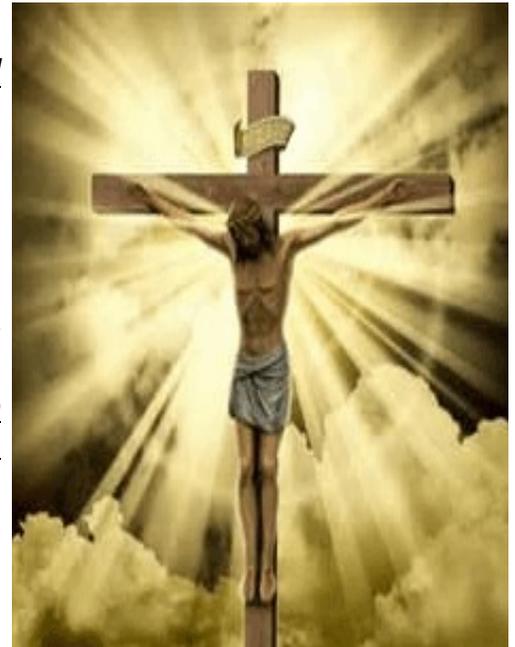


C. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ on Passover, Wednesday, Abib 14, AD 31, was indeed an “imperial day” as it ushered in the kingdom of God based on faith in Jesus Christ alone as our Savior and Redeemer.

1) The world as it was known changed forever on that special day.

- a. A new kingdom was ushered in that was accessible to everyone who called on the name of the Lord and was born-again through faith in Jesus Christ.

- 2) Everything had changed! In fact, the majority of the Jews resisted that change.**
- They accused Jesus of being a heretic and a blasphemer and they rejected Him as the Messiah.
 - Their actions and disbelief resulted in them being cast out of the kingdom of God.
 - Jesus said in John 3:5, “*Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”*”
 - When we are born naturally, we are born surrounded in water (the natural birth). Jesus says that we have to be born-again of the Spirit: This is the spiritual birth that takes place when we ask Jesus to forgive us of our sins and He cleanses us from an evil conscience.
- 3) No longer was salvation based on works or animal sacrifices under the Law, it was now based on faith in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ.**
- The truth is that salvation has always been based on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
 - Hebrews 10:4, “**For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.**”
- 4) The new kingdom ushered in by Jesus Christ on that Imperial Day of the Lord was the “better hope” talked about in Hebrews 7:18,19.**
- Hebrews 7:18,19, “*For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, 19 for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.”*”
- 5) The Apostle Paul referred to this new time as the “Dispensation of Grace” in Ephesians 3:1.**
- He goes on to explain the mystery that the Gentiles now had opportunity to be fellowheirs of the Gospel through Jesus Christ.
 - The message was so revolutionary in that day that it was called a “mystery” and the truth is that many Jews still reject the idea to this day.



CONCLUSION

On the day of Jesus’ crucifixion, Wednesday, Abib 14, AD 31, the Apostle John was chosen by God to receive a vision and revelation of Jesus Christ. It was on this date—the most important date in history—that Jesus Christ died for the sins of all mankind: Past, present, and future. It is a date that you and I still rely on today for the forgiveness of our sins.

It was on this “imperial day” [*def. relating to an empire or an emperor*], that the revelation of Jesus Christ’s empire or kingdom was revealed to John with the instructions that he “*Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this*” (Revelation 1:19).

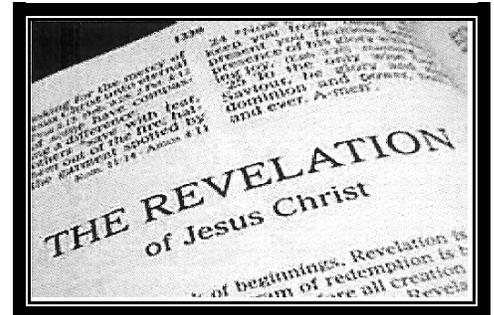
The book of Revelation is indeed the revelation of Jesus Christ Himself. It tells of His authority in heaven, His impending judgment of the earth, His Millennial Reign on the earth, and His subsequent rule for all eternity. Revelations is not a book to be ignored, it is a book to be embraced and loved. When we understand the book of Revelation, we will understand who Jesus really is!

**“WHO IS WORTHY TO OPEN THE SCROLL
AND TO LOOSE ITS SEALS?”**

LESSON TWO • by Bishop David W. Kramer • February 17, 2016

INTRODUCTION

In our first session about the book of Revelation, we introduced that idea that the Apostle John received the vision of the book of Revelation beginning on Passover–Wednesday, Abib 14, AD 31—the day that Jesus Christ was sacrificed for the sins of the world. The Bible does not give any details on the length of John’s vision other than the fact that John was in heaven (in the Spirit) when Jesus returned as the resurrected Lamb of God. We know that Jesus returned to heaven on Sunday, Abib 18, following His resurrection the previous evening at the end of the Sabbath.



While John was in heaven, a search was underway to find someone who could open the scroll that was sealed with seven seals. They looked in heaven, on the earth, and under the earth—yet no one was found worthy. This realization caused John to weep. Then, suddenly, Jesus appeared in heaven as the Lamb of God that was slain. He had prevailed over death and the grave—through His victorious resurrection—and He was now qualified to open the scroll. Jesus then opened the scroll and read its contents so that John could record them in what we now call “The Book of Revelation”.

1. THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING THE TIMING OF JOHN’S VISION IS BASED ON REVELATION 5:1-9.

A. First, we must establish that John is indeed “in the Spirit” in heaven. In other words, John did not physically leave this earth. We would say he was having a “vision”.

1) Revelation 4:1,2,

[1] *“After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.”*

[2] ***Immediately I was in the Spirit;*** and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne.”

2) John finds himself in the throne room in heaven.

B. In Revelation 5:1-9, John begins to see the following scene unfold in heaven.

1) Revelation 5:1,2,

[1] *“And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals.*

[2] *Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, **“Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?”***

a. The “One” on the throne is none other than Yahweh God the Father.

b. The angel is searching heaven to find someone worthy to open the scroll with the 7 seals.

2) Revelation 5:3,4,

[3] “And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it.”

[4] So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it.”

- a. Notice that there was no one found worthy to open the scroll in heaven, nor on the earth, nor under the earth—including Jesus!
- b. This does not mean that Jesus was not in existence because He was! Jesus is part of the Godhead and has always existed.
- c. It simply means that Jesus had not accomplished the requirements necessary to open the scroll at the time he was witnessing the scene.
- d. John was so upset at this revelation that he wept.



3) Revelation 5:5,

[5] “But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.”

- a. John was instructed to stop weeping. Why? Because someone had been found to open the scroll.
- b. Who? The Lion of Judah and the Root of David—which is none other than Jesus Christ Himself!
- c. Also, note that the word “prevailed” is inserted in this passage. What was the angel saying?
- d. Answer: That Jesus had now PREVAILED over death and the grave and was now found worthy to open the scroll whereas in the previous scripture this was not the case.
- e. So, what changed? What did Jesus prevail over? Jesus overcame death and the grave through His victorious resurrection.

4) Revelation 5:6-9,

[6] “And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

[7] Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

[8] Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

[9] And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.”

5) The fact that Jesus was slain as the Lamb of God now made Him worthy to take the scroll with the 7 seals from the right hand of God.

- a. It should be noted that at this point salvation became available to “every tribe and tongue and people and nation.”
- b. God’s plan of redemption for all people was no longer limited to the Jews.
- c. Notice the reference in verse 9 that they sang “a new song”. Indeed, this was the first time that this song could be sung, for it was the first time that they were truly redeemed to God.
- d. Why? Because of the blood of Jesus Christ, the sacrifice Lamb that was slain.

2. THE QUESTION NOW BECOMES: WHEN DID JESUS BECOME THE LAMB OF GOD THAT WAS SLAIN THUS REDEEMING MANKIND TO GOD BY HIS BLOOD?

A. The answer is simple: Jesus became the Passover Lamb slain for the sins of all mankind of Wednesday, Abib 14, AD 31 when He was crucified on the cross of Calvary in Jerusalem, Israel.

1) While John was having this vision of heaven, something changed.

- a. Whereas the scripture tells us emphatically that no one was found to open the scroll—and they looked everywhere: in heaven, on the earth, and even under the earth!—all of a sudden something changed!

B. What event happened that caused all of heaven to celebrate?

1) Jesus Christ voluntarily offered Himself as a sacrifice on the cross of Calvary and shed His blood so that all mankind could be redeemed unto God.

- a. Remember, without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins (Hebrews 9:22).
- b. And, this event took place while John was in the Spirit in heaven.

C. In Revelation 5:5, the word *prevailed* is used to describe what Jesus did.

1) Revelation 5:5,

[5] *“But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. **Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.**”*”

2) The word *prevailed* is a verb that means *prove more powerful, be victorious*.

- a. What was it that Jesus had *prevailed* over or was *victorious* over?
- b. The answer is: Death and the grave.

3. JESUS NOW POSSESSES THE KEYS TO DEATH AND THE GRAVE.

A. Before the time of Jesus, death, sin, and the grave, reigned over the earth.

1) Why? Because of mankind’s sin. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God and ate of the tree of Good and Evil in the Garden of Eden, they were given a death sentence.

- a. Genesis 2:16,17, “And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, **for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.**”



- b. It should be noted that had Adam and Eve obeyed God, they would have lived forever. When they disobeyed, they lost their chance at eternal life until Jesus Christ came along and prevailed over sin, death, and the grave.

2) Romans 5:12-14,

[12] “Therefore, **just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—**

[13] (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

[14] ***Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses***, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.”

- 3) **What is Paul saying? He is saying that mankind was lost to death, sin, and the grave—thereby allowing death to “reign” over the earth.**
 - a. There was no escaping death unless it was by a supernatural act of God. The Bible tells us that it is appointed for man to die (Hebrews 9:27).
 - b. And, without the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, that “death” would be an eternal separation from God with no hope of redemption.

B. Mankind was under a death sentence because of the sinful nature brought upon us by Adam and Eve’s disobedience in the Garden of Eden.

- 1) **Although mankind was able to be redeemed from their sins by the works of the Law in the Old Testament, that Law was only a schoolmaster designed to bring us to faith in Christ.**
 - a. The Law was designed to show mankind that they needed a Savior.
 - b. Galatians 2:16, ***“knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.”***
- 2) **In other words, all of the forgiveness and/or redemption of sins obtained under the Old Testament Law was still dependent upon the ultimate prophecied sacrifice of Jesus Christ whose blood cleansed us from our sin and thus our “death sentence”.**
 - a. Remember, according to Revelation 13:8, Jesus was crucified *“from the foundation of the world.”*
 - b. All of the redemption of mankind has always been qualified by the sacrifice of Jesus.
- 3) **If Jesus Christ had not become the Passover Lamb slain for the sins of the world, “death and the grave” would still be reigning today and we would be hopeless!**

C. Jesus Christ was victorious over death and the grave and His actions have made us free from the “sting of death.”

- 1) **Revelation 1:18,**
*18 “Jesus said, “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.***”*
- 2) **“Hell and Death”—which represent eternal separation from God—no longer reigned on the earth.**
- 3) **Mankind now has access to a Holy God, Yahweh the Father, through faith in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ His Son.**
- 4) **The eternal life that we lost in the Garden of Eden has now been restored to us when we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior and His atoning blood covers our sins.**
 - a. This is only possible because Jesus prevailed over death and now He—*not Satan*—has the keys to death and hell.

4. WHAT HAPPENED ON WEDNESDAY, ABIB 14, AD 31?

A. After Jesus died on Passover, He was placed in the grave for three days and three nights. He arose from the grave on Saturday evening.

1) Notice that Jesus did not go to heaven immediately after His death. He went to hell to preach to the spirits that were in prison.

2) I Peter 3:18-20,

[18] *“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,*

[19] *by whom also **He went and preached to the spirits in prison,***

[20] *who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.”*

3) What did Jesus preach to them?

a. I Peter 4:6, *“For this reason **the gospel was preached also to those who are dead,** that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.”*

B. Jesus was seen on earth before He ascended to heaven.

1) While Jesus arose from the grave on Saturday evening, He appeared to Mary on Sunday morning when she arrived to check on His tomb and found the stone rolled away (John 20:11-18).



2) Jesus instructed Mary not to touch Him.

a. John 20:17, *“Jesus said to her, **“Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.’”***

C. It was on Sunday, Abib 18, that Jesus appeared in heaven and was found worthy to loose the 7 seals on the scroll.

1) What did the scroll contain? God’s master plan for the Last Days and all eternity as written in the book of Revelation.

a. According to Revelation 5:9, this plan of salvation and redemption was now open to *“...every tribe and tongue and people and nation.”*

b. We know for a fact that this took place only once when the veil of the temple was torn in two at the time of Christ’s crucifixion.

c. That is when all of mankind was placed on an equal playing field with the only requirement for salvation being that one must be born-again through faith in Jesus Christ.

d. This opened the door of salvation to everyone—not just the Jews.

D. Why was it necessary for Jesus to open the scroll when it was not yet time for the judgments contained therein to be poured out on the earth?

1) First, it should be noted that Jesus did indeed *open the scroll and loose its seals* (Revelation 5:5).

a. In verse 4 the cry was made for someone to *“...to open and read the scroll, or to look at it.”*

- 2) **The scroll needed to be open so that the Apostle John could read and look at the prophecies and information contained in them to record for you and I.**
 - a. God had summoned John to heaven to show him *“things which must shortly take place”* (Revelation 1:1).
- 3) **If the scroll had not been opened, we would have not have the detailed record of the events which would take place in the last 3 ½ years before the return of Jesus Christ at the 7th Trump.**

E. Some would argue that Revelation 5 is a futuristic prophecy reserved for the Last Days.

- 1) **If this is true, are we saying that there would be another time in the future when Jesus would be found unworthy to open the scroll with the 7 seals that God held in His hand?**
 - a. Does this mean that Jesus would have to be slain again because His first crucifixion was somehow nullified?
- 2) **I Peter 3:18, *“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.”***
 - a. There will never be another sacrifice for sin. Before Jesus died on the cross He said, *“It is finished”* (John 19:30).

5. THE FACT IS THAT THERE HAS ONLY BEEN A SMALL WINDOW IN TIME WHEN JESUS WAS NOT FOUND IN HEAVEN.

A. Revelation 5:2-4 is emphatic that a thorough search was made in heaven, on the earth, and under the earth; however, no one was found worthy to open the scroll and loose the seven seals.

- 1) **They were looking for Jesus—the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, and the Root of David.**
 - a. At the time that John was in the Spirit in heaven, Jesus was not found there.
 - b. He had not yet prevailed over death and hell by resurrecting from the grave.
- 2) **The only time Jesus was removed from His heavenly glory and role was during His time here on the earth—a period of 33 ½ years.**
 - a. Hebrews 2:9 says that He was made a little lower than the angels to suffer death.



- 3) **Regardless of when the search for Jesus to open the scroll began, we know that it ended when He subsequently appeared in heaven on Sunday morning as the slain, resurrected, and victorious Lamb of God.**
 - a. He was slain at a particular time in history: Wednesday, Abib 14, AD 31—The Day of Passover.
 - b. He resurrected from the tomb on Saturday evening, the beginning of the first day of the week.
- 4) **On Sunday, Abib 18, AD 31, Jesus appeared in heaven as the slain Lamb of God. He was then found worthy to take the scroll and open it.**

a. Revelation 5:5-9:

[5] *"But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. **Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.**"*

[6] *"And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, **stood a Lamb as though it had been slain**, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.*

[7] *Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.*

[8] *Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.*

[9] *And they sang a new song, saying: "**You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.**"*

5) Remember, according to Revelation 5:6, the Apostle John was still in heaven when he looked and beheld the appearance of Jesus.

a. Jesus then took the scroll from God the Father and opened it.

b. John subsequently recorded what he heard and saw in the scroll in the book of Revelation.

B. According to Acts 7:55, Stephen saw Jesus standing at the right hand of the Father right before his death. That is where Jesus still is today. Historians conclude that Stephen was martyred in AD 34—approximately 3 years after Jesus was crucified (AD 31).

1) When John had the vision, according to Revelation 5:3-5, Jesus was not yet seated at the right hand of God.

a. Remember that He was not found in heaven and He had not yet prevailed over death and the grave.

2) After His resurrection, Jesus appeared in heaven on Sunday, Abib 18, AD 31.

a. After He opened the scroll with the 7 seals, Jesus returned to earth for approximately 40 days (Acts 1:3) where He was seen by over 500 brethren (I Corinthians 15:6).

3) Jesus then returned to heaven before the Feast of Pentecost (Acts 1:9) and sat down at the right hand of the Father to intercede for you and I (Mark 16:19; Hebrews 12:2).

a. Jesus will remain in heaven until His enemies become His footstool (Matthew 22:44).

6. HISTORIANS SAY THAT THE APOSTLE JOHN RECEIVED THE VISION OF REVELATIONS ON THE ISLE OF PATMOS AROUND AD 96.

A. The Church of God does not agree with this theory. The fact is that the Roman Emperor Domitian exiled John to the Isle of Patmos as a punishment because he refused to stop preaching the Gospel.

1) The Apostle John was born approximately AD 6 and died approximately AD 98-100.

a. He was the last surviving of the 12 Apostles and was approximately 90 years old when he arrived on Patmos.

2) John was not sent to Patmos to receive a vision, he was sent to Patmos as a punishment for a lifetime of preaching about the vision he had seen almost 65 years earlier.

a. Remember, he had shared that vision with the Apostle Paul who died ~65 AD.

B. If we accept the theory that John received the vision on the Isle of Patmos in AD 96, how do we explain the scripture in Revelation 5:4 which states emphatically that “no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it”?

1) Remember that a thorough search was underway in verse 3 and no one was found worthy to open the scroll.

a. So, if John is having this vision in AD 96—some 65 years after the crucifixion of Jesus—are we saying that there was still no one eligible to open the scroll?

b. In AD 96, we know that Jesus was already victorious over death and the grave and He had prevailed by His resurrection from the dead.



2) We have already established that Jesus was sitting at the right hand of God in AD 34 when Stephen was stoned.

a. Therefore, it stands to reason that the vision had to take place before this date.

3) The truth is that in AD 96, Jesus was already qualified to open the scrolls and there would be no need to undertake a search for someone to open and read them.

a. He had already paid the price to redeem mankind back to God.

b. Revelation 5:9, “*And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; **for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.**”*”

CONCLUSION

There is only a small window in history when Jesus was not in heaven. It occurred some 2,000 years ago when Jesus voluntarily made Himself a little lower than the angels so that He could taste death for you and I. Jesus became a man, born of a virgin, and dwelt on the earth for approximately 33½ years.

On Wednesday, Abib 14, AD 31, Jesus was sacrificed as the Passover Lamb for the sins of the world. Three days later, at the end of the Sabbath, He arose victorious over death and the grave. The Lamb of God that was slain, had prevailed over death and was now ready to return to heaven as the Redeemer of all mankind.

Jesus returned to heaven on Sunday, Abib 18, AD 31, and was found worthy to open the scroll that was sealed with 7 seals. He took the scroll from the hand of God and read it. John recorded what he heard in the book of Revelation. And, because of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross of Calvary, salvation and redemption to God was offered to every person. Thank you Lord!