

Dear Worshipers of the Resurrected Lord:

Some 25 years ago they were quite active.

- They stood on the street corners of the major cities of our nation
- They would stand or sit through rain, sunshine, cold or heat
- They would sell flowers to people walking past them on the street
- The money they would receive from their sales was not theirs to keep
- They would hand over the money to the one whom they considered their “savior”
- Who were these people?
 - They were followers of Dr. Moon of the Unification Church
 - They were called “Moonies”

When I would come across them, I often wondered what they really believed in. I wondered what motivated them to stand on street corners for hours selling flowers for money that they handed over to their leader. I also wanted to find out what they believed about concerning Jesus. This is what I found out.

- They believe Jesus came to earth only as a man to correct Adam’s failure
- They believe the cross is the symbol of the defeat of Christianity
- They believe that Jesus failed in his mission when he died on the cross
- They do not believe that Jesus’ death on the cross “saved” them
- They do not see Jesus as the King who conquered Satan and death
- They do not believe that Jesus is the eternal true God

Perhaps they have never read these words from Revelation which speaks to us about Jesus as our

- Savior
- Ruler
- Eternal God

The book of Revelation has always been somewhat of a mystery because of its use of symbolism. But Revelation makes it clear who Jesus is. The theme of Revelation is the return of Jesus to rescue his people and settle accounts with all who defy him. Revelation is a book of...

- Hope

- Warning
- Promise

Have hope knowing that God is in control and Christ's victory over sin and death is assured!

- Our great hope is that Christ's promises about eternal life are true
- Our great confidence is that we will reach our final destination - heaven – therefore we can follow Christ with courage no matter what we may face.
- God is in control of our life and our times.
- We may trust Him with our very own lives.

The Apostle John wrote the book of Revelation around 95 AD. It was a time of great persecution for believers in Jesus. Believers were persecuted by the Roman government because they would not say three little words: "Caesar is Lord."

By saying "Caesar is Lord" a believer could have saved his earthly life from...

- Imprisonment and exile
- Torture or death

By the time the Book of Revelation was written Caesar worship was the main religion of the whole Roman empire. Once a year everyone in the land had to appear before the Roman leaders of government to burn a pinch of incense to the godhead of Caesar and say "Caesar is Lord."

After this was accomplished a person could go on his way and worship any god or goddess he desired as long as that worship did not detract from his loyalty to Rome. Caesar, the Roman ruler, was to be worshipped first and then other gods as one saw fit. To refuse to burn the pinch of incense and to say "Caesar is Lord" was not an act of irreligion; it was an act of political disloyalty in Rome's view. This is why Rome dealt so harshly with anyone who disobeyed.

Revelation was written by the Apostle John to encourage Christians who were suffering in the midst of a difficult persecution. No Christian could give the title "Lord" to any other than Jesus Christ.

- This was the center of his creed
- Christians were considered to be outlaws by the Roman government
- Life for a believer was one of constant terror and persecution

The Apostle John wrote Revelation to...

- Exalt Christ and give believers hope and encouragement
- Help believers focus their eyes on Jesus as King and God

Our world today has many different views of Jesus Christ. The Apostle John gives us the real Jesus Christ who died and rose again for our salvation.

In verse 5 John writes about Jesus **“To Him who loves us** and has freed us from our sins by His blood.”

- The verb “love” is the Greek word agape
- Agape love is a compassionate and forgiving love when facing hostility and disobedience
- Agape love is the type of love a parent has for a child who is disobedient
- Agape love is the type of love a spouse has for husband/wife despite being wronged

Jesus had Agape love for us when He died on the cross.

- He loved us despite our sins
- John says here that Jesus loves us with a continuous love
- Jesus’ love never stops for us
- He loves us even though we repeatedly sin against Him
- Although Jesus hates sin, He still loves us
 - He loves us even though we may tell a lie
 - He loves us even though we may pass on a bit of gossip
 - He loves us even though we may be filled with sinful anger at times
 - He love us even when we don’t always show Him love in return

John reminds us in verse 5 that Jesus **“has freed us** from our sins...” The Greek word used here for “freed” mean to be “released from being tied up.”

- We have been released from our sins
- This releasing was done by one act of Jesus in the past and is good for all time
- Jesus released us from being tied up to our sins
- The blood of Christ released us from our ropes of sin
- As the Book of Acts says: “...the church of God, which He bought with His own blood.”

We are no longer tied up to our sins.

- Yes, we still sin but our sins cannot keep us away from God
- Yes, we still sin but our sins can no longer condemn us

- Romans 8:1 says: “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”
- We are free to live for God, to serve Him in our lives
- We are free from the power of death, from the power of Satan
 - The devil cannot touch us
 - The devil cannot control us

Praise God for this freedom that our sins can no longer be held against us!

The Apostle John reveals Jesus as our only Savior and for our strength to live in a hostile world he also reveals Jesus as our only Ruler. Verse 5 says Jesus Christ is **“the faithful witness”** A witness is a person who speaks from first-hand knowledge and Jesus is the Person with the first-hand knowledge about God.

Much of what we know about God has been told to us by Jesus in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. John wrote: “No one has ever seen God, but God the only Son, who is at the Father’s side, has made Him known.”

- Jesus has made God known to us
- Jesus has made the plan of salvation known to us
- Jesus is the Only Way to God for He is true God

Jesus as our ruler is the **“first-born from the dead.”** The Greek word for “first-born” means honor. It is used as a reference to the superior rank and dignity of Jesus Christ. It literally means “one with power and honor, one who occupies the first place.”

- Jesus was the first to be raised from the dead to die no more
 - Jesus is the Lord of the living whom we will follow in our own resurrection
 - Jesus’ resurrection is a picture of things to come for us who believe
 - As Jesus’ glorified body so our body will rise again to a new life
 - We have this glorious hope to look forward to
 - Therefore, death has no power over us, death has lost its sting over us
- Our death is not the end of us. Because Christ was the “first-born” from the dead, we will follow Him as the “second-born” from the dead.

Jesus is ruler over all. Verse 5 says He is “...the ruler of the kings of the earth.” Verse 6 continues the thought “...and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve His God and Father...”

In the Old Testament the Jewish believers would describe the Messiah as the highest of the kings of the earth. Psalm 89 says: "I will also appoint Him my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth." Paul says the same in Philippians "...that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God..." Jesus is ruler over all the earthly leaders of all time. Earthly leaders have their power limited and restrained by the rule of Christ. To Him they will be held accountable.

As believers in Jesus as King, we have been appointed to be a kingdom of priests in His service. A priest in the Old Testament would offer sacrifices to God on behalf of the people of Israel. The priest was also allowed to enter into the presence of God. We have been chosen by God to bring the Word of God to people. We may enter into the Lord's presence through the blood of Jesus. You are called as a priest to proclaim God's Word. You have the Word of God as a tool to...

- Fight off the power sin in your life
- Counsel others with problems in life
- Visit others who are ill at home or in the hospital
- Teach others about Jesus' plan of salvation for them
- Proclaim that the All-powerful God has offered eternal life to you – Amazing!

Revelation is a book of victory and believers are seen as overcomers.

We all have been drafted into God's service. Since Jesus is our ruler we will...

- Give of our life to His kingdom
- Spend time in prayer and devotion
- Love Him and others with the love He provides

Verse 8 reminds us that Jesus is the **"...Alpha and Omega..."** who is, and who was, and who is to come, the almighty." This means Jesus is the eternal God in whom we have life. Jesus is the A to Z of life. He is...

- The beginning and the end
- The source of all truth
- The end of all things – every question finds in Him the answer
- Almighty – all things are from Him and for Him
- The One who provides us with strength and self-confidence in life
- The One who takes away our loneliness

Revelation was written for believers who had their own little world falling apart around them. They would say to one another: “Meet more often to give thanks and glory to God for when you meet often Satan’s powers are thrown down.”

We may not feel or think at times that we are overcomers

- We need not fear life, because He is the Living One
- We need not fear death, because He died and is alive, having rose again
- We need not fear eternity, because He holds the keys of death

Christ decides who lives, who dies and when. 1:18

The One with the keys is the One who has authority.

He is the Almighty – He exercises sovereign control over every person, object and event not one molecule in the universe is outside that dominion.

“I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple.”

- Isaiah 6:1