

Patmos When the Heavens Opened

by Basilea Schlink

This sermon delves into the revelations received by the disciple John at Patmos, highlighting the battle between light and darkness, the impending divine judgments, and the importance of repentance and humility before God's wrath. It emphasizes the need to align with Jesus, the victorious Lamb, even in the face of persecution and suffering, as the ultimate victory belongs to those who follow Him faithfully.

Scripture: Revelation 1:12, Revelation 14:7, Matthew 24:9, Revelation 19:7, Revelation 22:12

Topics: "Victory in Christ", "The Call to Repentance"

Description

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Transcript

The Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary in Darmstadt, West Germany presents Patmos, When the Heavens Opened with Mother Basilea Schlink. We are living in troubled times. Light and darkness are at war, and Satan is gaining one victory after the other.

Sin and evil are flooding the earth. If God is almighty, why doesn't he intervene? This is the burning question that comes to mind as we look at the world scene today. Nearly 2,000 years ago, the answer was given in a revelation made to the disciple John at Patmos, a rugged island in the Mediterranean where he spent the last years of his life in exile.

In 1975, Mother Basilea, founder of the Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary and its headquarters, Canaan, in West Germany, felt that the Lord was calling her to visit the island for a time of prayer in solitude, and there she was granted a deeper understanding of God's eternal plans and purposes, as they are described in Revelation, the last book in the Bible. Mother Basilea would often climb up the steep donkey path leading to the grotto, which since the first centuries of Christianity has been recognized as the historical site where the apostle John received the revelation of Jesus Christ. Upon entering the grotto, she could immediately sense the presence of God.

It was like being in a holy temple, for the events of long ago are still captured in the atmosphere. She was constrained to kneel down at this site, where not only the apostle John, the favorite disciple of Jesus, had

set foot, but where Jesus himself had appeared. An icon above the historical spot shows how John, overwhelmed by the majesty of Jesus and his power as judge, lies on the ground like a dead man.

On the roof is a triple fissure which is symbolic of the Holy Trinity. The great voice as of a trumpet is said to have come out of the rock, causing it to split in three. Sitting before this icon, Mother Basilea read the passage in Revelation 1 that it depicts.

There John writes, On turning, I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands, one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden girdle around his breast. His head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze refined as in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of many waters.

What must it have meant for John that Jesus appeared to him in this way? Had he not been Jesus' favorite disciple? Had not Jesus loved him dearly and revealed his heart to him like a friend to a friend? But now it was a different Jesus that stood before him, so different that John may well have failed to recognize him at first. Indeed, Revelation gives us a completely new and different picture of Jesus Christ. There he reveals himself as the mighty Lord, the King of kings, the judge of all mankind.

The sword of judgment now issues from the mouth of him who is the Savior and Redeemer, and uttered so many words of mercy. John was to proclaim the apocalyptic age of divine wrath, therefore he first had to experience the holiness, majesty, and divine wrath of Jesus, before whom one can only lie prostrate on the ground. Here on Patmos, the book of Revelation opened up to me in a completely new way.

I was deeply moved to think that today, almost 2,000 years after John's visions, this revelation is beginning to be fulfilled before our very eyes. Yes, I could sense that the hour has come for the unfolding of the end-time visions, and I was pierced to the depths of my heart. Our generation has entered the age of the wrath of God.

The earth, covered with blasphemy, with sin, sin, and more sin, will experience the judgment of God. How terrible! And led by the Spirit, Mother Basilea began to write down her experiences. It became clear to her that we have entered the apocalyptic age, an age of fear and dread.

Iniquity is sweeping through every country. Terrorism, rumors of war, calamities, famine, and death pervade the earth. Yet these are merely preliminary judgments, culminating in the appearance of the four apocalyptic writers.

Divine judgments of an even more severe nature will follow. The events described by John are no longer a remote possibility today, for we are threatened by a nuclear war that could swiftly develop into a world conflagration. In Revelation 8, we read that the seven angels standing before God are given seven trumpets and prepared to blow their mighty blasts.

Thunder and lightning proceed from the throne of God. All heaven shakes. The Almighty God begins to judge the corrupt earth, and His holy angels execute His judgments.

The grass burns up. Springs, rivers, and oceans are contaminated. Approximately one-third of mankind dies in excruciating pain, and this time is near, as Scripture tells us.

Later, when the anti-Christian kingdom is established, the bowls of God's wrath will be poured out, in particular upon the harlot of Babylon, and all those who joined her in offering others the fierce wine of her

impure passion, and who drank of it themselves. What untold misery is caused even now by the sins of depravity and immorality so prevalent in today's world! John also sees that the woman is seated upon a scarlet beast that is covered with blasphemous names. Even now, at the beginning of the end-time era, blasphemy is commonplace.

Not only is it pervading heathen and anti-Christian nations, but it is spreading throughout the so-called Christian nations. People flock to blasphemous film and stage productions. They applaud, although a distorted image of Jesus is shown, although evil is glorified, and countless numbers fall under the power of the devil.

The sins of mankind grow, and so too the holy wrath of God. Judgment will reach its climax in the anti-Christian era. The kingdom of the Antichrist will be plunged into darkness.

Thirst will be prevalent, and plagues widespread. Men will gnaw their tongues in agony. Cities will fall in ruins.

Entire islands will vanish. Huge hailstones will kill people and animals, and ravage the countryside. Fire and brimstone will fall from heaven, and the elements will melt in the heat.

Whoever did not want to accept the God of love, our Savior Jesus Christ, who was crucified for our sins, must then encounter the terrible God of wrath. The day is drawing near when the countenance of the Savior, the meek and patient Lamb, will become that of the wrathful Lamb. At the frightening sight of his countenance, men will cry out to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, as John saw in his vision.

Perhaps in your heart you can hear the Lord calling to you, Awake! The judgment of God is about to descend upon the world. He is warning you because he loves you. So listen to him, and you will experience his help when that time comes.

Jesus is waiting for you, so come to him. Admit your sins, confess them, and turn from them. A scene from a herald play by Mother Basileia depicts the grief of the heavenly world.

So few heed God's call to repentance. Oh, listen, the angel is saying. Listen to God's lamenting.

My heart and my love I gave to my children. I gave them my only begotten Son, but they continue to sin. They hold me in contempt and ridicule my love.

Their sins are crying out to heaven. Come forth then, O eternal and almighty God, and manifest yourself. To the godless you show yourself as judge, but to the penitent you are a merciful Lord and rewarder.

The vats of evil are overflowing. The hour of judgment is impending. Anguished cries and moans will rise up to the holy God, whom men declared dead, whom they blasphemed, ridiculed, and degraded.

Mother Basileia writes in her book about her experiences on Patmos, how distressed I was to see that between the terrible judgments of God in Revelation, the words often appear, and they would not repent. They only cursed the God of heaven. In the coming time of judgment, people will shake their fists menacingly at God.

They will blame him for the judgments descending upon our world. Even today, when disaster strikes, people ask, how can God allow such things to happen? But God, the righteous judge, will ask us, where

does all the terrorism come from, the rioting? Where does the chaos come from? What is the cause of the economic problems, the misery in the world, the widespread famine, the many wars? Answer me. And no one will be able to answer him a word, but God can give the answer.

You have discarded my commandments. You have declared them invalid. In my commandments it is written, thou shalt not kill.

As long as they were valid, terrorism could not rule the nations. You have used the mass media to glorify crime in the eyes of the younger generation. You demanded a religion of liberation for the oppressed, and now they are oppressing you.

You abolished the fifth and seventh commandments, and this has led to rebellion, aggression, perversion, and sexual immorality, to ruined marriages and broken homes. You are the ones who destroyed my earth and contaminated the waters. You murdered unborn life, led children astray, and incited hatred.

My commandments offer peace, prosperity, and reconciliation for individuals and for nations, but you have rejected them. At this holy verdict of God, we can only fall silent and humble ourselves. Pierced to the heart, I sense that one thing is of utmost importance for each one of us, today and tomorrow.

The point is not whether we understand God in his wrath and judgment, but whether we can stand before him when his judgments descend. In Revelation 14, an angel proclaims the gospel of the end times to the whole earth. Fear God and give him glory, for the hour of his judgment has come.

In this connection, Mother Basilea went on to write, Jesus was gracious to the apostle John because he fell on the ground before him in humility and holy fear, and he will also be gracious to us if we truly humble ourselves. Whoever lies before God as a penitent sinner, willing to forgive others just as he was forgiven by Jesus, will be spared the sword of judgment. Indeed, the apostle John, who first saw Jesus as a judge, was then permitted to behold him in all his glory as the lamb enthroned on high.

And we too shall experience that the Lord will shine upon us in his glory, in the midst of affliction and darkness, if we repent and turn from our sins. God will spare such humbled souls as a man spares his son, and they shall be his special possession, as we read in the book of Malachi. Words like this disclose the innermost heart of God.

His only desire is to show us goodness and to protect us, as he has demonstrated ever anew in his dealings with his old and new testament people. Revelation not only describes the coming judgments of God, it also portrays the end-time battle between light and darkness, between heaven and hell. On Patmos, Mother Basilea could see in spirit something of what is to come.

Do I see it right? How strange! Two armies going to war. But this is not a battle you normally see. These two commanders are not equally matched.

The one is powerful, triumphant, crushing everything with his claws. And a great and mighty army marches under his banner. And the other? A lamb, oh, with only a handful of followers behind him.

Oh, Jesus, you are a king, yet how poor, how weak you are, and how small the numbers following you into war. Oh, yes, but I can see you bear wound marks. They are the source of your might, the source of your victorious power.

And what radiance rests upon you and upon this small band of souls. Yes, they bear your likeness. They too are lambs, covered with wounds and ready to die.

They are trampled underfoot, crushed and defeated. And yet, oh wonder, I see that they are the victors. I stand adoring.

Suffering and wounds bring victory, triumph and glory. And you, Lord Jesus Christ, the mighty commander, together with this small band that follows you out of love, ready to die, will gain the final victory. Do you want to belong to this small band fighting under the banner of the lamb? The lamb of God is their one and only love.

They long to be like him in following the example of the lamb. They endure everything in patience. They bear wounds and love their enemies.

But suffering and patient endurance are a source of power. They are the only way to victory. The time has come when we shall be hated and persecuted by all nations for his namesake, as Jesus prophesied in Matthew 24.

Even now, millions of Christians in various parts of the world are suffering persecution and martyrdom. How important it is that we pray, prepare me, Lord Jesus, help me to so live my life today that I can suffer for you tomorrow, out of love for you, and as a true lamb. Even now, the victory stands invisibly over the followers of the lamb, in prisons and labor camps, during cross-examinations, brainwashing and torture, and in the hour of death.

In his love, Jesus has prepared immeasurable glory for these sorely tried souls. They will partake of the merit supper of the lamb and dwell with him forever in the city of God. But not all believers will die a martyr's death.

A number will undergo other kinds of suffering, and when the midnight hour strikes, they will hear the call of the bridegroom. Jesus will come to gather all those whose lamps are burning brightly with love for him, as we read in the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25. He will deliver them out of the horrors of this world and take them to himself to celebrate the merit supper of the lamb.

Jesus is coming. Beyond all description will be the splendor and beauty, nobility, majesty and glory of our bridegroom Jesus. When he descends, he will come with a cry of command, with the archangels' call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God.

And the first fruits, his beloved and chosen ones, will be taken up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and they will be with him forever. Yes, blessed are those of whom God can save on the day of the merit supper of the lamb. His bride has made herself ready.

Love for her bridegroom has made her ready for this greatest of moments. She is ready because she kept the commandments of God and did not love her life, but sacrificed it for Jesus and others. She is ready because she fought against sin and Satan and overcame by the blood of the lamb in the word of her testimony.

This bridal host of the lamb, consisting of souls from Israel and from all nations and tongues, as well as the martyrs, is a triumphant proof for all eternity that God does exist. True, the prince of death was successful, having killed many who lived and fought for Jesus, but in one respect he miscalculated, just as he did at

Calvary. Life that comes from the immortal God can never die.

It is stronger than death. The martyrs and those taking part in the rapture, both his divine life is in them. Jesus was their life, their love, and this divine life continued to live.

And in the anti-Christian reign, when it seemed as though Satan would gain the victory once and for all, this divine life turned it into a crushing defeat. Hallelujah, for the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.

The lamb on Mount Zion is surrounded by his bride, the overcomers of the throne, who do not cease to praise and worship him, to whom they owe everything. Rivers of love flow from God's heart into theirs, and as they sing to Jesus, the lamb, their heavenly bridegroom, the air seems to carry the gentle strains of this new song from the throne on high, awakening in those who hear it a song of tender, fervent love for Jesus. To one name all our love belongs, most lovely name.

It is Jesus, Jesus fills our songs, oh blissful name. With all our heart and mind and strength, we give you our love. And one day we shall praise at length in glory above.

Glory beyond compare, this is what suffering brings, for with God suffering is never the end. Glory shall come from suffering. Oh, what glory God the Father has prepared for those who chose the path of the cross.

For those who chose the path of the cross. Glory, glory, glory, glory. And if the bridegroom tarries, wait for him, he will surely come.

So at a moment when you least expect it, when night is at its darkest, the words will come true. I am the first and the last, I am coming, I have come. Shame, and his reign can now begin.

If you would like to read more for yourself, ask at your local Christian bookstore for a copy of Patmos, When the Heavens Opened by Mother Basilea Schlink. A videocassette of this program is available upon request. 85046.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/agU8KWM0uhl.mp4>

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