

The Choice That Must Be Made!

When the civil war broke out, a former schoolteacher named Clara Barton begged Union generals to let her go to the front lines to help the wounded. "A battlefield is no place for a woman," they told her. But she hounded them until they gave in. Loading a wagon with supplies, Clara headed to the front and nursed injured men as shells whistled overhead.

At the Battle of Antietam in Maryland, a bullet tore through the sleeve of her dress, killing the wounded soldier she was tending. But Clara kept risking her life at front lines across the South, from Fredericksburg to Charleston. The grateful soldiers began to call her the 'Angel of the Battlefield.'

After the war she directed a search for missing men and helped mark the graves of nearly 13,000 Union soldiers died at the Andersonville Prison in Georgia. On a trip to Europe, she helped organize the relief efforts of the International Red Cross in the Franco-Prussian War.

A decade later, on May 21, 1881, Clara Barton founded the American Red Cross. For the next two decades, she was on the scene, delivering relief in times of natural disaster and war, including the Johnstown Flood of 1889, the 1898 explosion of the USS *Maine*, and Great Galveston Hurricane of 1900. She helped provide relief for victims of famine and war in Russia, the Balkans, Armenia, and Cuba.

Barton served as President of the American Red Cross until age 82. She died in 1912, eight years after her retirement.

-May 21 entry, *American Patriot's Almanac*

I wanted to share a sketch of her life with you because of a quote she gave one time that summed up her drive to aid others:

"The door that nobody else will go in at, seems always to swing open widely for me." -Clara Barton

Isn't that a great quote?!

And it fits perfectly with our last passage in Revelation today, which is also the last passage of the Bible!

**And what do we find in this the last passage of both Revelation and the Bible?
A final appeal to walk through the door of salvation that has swung open
widely for mankind, a final appeal to make the choice that must be made!**

Read Revelation 22:6-21 LET'S PRAY!

Our passage today is the postscript to The Book of Revelation, coming after the great vision John received on Patmos.

Let's take a moment and recap what we have seen in The Book of Revelation.

Turn to Revelation 1:1

As we have gone through Revelation we have tried to emphasize first and foremost the person and work of Jesus Christ!

We love the image of the eternal God becoming a child and born in the manger of Bethlehem we celebrate each Christmas!

We have emblazoned in our minds the loving Lamb of God hanging on a cross bearing our sins and then rising from the dead as the conqueror of death, the truths we celebrate at Easter!

But Revelation has taught us our portrait of Christ is not complete until we see Him as the white haired, blazing eyed Lion of Judah is going to return to earth and fulfill the Old Testament promises that Messiah would reign over the whole earth with His saints from the throne of David in the Land Promised to Abraham.

Our passage today is like the grand finale of a fireworks show, citing 8 names of Jesus Christ in 16 verses!

Look at 1:3

This is the first of, you guessed it, seven blessings promised in The Book of Revelation. This one promises a blessing for those who read, seek to understand, and apply to their lives the truths in the book! The last two of the seven blessings are in our passage for today!

Look at 1:19

This was our outline for The Book of Revelation

The things John had seen was the Great Portrait of Jesus as the Returning King He had seen in chapter one.

The things which are, that's the timeless portrait of believers in churches painted in chapters two and three. The commands in chapters two and three are in the present tense, and given to us as much as to John' original audience of the seven churches!

Beginning in chapter 4 and going until the final words of our passage for today, John spoke of the things which will take place after the age of churches. 4:1 uses the very words used in 1:19, "After this I saw..."

The word church does not occur from the end of chapter three until the very end of the book, the final words in our passage today that take place after the vision of the end times.

Look at 3:10

The age of testing is a reference to the end time Tribulation. After a look into Heaven in chapters four and five, the tribulation begins in chapter six and goes to chapter nineteen.

I take the promise here to mean that born again believers alive will be raptured off earth before the Tribulation begins.

This fits, because as we get into the Bible's reasons for the tribulation none of them had to do with the church.

The three purposes of the Tribulation:

- 1. Judge the Satanic World System that has ruined earth**
- 2. Re-gather a spiritual Israel ready for Christ to reign**
- 3. Give everyone on earth several last chances to repent before Jesus returns**

In Chapters nineteen and twenty we saw that Christ will return to earth at the end of the Tribulation and set up a Thousand Year reign on earth.

At the end of that time Satan will be dealt with and there will be the Great White Throne judgment of non-believers, and the earth as we have known it will cease to exist. For those who never walked through the Door of salvation Jesus has swung open widely for them, they will be banished forever to the Lake of Fire.

But chapters 21 and 22 tell us for those who did receive Christ and had their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life, their home will be a New Earth, free from the effects of the curse! Hallelujah!

And that brings us back to our passage for today!

The Last Three Things The Bible Impresses On Us:

First and Foremost, it's all about Jesus!

Eight names given for Jesus in this passage:

Verse 6 – The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets!

I'm going to come back to that, I love it!

Verse 13 - I am the Alpha and Omega!

The First and the Last!

The Beginning and the End!

Do you know what that means? It's all about Jesus!

I love how the author of Hebrews calls Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith!

Verse 16- I am the Root of David

That means he was alive before David, who lived before Jesus came as a baby!

Micah said His goings forth are from Everlasting!

John's Gospel says Jesus Created the World!

Jesus has always existed along with God the Father and God the Spirit!

Saying He is the Root of David is another way of saying He is God!

But He's also the Offspring of David!

If the Root reinforces He is 100 % divine, the Offspring reinforces that he is 100 % human. Jesus is the one uniquely qualified to bring God and man together!

As He Himself said, "He is the Door."

That is, the Door people enter Heaven through!

"No one comes to the Father but by Jesus!"

Verse 16 also calls Jesus, "The Bright Morning Star!"

Our problem is we make stars of people that are bound for the Lake of Fire. Revelation has taught us there's only room for one superstar in the Christian's life, Jesus, the Bright Morning Star!

John the Baptist said what should be the motto for all of us, "He must increase, but I must decrease!"

It's all about Jesus!

The Final title of Jesus is in verse 20- "Lord Jesus."

Romans 10 says when we confess with our mouths Jesus is Lord and believe in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead, we will be saved!

First and Foremost, it's all about Jesus!

Secondly, we are partners with all believers who have gone before and come after us!

Look again at verse 6

It says He is the God of the spirits of the prophets!

Moses is alive with Jesus!

Elijah is alive with Jesus!

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel are alive with Jesus!

After hearing all of these things from the angel, John was overwhelmed and fell to worship the angel.

Look at verse 9

The angel said, "Don't do that, John! I am a fellow slave with you, your brothers the prophets, and those who keep the words of this book!"

What a word to John!

He was connected with the prophets who had gone before, his brother apostles who had died, and even the angels!

But if John was overwhelmed hearing the angel, I am overwhelmed reading John!

I don't know about you, but personally I don't see myself as on the same plane as angels like Gabriel, OT saints like Moses and Elijah, and apostles like Peter, Paul, and John!

But what the angel said to John he also is saying to you and me.

Do you see it there in verse nine? It says we are fellow slaves with those who have gone before if we keep the words of this book! We are their partners, extending the kingdom of God in our generation as they did in theirs!

Hallelujah!

You and I are partners with the original Peter, Paul, and Mary!

Paul wrote to the Philippians and told them they were partners with him in the grace they were experiencing, and in the gospel they were sharing!

John wrote to the churches in Asia that they were his partners as they persevered in the midst of their troubles together, and partners in advancing the Kingdom of Jesus in the midst of the hostile kingdom they lived in!

Isn't it great to know that if you and I read the words of the Bible, and do what it says, we receive the blessing verse seven speaks of and are partners with all who have gone before and will come after?

Together we all worship God, and together we are partners making our unique contributions to advancing Jesus' Kingdom!

So as The Book of Revelation, and indeed all the Bible, comes to a close, first and foremost, we see it's all about Jesus! Secondly, we see that Christians are partners with all who believe who have come before and will come after!

Lastly, one more time the appeal goes out to sinners to come to Jesus before it's too late!

God is not willing that any should perish but that all should repent of their sins, and look to Jesus for mercy and be saved!

The Bible is one appeal to sinners after another from a loving God to choose the eternal life made possible only through Jesus Christ!

The holiness of God demands that He punish sin. The love of God delights in receiving sinners who let Jesus bear the wrath due them, and receive the forgiveness and eternal life that comes through trusting Jesus as Lord and Savior.

“Choose for yourselves today the one you will worship: the gods your fathers worshipped beyond the Euphrates River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living. As for me and my family, we will worship the Lord.” –Joshua 24:15

“When all has been heard, the conclusion of the matter is: fear God and keep His commands, because this is for all humanity. For God will bring every act to judgment, including every hidden thing, whether good or evil.” –Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

“For I take no pleasure in anyone’s death. This is the declaration of the Lord God. So repent and live!” –Ezekiel 18:32

“The one who believes in the Son has eternal life, but the one who refuses to believe in the Son will not see life; instead the wrath of God remains on him.” –John 3:36

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” –1 John 1:9

The heart of God is for people to experience eternal life because of what Jesus has done for them! And so it should not surprise us that what he has said throughout the Bible takes center stage here at the end of the book!

Verse 14 Blessed are those who wash their robes!

Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

If not, the last chapter of the Bible says, “Come to Jesus!”

Verse 17 The Spirit of God is saying “come to Jesus and live!”
The church, the bride of Christ says, “Come to Jesus and live!”

Look at the extent of the offer: anyone who is thirsty should come!
Anyone who desires to live forever with Jesus should receive His gift of salvation!

“Listen! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him and have dinner with him, and he with Me!” –Revelation 3:20

Jesus is the choice that must be made!

Reject Him, and you continue in the cursed, Lake of Fire bound state that you are currently in.

Receive Him, and experience life forever with Him on the New Earth- do it today, before it's too late!

In a moment, non-Christian, I'll give you a chance to receive Him!

But first a final word to those who are already believers!

Three times this Grand finale pictures Jesus saying, "Behold, I am coming quickly!"

Back in Rev. 3:11 Jesus said, "I am coming quickly. Hold on to what you have, so no one takes your crown!"

When Revelation uses this word quickly, two things are intended.

First, when the events described in Revelation begin to happen they will unfold in rapid succession.

Second, the events in Revelation are imminent, they "loom over" everything currently going on!

Look at the next to last verse of your Bible, Revelation 22:20.

Knowing Jesus was coming quickly caused John to blurt out, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

Fellow believers, Revelation 22 tells us what our perspective is to be as the time draws near.

First, we are to constantly be living in such a way that our lives and our lips say to non-Christians, "come to Jesus!"

And then with great expectation of His rapture we are to constantly look to Heaven and say, "come, Lord Jesus!"

You can only do that if you realize there is a spiritual battle going on all around you! Ephesians 6 tells us people are not the enemy, they are the ones we are trying to win to Jesus!

The church right now is too often lethargic and acting with a peace-time mentality rather than going through the open doors the Holy Spirit puts before us!

The end of the Bible pictures John and true believers in a spiritual battle, saving everyone we can on the battlefield before Jesus comes and airlifts us out of here!

That's the last picture I want to give you from Revelation!

Your on the battlefield, you know the airlift is coming to take you out of there, and you are speaking into your radio saying, please come get me, commander! But in the meantime, you are finishing strong in the battle you are called to!

Folks, Jesus is coming back!

With love in your heart get out there every day and plead with people to come to Jesus!

But also look to Heaven and say, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

Sinner's Prayer!