

REVELATION



Read Revelation 1:1–8

A blessing is called down upon those who read and heed the words in this book. There is an urgency about it all—one cannot afford to be casual about it. We are reminded that Jesus is faithful unto death and victorious over death—a fact which has a happy result for us.

Reflect: If God be for me who can prevail against me? It often seems that the storm clouds have gathered but that notwithstanding I take comfort in the thought that Christ will conquer. He is, after all, the Almighty.

Pray: Lord God, however threatening the sky above me, I put all my trust in you.

Act: I will resolve to stir up confidence in ultimate victory. God in his almighty greatness is on my side.

Introduction and Salutation

1 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants^a what must soon take place; he made^b it known by sending his angel to his servant^a John, ² who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.

3 Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it; for the time is near.

4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, ⁵ and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and freed^c us from our sins by his blood, ⁶ and made^b us to be a kingdom, priests serving^d his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

7 Look! He is coming with the clouds;
every eye will see him,
even those who pierced him;
and on his account all the tribes of the earth
will wail.

So it is to be. Amen.

8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

^a Gk slaves

^b Gk and he made

^c Other ancient authorities read washed

^d Gk priests to

Read Revelation 1:9–20

John is enjoined to write down and then hand on what is disclosed to him. This is to be passed on to the faithful whose experiences he shares. He has heard the voice of Christ and is commanded to circulate what he has heard. We are reminded that Jesus is present to his people. Take note that John here speaks of Jesus as God. John's message is intended not just for the Church of his day but for the Church until the end of time.

Reflect: As Christ was present and active in the Church of those times, he is meaningfully present in today's Church. One must guard against fixing on the weaknesses and inadequacies of people in the Church and losing sight of the fact of Christ's sustaining and enlivening presence in the contemporary Church.

Pray: Grant me the grace to deeply sense your presence in the Church of my day and be reassured by that awareness.

Act: Set an example of reverence for the Church by the way you speak of it and act toward it.

Read Revelation 2:1–7

The churches receive praise or blame as deserved. The fact is that Christians vacillate and are found to be sometimes devout and exemplary, sometimes weak and listless. The undercurrent in this text is one of encouragement.

Reflect: How frequently occurring this all is in the human experience—in one's own life. Fortunately God is kind and understanding. What an uplifting fact that is.

Pray: Thank you, dear God, for your endless patience with me and my foibles.

A Vision of Christ

9 I, John, your brother who share with you in Jesus the persecution and the kingdom and the patient endurance, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.^a ¹⁰ I was in the spirit^b on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet ¹¹ saying, "Write in a book what you see and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamum, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."

¹² Then I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and in the midst of the lampstands I saw one like the Son of Man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash across his chest. ¹⁴ His head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; his eyes were like a flame of fire, ¹⁵ his feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of many waters. ¹⁶ In his right hand he held seven stars, and from his mouth came a sharp, two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining with full force.

¹⁷ When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he placed his right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, ¹⁸ and the living one. I was dead, and see, I am alive forever and ever; and I have the keys of Death and of Hades. ¹⁹ Now write what you have seen, what is, and what is to take place after this. ²⁰ As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

The Message to Ephesus

2 "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands:

² "I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance. I know that you cannot tolerate evildoers; you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them to be false. ³ I also know that you are enduring patiently and bearing up for the sake of my name, and that you have not grown weary. ⁴ But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. ⁵ Remember then from what you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. ⁶ Yet this is to your credit: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I

^a Or *testimony to Jesus*

^b Or *in the Spirit*

Act: Resolve to be more thoughtful about your conduct of daily life. Use the daily examination of conscience to introduce more steadiness in your service of God.

Read Revelation 2:8–11

Persecution is in store for the believer in Christ. But not to fear—he who stands firm even, as may be, unto death, will conquer.

Reflect: Almost inevitably I, as a follower of Christ, shall have to suffer here on earth. But I am given to understand by these words of Revelation, that to cringe from persecution because of my embrace of Christ in faith, is to plunge into the second death: that is, to suffer the loss of a happy eternal life.

Pray: Strengthen me, O God, to see and to embrace the truth that it is better to suffer here than hereafter.

Act: Focus on some life situation, some habit of sin, that you are constantly prompted to embrace even though it may cost you eternal life. Seriously and finally renounce it. Have confidence that God will support you in the renunciation.

Read Revelation 2:12–17

Pergamum designates the Christian communities that cultivate earthly advantages at the cost of unadulterated faith in the true God. This is seen in their facile embrace of the spirit of Balaam.

Reflect: Am I too much in sync with popular and widespread viewpoints even when these viewpoints run counter to the Church's teaching? Is running with the crowd normative for me?

also hate. ⁷ Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. To everyone who conquers, I will give permission to eat from the tree of life that is in the paradise of God.

The Message to Smyrna

⁸ “And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These are the words of the first and the last, who was dead and came to life:

⁹ “I know your affliction and your poverty, even though you are rich. I know the slander on the part of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. ¹⁰ Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Beware, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison so that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have affliction. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. ¹¹ Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. Whoever conquers will not be harmed by the second death.

The Message to Pergamum

¹² “And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: These are the words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword:

¹³ “I know where you are living, where Satan's throne is. Yet you are holding fast to my name, and you did not deny your faith in me^a even in the days of Antipas my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan lives. ¹⁴ But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the people of Israel, so that they would eat food sacrificed to idols and practice fornication. ¹⁵ So you also have some who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. ¹⁶ Repent then. If not, I will come to you soon and make war against them with the sword of my mouth. ¹⁷ Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. To everyone who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give a white stone, and on the white stone is written a new name that no one knows except the one who receives it.

The Message to Thyatira

¹⁸ “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These are the words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze:

¹⁹ “I know your works—your love, faith, service, and patient endurance. I know that your last works are

^a Or *deny my faith*

Pray: Lord God, grant me the wisdom and strength to embrace your truth and the way of life it imposes, even when this comes at a high cost to my popularity.

Act: Identify specific instances of Church teaching at odds with current life style. Articulate this in public, even if doing so puts you at the risk of being scorned.

Read Revelation 2:18–29

It is important to have a tenacious hold on the true faith. Be wary of the strong pull to assimilate. For social acceptance and/or economic survival some people are prone to downplay or even abandon the faith.

Reflect: Once and for all one must put aside the urge and the pressure from outside to conform at all costs to the prevailing mores.

Pray: Grant me the courage and strength to live by your word, O God—not by any other norm no matter how widely accepted.

Act: Resolve to uncover through an earnest examination of conscience, any attitude or practice you may have that is endorsed by widespread practice or public opinion but which runs counter to the gospel.

Read Revelation 3:1–6

For the most part the members of the Church of Sardis are guilty of a certain lassitude in their commitment to Christ. This is a wake-up call for them. Happily there is a small minority unsullied by the torpor of the rest. To these few, blessedness is promised.

greater than the first. ²⁰ But I have this against you: you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet and is teaching and beguiling my servants^a to practice fornication and to eat food sacrificed to idols. ²¹ I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her fornication. ²² Beware, I am throwing her on a bed, and those who commit adultery with her I am throwing into great distress, unless they repent of her doings; ²³ and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am the one who searches minds and hearts, and I will give to each of you as your works deserve. ²⁴ But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call ‘the deep things of Satan,’ to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden; ²⁵ only hold fast to what you have until I come. ²⁶ To everyone who conquers and continues to do my works to the end,

I will give authority over the nations;

²⁷ to rule^b them with an iron rod,

as when clay pots are shattered—

²⁸ even as I also received authority from my Father. To the one who conquers I will also give the morning star. ²⁹ Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

The Message to Sardis

3 “And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars:

“I know your works; you have a name of being alive, but you are dead. ² Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is on the point of death, for I have not found your works perfect in the sight of my God. ³ Remember then what you received and heard; obey it, and repent. If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you. ⁴ Yet you have still a few persons in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes; they will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. ⁵ If you conquer, you will be clothed like them in white robes, and I will not blot your name out of the book of life; I will confess your name before my Father and before his angels. ⁶ Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

The Message to Philadelphia

⁷ “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:

These are the words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens:

^a Gk slaves

^b Or to shepherd

Reflect: It is disheartening to be a minority. Yet one must bravely face up to that fact and determine with Christ's help to prevail against all odds. Be convinced of the truth in the saying: "*multum in parvo,*" there is much in little.

Pray: Dear God, I pray for courage and increased strength to stand my ground even though I am in the minority.

Act: I will resolve to speak out for God and right upon every occasion that presents itself. Refuse to be cowed for being in the minority.

Read Revelation 3:7–13

The future must be faced with faith and courage. After all, Christ—and Christ only—has the power to grant access to God. He only has the key.

Reflect: One must never be tempted to minimize the absolute importance of Christ for salvation. There is only one Way. No ecumenical impulse must ignore this blazing fact.

Pray: I am profoundly grateful to you, Lord Jesus for having disclosed to me through the Scriptures and the teaching of the Church the deep need I have for you.

Act: Review your schedule of activities to ascertain whether your normal round of agenda reflects the importance of Christ in your life.

Read Revelation 3:14–22

The church in Laodicea was pathetically self-complacent. Harsh words are spoken to it out of genuine concern for its welfare.

8 "I know your works. Look, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. 9 I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but are lying—I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you. 10 Because you have kept my word of patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth. 11 I am coming soon; hold fast to what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. 12 If you conquer, I will make you a pillar in the temple of my God; you will never go out of it. I will write on you the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem that comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. 13 Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

The Message to Laodicea

14 "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the origin^a of God's creation:

15 "I know your works; you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were either cold or hot. 16 So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spit you out of my mouth. 17 For you say, 'I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing.' You do not realize that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. 18 Therefore I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire so that you may be rich; and white robes to clothe you and to keep the shame of your nakedness from being seen; and salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. 19 I reprove and discipline those whom I love. Be earnest, therefore, and repent. 20 Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me. 21 To the one who conquers I will give a place with me on my throne, just as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. 22 Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches."

The Heavenly Worship

4 After this I looked, and there in heaven a door stood open! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." 2 At once I was in the spirit,^b and there in heaven stood a throne, with one seated on the throne! 3 And the one seated there looks like jasper and carnelian, and around the

^a Or *beginning*

^b Or *in the Spirit*

Reflect: In our hi-tech, modern world, we run a greater risk of unwarranted complacency than ancient cultures did. We have widely conquered disease and ignorance but we have not engineered a perfect world. Sickness, natural disasters and war are still factors in our universe. We do not have a diminished need for God. If anything, ours is a heightened need for God.

Pray: Give me the grace, O God, to convert the inevitable trials of life into moments of acknowledgment of my dependence on you.

Act: Examine your life and conscience and, with a humble attitude, acknowledge your moments of most insistent need of God.

Read Revelation 4

John is granted a vision of heaven. He does not see God but somehow perceives him to the degree that a creature can. God appears as brilliant jewels. The very brightness of the vision at once declares the presence of God and conceals it.

Reflect: A fact never to be lost sight of is that God lives and reigns even in the midst of the chaos that besmirches our world.

Pray: I join my voice to all creatures in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea to cry out in praise of you, Lamb of God.

Act: The power and majesty of God are here perceived in bold relief. Through further reading strive to deepen your knowledge and appreciation of God's greatness.

throne is a rainbow that looks like an emerald. ⁴ Around the throne are twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones are twenty-four elders, dressed in white robes, with golden crowns on their heads. ⁵ Coming from the throne are flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and in front of the throne burn seven flaming torches, which are the seven spirits of God; ⁶ and in front of the throne there is something like a sea of glass, like crystal.

Around the throne, and on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: ⁷ the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with a face like a human face, and the fourth living creature like a flying eagle. ⁸ And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and inside. Day and night without ceasing they sing,

“Holy, holy, holy,
the Lord God the Almighty,
who was and is and is to come.”

⁹ And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to the one who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall before the one who is seated on the throne and worship the one who lives forever and ever; they cast their crowns before the throne, singing,

¹¹ “You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they existed and were created.”

The Scroll and the Lamb

5 Then I saw in the right hand of the one seated on the throne a scroll written on the inside and on the back, sealed^a with seven seals; ² and I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?” ³ And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it. ⁴ And I began to weep bitterly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. ⁵ Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.”

⁶ Then I saw between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders a Lamb standing as if he had been slaughtered, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. ⁷ He went and took the scroll from the right hand of the one who was seated on the throne. ⁸ When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the

^a Or written on the inside, and sealed on the back

Read Revelation 5

The plan of God for the world begins to take shape with the opening of the sealed scroll. It will turn out that only the Christ will be capable of breaking open the seal.

Reflect: Consider how all-important Christ is, not only for humanity as a whole but for me in particular.

Pray: Christ Jesus, I ask the grace never to take you for granted and not to minimize your vast importance for me.

Act: Look for the opportunity to express to a friend or acquaintance your worldview with Christ as the center.

Read Revelation 6:1–8

Humanity left to its own devices will wreak all manner of horror. War is one specific instance of humanity's brutality. War is not here celebrated. It is unmasked. Humanity even in its worst moods and moments cannot frustrate God's beneficent purposes.

Reflect: My faith must be broad and deep enough to perceive God at work in wondrous ways to achieve his purposes.

Pray: Enlarge my faith, O God, to make me ever mindful of your bottomless goodness and mercy at work in every one of life's contingencies.

Act: Look for the opportunity to identify the divine dimension of some current phenomenon.

twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.⁹ They sing a new song:

"You are worthy to take the scroll

and to open its seals,

for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God

saints from^a every tribe and language and people and nation;

¹⁰ you have made them to be a kingdom and priests serving^b our God, and they will reign on earth."

11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels surrounding the throne and the living creatures and the elders; they numbered myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands,¹² singing with full voice,

"Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might

and honor and glory and blessing!"

¹³ Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, singing,

"To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"

¹⁴ And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the elders fell down and worshiped.

The Seven Seals

6 Then I saw the Lamb open one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures call out, as with a voice of thunder, "Come!"^c ² I looked, and there was a white horse! Its rider had a bow; a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering and to conquer.

³ When he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature call out, "Come!"^c ⁴ And out came^d another horse, bright red; its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that people would slaughter one another; and he was given a great sword.

⁵ When he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature call out, "Come!"^c I looked, and there was a black horse! Its rider held a pair of scales in his hand, ⁶ and I heard what seemed to be a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a day's pay,^e and three quarts of barley for a day's pay,^e but do not damage the olive oil and the wine!"

⁷ When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature call out, "Come!"^c ⁸ I looked

^a Gk *ransomed for God from*

^b Gk *priests to*

^c Or "Go!"

^d Or *went*

^e Gk *a denarius*

Read Revelation 6:9–11

Fidelity to Jesus results in sharing his fate. But those who suffer for their faithfulness to Christ will be avenged. “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord” (Rom 12:19). Evil shall not prevail.

Reflect: To embrace Christ in faith is not without its penalty in today’s world. For one to stand up for Christian values is at best not to be taken seriously. But one must take the long view and know that eventually one will be well rewarded for steadfast faith in Christ.

Pray: Strengthen me, O God, and bless me for my steadfast loyalty to you and to your truth.

Act: Speak out candidly and specifically about the present violations of Christian morality even though these abuses are approved by law.

Read Revelation 6:12–17

The end of the world is depicted in imagery derived from the Old Testament. A crashing contrast is pictured here “the wrath of the Lamb.” Meekness, not wrath, is usually associated with a lamb. Subsequently Jesus will be pictured as intimidating to his enemies and seated on a white horse, but the fact is he will achieve victory hanging on the cross.

Reflect: More often than not the chances of victory for Christianity in today’s world seem dismal, but ultimately, Christ will conquer.

Pray: Strengthen my faith in your eventual victory, O Lord.

Act: Make a conscious effort to quell defeatist thoughts. Take heart in the assurance that Christ and his Gospel will triumph in the end.

and there was a pale green horse! Its rider’s name was Death, and Hades followed with him; they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, famine, and pestilence, and by the wild animals of the earth.

9 When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slaughtered for the word of God and for the testimony they had given; ¹⁰ they cried out with a loud voice, “Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long will it be before you judge and avenge our blood on the inhabitants of the earth?”

¹¹ They were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number would be complete both of their fellow servants^a and of their brothers and sisters,^b who were soon to be killed as they themselves had been killed.

12 When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and there came a great earthquake; the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, ¹³ and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree drops its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. ¹⁴ The sky vanished like a scroll rolling itself up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. ¹⁵ Then the kings of the earth and the magnates and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of the one seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb; ¹⁷ for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”

The 144,000 of Israel Sealed

7 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth so that no wind could blow on earth or sea or against any tree. ² I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to damage earth and sea, ³ saying, “Do not damage the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have marked the servants^a of our God with a seal on their foreheads.”

4 And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred forty-four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the people of Israel:

- 5 From the tribe of Judah twelve thousand sealed, from the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand, from the tribe of Gad twelve thousand,
- 6 from the tribe of Asher twelve thousand, from the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand, from the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand,

^a Gk slaves

^b Gk brothers

Read Revelation 7:1–8

Although God seals his faithful, this does not imply shelter from pain and death but rather divine support in time of tribulation.

Reflect: The only feasible attitude to strike is one of patient endurance. Life can be difficult at times but Christ is there to support us, his own, even in the worst of times.

Pray: I ask for strength and courage, O Lord, to make my way unscathed through life's dark alleys and narrow mountain pathways.

Act: Identify a long-standing problem, left not coped with until now. With God's help decide to finally grapple with it.

Read Revelation 7:9–17

God's people have successfully weathered persecution. They have survived not by taking the offense but by suffering death. Through it all, paradoxically, the Lamb has become the shepherd. It is the Lamb that has conquered and because of the Lamb we are empowered. "I can do all things through him who strengthens me" (Phil 4:13). A bright future awaits us as followers of the Lamb.

Reflect: There is an ingrained optimism in Christianity. It celebrates Good Friday but it is always headed toward Easter Sunday.

Pray: Throughout the dark moments of life, dear Jesus, let me never lose sight of the ultimate victory that awaits every one of your faithful followers.

Act: I will make a studied effort to be upbeat as I make my way through this life, aware that "*Christus vincit, Christus regnat*"—Christ conquers, Christ reigns.

- 7 from the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand,
from the tribe of Levi twelve thousand,
from the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand,
8 from the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand,
from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand,
from the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand sealed.

The Multitude from Every Nation

9 After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰ They cried out in a loud voice, saying,

"Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

¹¹ And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹² singing,

"Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

¹³ Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?" ¹⁴ I said to him, "Sir, you are the one that knows." Then he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

¹⁵ For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them.

¹⁶ They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat;

¹⁷ for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

The Seventh Seal and the Golden Censer

8 When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. ² And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.

³ Another angel with a golden censer came and stood at the altar; he was given a great quantity of in-

Read Revelation 8:1–5

The tone of these verses indicates the solemnity of the moment. The live coals are the prayers of the martyrs. Their prayers which have ascended to God now bring about changes on earth. God vindicates his people.

Reflect: Patient waiting is called for. God in his good time will vindicate his own. Our sense of timing is not infallible. It often happens that what we feel should happen in a trice, in fact requires time to ripen.

Pray: Grant me the wisdom and patience, O God, to credit the phrase “in God’s good time.”

Act: Prayerfully accept God’s will each day as you patiently wait for God to act in your behalf.

Read Revelation 8:6–13

The plagues triggered by the trumpet blasts are part of the ongoing battle between good and evil. These plagues result from man’s rejection of God’s overtures.

Reflect: No good can come from turning a deaf ear to God’s invitations. His offer of salvation is gracious and generous. To ignore it is pathetic and tragic. The only option that makes any sense at all is to embrace him and his offer with wild abandon.

Pray: Lord, your goodness to me is boundless. It makes no sense at all for me to turn my back on you.

Act: Take time—a day of recollection perhaps—to determine whether your life is as sharply focused on God as it could be.

cense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar that is before the throne. ⁴ And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel. ⁵ Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth; and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

The Seven Trumpets

6 Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets made ready to blow them.

7 The first angel blew his trumpet, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were hurled to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

8 The second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a great mountain, burning with fire, was thrown into the sea. ⁹ A third of the sea became blood, a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

10 The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, blazing like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. ¹¹ The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many died from the water, because it was made bitter.

12 The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of their light was darkened; a third of the day was kept from shining, and likewise the night.

13 Then I looked, and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew in midheaven, “Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow!”

9 And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from heaven to earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit; ² he opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft. ³ Then from the smoke came locusts on the earth, and they were given authority like the authority of scorpions of the earth. ⁴ They were told not to damage the grass of the earth or any green growth or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. ⁵ They were allowed to torture them for five months, but not to kill them, and their torture was like the torture of a scorpion when it stings

Read Revelation 9:1–12

Evil exists because of sinning humanity. The diabolical locusts have human faces, which is to say they are rebellious human beings working against God's will. Human beings have to confront the fact of their proclivity to sin. "The inclination of the human heart is evil from youth" (Gen 8:21).

Reflect: Man's proneness to sin must not be underrated. One cannot glide through life giving little thought to the vigilance we must always have against sin.

Pray: O God, be constant in your care of me. Shield me from the life situations that induce me to sin.

Act: Identify the persons, places or circumstances that have been conducive to your sinning in the past.

Read Revelation 9:13–21

The four angels represent God's reaction to sin. The thrust of the plagues is not vengeance but a call to repentance.

Reflect: Physical suffering and mental anguish must sometimes be interpreted as a summons to get serious and set aside sinful ways while there is still time.

Pray: Grant me the insight, O God, when it is called for, to construe suffering as a call to re-order my life.

Act: Set aside time to identify lingering habits of sin. Take firm action to break those habits. Be specific, be firm.

someone. ⁶ And in those days people will seek death but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will flee from them.

⁷ In appearance the locusts were like horses equipped for battle. On their heads were what looked like crowns of gold; their faces were like human faces, ⁸ their hair like women's hair, and their teeth like lions' teeth; ⁹ they had scales like iron breastplates, and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle. ¹⁰ They have tails like scorpions, with stingers, and in their tails is their power to harm people for five months. ¹¹ They have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon,^a and in Greek he is called Apollyon.^b

¹² The first woe has passed. There are still two woes to come.

¹³ Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four^c horns of the golden altar before God, ¹⁴ saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." ¹⁵ So the four angels were released, who had been held ready for the hour, the day, the month, and the year, to kill a third of humankind. ¹⁶ The number of the troops of cavalry was two hundred million; I heard their number. ¹⁷ And this was how I saw the horses in my vision: the riders wore breastplates the color of fire and of sapphire^d and of sulfur; the heads of the horses were like lions' heads, and fire and smoke and sulfur came out of their mouths. ¹⁸ By these three plagues a third of humankind was killed, by the fire and smoke and sulfur coming out of their mouths. ¹⁹ For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails; their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they inflict harm.

²⁰ The rest of humankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands or give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk. ²¹ And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their fornication or their thefts.

The Angel with the Little Scroll

10 And I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire. ² He held a little scroll open in his hand. Setting his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, ³ he gave a great shout, like a lion roaring. And when he shouted, the seven thunders sounded. ⁴ And when the seven thunders had sounded, I was about to

^a That is, *Destruction*

^b That is, *Destroyer*

^c Other ancient authorities lack *four*

^d Gk *hyacinth*

Read Revelation 10

The prophet is enjoined to not record what he has heard, because God withholds the doom that is implied by the seven thunders. Eating the scroll suggests that the prophet has to make part of himself the message he has to convey. The word of God which is to be transmitted brings grace (sweet as honey) and challenge (sour stomach).

Reflect: One must never lose sight of the limitless mercy of God. It must be shouted from the rooftops in season and out of season. This is a challenging task that brings fulfillment at times, frustration at other times.

Pray: God, grant that I may be constant and unfazed as I witness to your goodness in season and out of season.

Act: The prophet must eat the scroll—make it part of himself. So also I must make God’s word a part of my very being.

Read Revelation 11:1–2

The Temple is a figure of the Christian community. The Church will survive in the long run, but this does not imply an easy time of it for its members. When all is said and done, we can rely on Christ’s words of strong assurance: “But take courage; I have conquered the world” (Jn 16:33).

Reflect: It always softens pain to know that in the end one will survive it and prosper.

Pray: I need the strength that you can provide, O Christ, to face up to the challenges to my Christian faith that the world is constantly hurling at me.

Act: Decide not to slacken your efforts to live an intensely Christian life.

write, but I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Seal up what the seven thunders have said, and do not write it down.” ⁵ Then the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and the land

raised his right hand to heaven

⁶ and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it: “There will be no more delay, ⁷ but in the days when the seventh angel is to blow his trumpet, the mystery of God will be fulfilled, as he announced to his servants^a the prophets.”

⁸ Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying, “Go, take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land.” ⁹ So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll; and he said to me, “Take it, and eat; it will be bitter to your stomach, but sweet as honey in your mouth.” ¹⁰ So I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it; it was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter.

¹¹ Then they said to me, “You must prophesy again about many peoples and nations and languages and kings.”

The Two Witnesses

11 Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, “Come and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, ² but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample over the holy city for forty-two months. ³ And I will grant my two witnesses authority to prophesy for one thousand two hundred sixty days, wearing sackcloth.”

⁴ These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. ⁵ And if anyone wants to harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes; anyone who wants to harm them must be killed in this manner. ⁶ They have authority to shut the sky, so that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have authority over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire.

⁷ When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, ⁸ and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that is prophetically^b called Sodom and Egypt, where also

^a Gk slaves

^b Or *allegorically*; Gk *spiritually*

Read Revelation 11:3–14

The two witnesses are the Christian community “you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem...and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). The witnesses walk in the footsteps of Christ and pay the price for so doing.

Reflect: We are perhaps too low-keyed in our witness. Perhaps that is why we are so widely tolerated and made comfortable in the world.

Pray: Help me to be strong and clear in my witness to you, O Christ, and then let the chips fall where they may.

Act: Scout out the times and venues in which you can fearlessly and effectively testify to your faith.

Read Revelation 11:15–19

The happy news is that the forces of evil will be defeated, God will prevail, the glory of the Lord will appear, and all will be well with the world. God’s kingdom is free of suffering. It is a venue of peace.

Reflect: The ineradicable urge to have a happy ending will in time be gratified. Finally peace will reign. It is this thought that should sustain us through the thick and thin of the present times.

Pray: Grant me your sustaining grace, O God. See me through the thick and thin of the present time.

Act: Encourage someone to hold out during present misfortune with the hope of future glory.

their Lord was crucified. ⁹For three and a half days members of the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb; ¹⁰and the inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and celebrate and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to the inhabitants of the earth.

¹¹But after the three and a half days, the breath^a of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and those who saw them were terrified. ¹²Then they^b heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here!” And they went up to heaven in a cloud while their enemies watched them. ¹³At that moment there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

¹⁴The second woe has passed. The third woe is coming very soon.

The Seventh Trumpet

¹⁵Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying,

“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah,^c and he will reign forever and ever.”

¹⁶Then the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷singing,

“We give you thanks, Lord God Almighty, who are and who were, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign.

¹⁸The nations raged, but your wrath has come, and the time for judging the dead, for rewarding your servants,^d the prophets and saints and all who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying those who destroy the earth.”

¹⁹Then God’s temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple; and there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail.

The Woman and the Dragon

12 A great portent appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. ²She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pangs, in the

^a Or the spirit

^b Other ancient authorities read I

^c Gk Christ

^d Gk slaves

Read Revelation 12:1–6

One may see layers of meaning in these words. The woman robbed with the sun makes one think of the Messiah's mother—Mary. Also the woman is Israel, the people of God in the Old Testament period. Each in her own way gives Christ to us.

Reflect: The great gift we have received from Mary commands a deep gratitude. If there were no other reason to develop devotion to Mary, this would be reason enough.

Pray: Mary, how could I ever be appreciative enough and enthusiastic enough over your gift of Jesus to me?

Act: Determine the ways in which you might enlarge and enrich your Marian devotion.

Read Revelation 12:7–12

Jesus dying on the Cross achieves victory over the forces of evil. Jesus' victory in this world effects the defeat of the evil spirits in the spiritual world. By his death Jesus defeats Satan. Ironically it is through pain and weakness that Jesus prevails.

Reflect: One must condition oneself to trust in Christ's victory. It is to no avail to be personally bellicose; victory is guaranteed to us by Christ's conquest on the Cross.

Pray: Dear Jesus, I put my trust in you. My enemies are formidable and I am weak. My only and sure hope of victory is in you.

Act: Single out someone suffering from depression and seek to persuade him or her of the liberating optimism a Christian can have.

agony of giving birth. ³ Then another portent appeared in heaven: a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. ⁴ His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. Then the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child, so that he might devour her child as soon as it was born. ⁵ And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule^a all the nations with a rod of iron. But her child was snatched away and taken to God and to his throne; ⁶ and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, so that there she can be nourished for one thousand two hundred sixty days.

Michael Defeats the Dragon

⁷ And war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought back, ⁸ but they were defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. ⁹ The great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

- ¹⁰ Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, proclaiming, "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Messiah,^b for the accuser of our comrades^c has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. ¹¹ But they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they did not cling to life even in the face of death. ¹² Rejoice then, you heavens and those who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, for the devil has come down to you with great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!"

The Dragon Fights Again on Earth

¹³ So when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued^d the woman who had given birth to the male child. ¹⁴ But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle, so that she could fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to her place where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. ¹⁵ Then from his mouth the serpent poured water like a river after the woman, to sweep her away with the flood.

^a Or to shepherd

^b Gk Christ

^c Gk brothers

^d Or persecuted

Read Revelation 12:13–18

The Church, often menaced, enjoys God's special help and protection. Evil powers are frustrated in not being able to definitively crush it. Individual members of the Church can be harassed by the devil, but the Church itself is immune to his malice.

Reflect: There is a basic optimism to the Christian faith. It may entail struggle, but with God's help victory is assured.

Pray: Strengthen me for the battle I must wage against the forces of evil. With you at my side, dear God, I shall conquer.

Act: Be determined to take full advantage of the sacramental helps God has made available to you.

Read Revelation 13:1–10

Persecution of the followers of Christ is not the exception but the rule. The faithful will be rescued not from tribulation but through it. Hence, what is called for is patient endurance fortified by faith.

Reflect: The faithful must not be taken by surprise when difficulties confront them as they seek to lead their lives in conformity with God's will. God is there to buoy them up.

Pray: Grant me a sense of your nearness to me, O God, even during—especially during—the difficult moments.

Act: Develop a ready resort to prayer as a help for navigating the difficult moments of life and faith.

¹⁶ But the earth came to the help of the woman; it opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth. ¹⁷ Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on the rest of her children, those who keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus.

The First Beast

18 Then the dragon^a took his stand on the sand of **13** the seashore. ¹ And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads; and on its horns were ten diadems, and on its heads were blasphemous names. ² And the beast that I saw was like a leopard, its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And the dragon gave it his power and his throne and great authority. ³ One of its heads seemed to have received a death-blow, but its mortal wound^b had been healed. In amazement the whole earth followed the beast. ⁴ They worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"

⁵ The beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. ⁶ It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. ⁷ Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them.^c It was given authority over every tribe and people and language and nation, ⁸ and all the inhabitants of the earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slaughtered.^d

⁹ Let anyone who has an ear listen:

¹⁰ If you are to be taken captive,
into captivity you go;
if you kill with the sword,
with the sword you must be killed.

Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

The Second Beast

¹¹ Then I saw another beast that rose out of the earth; it had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. ¹² It exercises all the authority of the first beast on its behalf, and it makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound^e had been healed. ¹³ It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in the sight of all; ¹⁴ and by the signs that it is allowed to perform on behalf of the beast, it deceives the inhabitants of earth,

^a Gk *Then he*; other ancient authorities read *Then I stood*

^b Gk *the plague of its death*

^c Other ancient authorities lack this sentence

^d Or *written in the book of life of the Lamb that was slaughtered from the foundation of the world*

^e Gk *whose plague of its death*

Read Revelation 13:11–18

One must be on guard against the deceptiveness of evil. Evil comes in diverse colors and flavors. For all its wiles, evil cannot outrun the power of God.

Reflect: The second beast stands for false religion. A religion that easily insinuates itself as authentic. In the practice of the true faith one must be on guard not to introduce attitudes or actions that run counter to the core meaning of the true faith.

Pray: God grant me the insight and strength to live out my faith in an authentic fashion.

Act: Examine your conscience to determine that you are not given to actions or even attitudes that are not consonant with the Christian faith.

Read Revelation 14:1–5

The focus here is on the brighter side, on those who are the companions of the Lamb. They have shared his vicissitudes; they now share his glory.

Reflect: There is a close link between Christ and his followers—as he suffered so must they. They must share his fate. “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me” (Mk 8:34).

Pray: Jesus, Lord, grant me the strength to follow you through thick and thin—uncomplainingly through fair weather and foul.

Act: Take in hand a longstanding problem and finally deal with it. Be conscious of Christ’s presence with you as you do this.

telling them to make an image for the beast that had been wounded by the sword^a and yet lived;¹⁵ and it was allowed to give breath^b to the image of the beast so that the image of the beast could even speak and cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.¹⁶ Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead,¹⁷ so that no one can buy or sell who does not have the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name.¹⁸ This calls for wisdom: let anyone with understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a person. Its number is six hundred sixty-six.^c

The Lamb and the 144,000

14 Then I looked, and there was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion! And with him were one hundred forty-four thousand who had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads.² And I heard a voice from heaven like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder; the voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps,³ and they sing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the one hundred forty-four thousand who have been redeemed from the earth.⁴ It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins; these follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They have been redeemed from humankind as first fruits for God and the Lamb,⁵ and in their mouth no lie was found; they are blameless.

The Messages of the Three Angels

6 Then I saw another angel flying in midheaven, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live^d on the earth—to every nation and tribe and language and people.⁷ He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, for the hour of his judgment has come; and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

8 Then another angel, a second, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”

9 Then another angel, a third, followed them, crying with a loud voice, “Those who worship the beast and its image, and receive a mark on their foreheads or on their hands,¹⁰ they will also drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured unmixed into the cup of his anger, and they will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.¹¹ And the smoke of their torment goes up for-

^a Or that had received the plague of the sword

^b Or spirit

^c Other ancient authorities read six hundred sixteen

^d Gk sit

Read Revelation 14:6–13

The gospel is carried to all people. A call to repentance is addressed to all mankind and so is an offer of salvation. It is a time of reckoning—pagan Rome is marked for destruction for having led people astray by its paganism.

Reflect: The account of the judgment leveled at paganism serves as a summons to God's people to face up to the crisis with courage. After all, God is bent on saving humankind in spite of its fickleness. To follow Christ is salvation, to wander away from him is to choose death.

Pray: To follow you, Christ Jesus, is to live. Never let me be separated from you.

Act: Reaffirm your resolve to follow Christ in all things and at all times.

Read Revelation 14:14–16

Christ, the Son of Man, will come to summon the people of God. He will gather together the elect as a harvester reaps a crop.

Reflect: It is consoling to realize that beyond the unrest and struggle of this life there can be for me a warm future in Christ's embrace.

Pray: Grant me the grace, O Christ, to be among the harvest that you will gather up into your arms.

Act: Examine your conscience to ascertain that there is no flaw in your life that would exclude you from Christ's harvest.

ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image and for anyone who receives the mark of its name.”

12 Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and hold fast to the faith of^a Jesus.

13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who from now on die in the Lord.” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “they will rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them.”

Reaping the Earth's Harvest

14 Then I looked, and there was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one like the Son of Man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand! ¹⁵ Another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to the one who sat on the cloud, “Use your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is fully ripe.” ¹⁶ So the one who sat on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped.

17 Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. ¹⁸ Then another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority over fire, and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, “Use your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe.” ¹⁹ So the angel swung his sickle over the earth and gathered the vintage of the earth, and he threw it into the great wine press of the wrath of God. ²⁰ And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the wine press, as high as a horse's bridle, for a distance of about two hundred miles.^b

The Angels with the Seven Last Plagues

15 Then I saw another portent in heaven, great and amazing: seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is ended.

2 And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands. ³ And they sing the song of Moses, the servant^c of God, and the song of the Lamb:

“Great and amazing are your deeds,
Lord God the Almighty!
Just and true are your ways,
King of the nations!^d

4 Lord, who will not fear
and glorify your name?

^a Or to their faith in

^b Gk one thousand six hundred stadia

^c Gk slave

^d Other ancient authorities read the ages

Read Revelation 14:17–20

As the good are rewarded so the evildoers are punished. Those who have persecuted God's people must pay the price. God is good but he cannot overlook evil-doing. Evil cannot be perpetrated with impunity.

Reflect: How often it appears in this life that the good suffer and the evildoers prosper. But not really. There is a day of reckoning when all will be set to rights.

Pray: I pray for patience. In your good time, O God, I know that all will be well; the good will be rewarded and the wicked punished.

Act: Go forward energetically leading the good life, confident that the good will be rewarded, the wicked penalized.

Read Revelation 15:1–4

The final seven plagues are announced. Subsequently they will be carried out. In heaven those "who had conquered the beast" stand victorious and sing in praise of God.

Reflect: The thought of ultimate victory and reward should not be a stranger to us. In the end God will conquer, and those who have struggled to line up with him will prosper.

Pray: Increase in me, O God, patience and endurance along with the certain hope of victory for all who hold out to the end.

Act: Make a concerted effort to be optimistic. God and right will surely prevail.

Read Revelation 15:5—16:1

We must read this account of the seven plagues against the backdrop of a God who works always and ardently for salvation.

For you alone are holy.
All nations will come
and worship before you,
for your judgments have been revealed."

5 After this I looked, and the temple of the tent^a of witness in heaven was opened, ⁶ and out of the temple came the seven angels with the seven plagues, robed in pure bright linen,^b with golden sashes across their chests. ⁷ Then one of the four living creatures gave the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever; ⁸ and the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were ended.

The Bowls of God's Wrath

16 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels, "Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God."

2 So the first angel went and poured his bowl on the earth, and a foul and painful sore came on those who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped its image.

3 The second angel poured his bowl into the sea, and it became like the blood of a corpse, and every living thing in the sea died.

4 The third angel poured his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water, and they became blood. ⁵ And I heard the angel of the waters say,

"You are just, O Holy One, who are and were,
for you have judged these things;

⁶ because they shed the blood of saints and prophets,

you have given them blood to drink.

It is what they deserve!"

⁷ And I heard the altar respond,

"Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty,
your judgments are true and just!"

8 The fourth angel poured his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to scorch people with fire; ⁹ they were scorched by the fierce heat, but they cursed the name of God, who had authority over these plagues, and they did not repent and give him glory.

10 The fifth angel poured his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness; people gnawed their tongues in agony, ¹¹ and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and sores, and they did not repent of their deeds.

12 The sixth angel poured his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up in order to prepare the way for the kings from the east. ¹³ And I saw

^a Or *tabernacle*

^b Other ancient authorities read *stone*

Reflect: God's mercy and kindness are limitless. The human tendency is to apply human standards to God. That is a mistake. One must never lose sight of those words in Isaiah 1:18: "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow."

Pray: I owe you a huge debt of gratitude for the mercy and kindness with which you treat me, O Lord.

Act: Determine to be loving and merciful in your dealings with people, regardless of whether they seem deserving of such kindness.

Read Revelation 16:2–11

The punishment meted out is consonant with the wrong that was perpetrated: those who had no scruples in shedding blood are given blood to drink. Regrettably, those who are being punished remain obdurate.

Reflect: God always provides the culprit with the opportunity to repent. The sacrament of reconciliation is God's gracious gift. Do I avail myself of it?

Pray: I am grateful to you, O God, for your forgiving spirit, your readiness to pardon even the most heinous of my offenses.

Act: Emulate God's readiness to forgive by generously forgiving those who have offended you.

Read Revelation 16:12–16

"See, I am coming like a thief!" one of several calls for watchfulness. Jesus had been very clear and forceful about preparedness. "The one on the housetop must not go down or enter the house to take anything away; the one in the field must not turn back to get a coat" (Mark 13:15–16).

three foul spirits like frogs coming from the mouth of the dragon, from the mouth of the beast, and from the mouth of the false prophet. ¹⁴ These are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty. ¹⁵ ("See, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake and is clothed,^a not going about naked and exposed to shame.") ¹⁶ And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Harmagedon.

¹⁷ The seventh angel poured his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" ¹⁸ And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a violent earthquake, such as had not occurred since people were upon the earth, so violent was that earthquake. ¹⁹ The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. God remembered great Babylon and gave her the wine-cup of the fury of his wrath. ²⁰ And every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found; ²¹ and huge hailstones, each weighing about a hundred pounds,^b dropped from heaven on people, until they cursed God for the plague of the hail, so fearful was that plague.

The Great Whore and the Beast

17 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great whore who is seated on many waters, ² with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and with the wine of whose fornication the inhabitants of the earth have become drunk." ³ So he carried me away in the spirit^c into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns. ⁴ The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication; ⁵ and on her forehead was written a name, a mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of whores and of earth's abominations." ⁶ And I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the witnesses to Jesus.

When I saw her, I was greatly amazed. ⁷ But the angel said to me, "Why are you so amazed? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that carries her. ⁸ The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to ascend from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the inhabitants of the earth, whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world,

^a Gk and keeps his robes

^b Gk weighing about a talent

^c Or in the spirit

Reflect: One must never run the risk of going about in sin, postponing any effort to throw off one's guilt. Christ is said to come "like a thief" because the manner and timing of his coming are not known.

Pray: Grant me the grace of preparedness, O God, that I may always be ready to welcome you with a clean and worthy heart.

Act: Take action immediately, if need be, to be restored to God's good graces.

Read Revelation 16:17-21

Tragedy and setbacks serve as a wake-up call for ceasing to do evil and learning to do good. God cannot abide sin; yet for all that, he is ready to pardon and to save those who have sinned.

Reflect: We are too prone to embrace the world around us, with its values and its goals. One must summon the strength to run counter to many of the current norms and enthusiasms, no matter what the cost. As has been sagely observed, when the whole village is running headlong toward the precipice, it is the one running in the opposite direction who is called the crazy one.

Pray: Grant me the strength to oppose the crowd, even if to do so will expose me to its scorn.

Act: Identify a specific instance in your life when to do the right thing might cost you the good will of your friends and neighbors. Then pray for the grace and courage to do the right thing.

will be amazed when they see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come.

9 "This calls for a mind that has wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated; also, they are seven kings, ¹⁰ of whom five have fallen, one is living, and the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain only a little while. ¹¹ As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction. ¹² And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast. ¹³ These are united in yielding their power and authority to the beast; ¹⁴ they will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful."

15 And he said to me, "The waters that you saw, where the whore is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages. ¹⁶ And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the whore; they will make her desolate and naked; they will devour her flesh and burn her up with fire. ¹⁷ For God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by agreeing to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled. ¹⁸ The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth."

The Fall of Babylon

18 After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority; and the earth was made bright with his splendor. ² He called out with a mighty voice,

"Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!
It has become a dwelling place of demons,
a haunt of every foul spirit,
a haunt of every foul bird,
a haunt of every foul and hateful beast.^a

³ For all the nations have drunk^b
of the wine of the wrath of her fornication,
and the kings of the earth have committed
fornication with her,
and the merchants of the earth have grown
rich from the power^c of her luxury."

4 Then I heard another voice from heaven saying,
"Come out of her, my people,
so that you do not take part in her sins,
and so that you do not share in her plagues;
⁵ for her sins are heaped high as heaven,
and God has remembered her iniquities.
⁶ Render to her as she herself has rendered,
and repay her double for her deeds;

^a Other ancient authorities lack the words *a haunt of every foul beast* and attach the words *and hateful* to the previous line so as to read *a haunt of every foul and hateful bird*
^b Other ancient authorities read *She has made all nations drink*
^c Or *resources*

Read Revelation 17

Pagan Rome is described. Its idolatry and wantonness is detailed. The death of the Christian martyrs heightened the blame of the pagan rule. But the Christians must not be deceived into thinking that their situation is hopeless. The followers of the Lamb will not succumb but will prevail.

Reflect: However dark and threatening is the sky, Christians must not give in to despair. “He neither slumbers nor sleeps who guards us, his people.”

Pray: Give me the strength and insight to realize that you do not turn your back on your people. You are not unaware and uncaring about our welfare.

Act: Determine not to be slowed down in your service to God by worry and insecurity about the future.

Read Revelation 18:1–8

This passage provides a continuing description of the downfall of pagan Rome. The root cause of the city’s evil is idolatry. The Christian inhabitants of the city are caught up in its devastation.

Reflect: There is much in modern-day society that is unsavory. The earnest Christian must not hesitate to indict the immorality of our society and to shun it.

Pray: Lord God, grant me the clarity of vision to perceive and renounce the evil in my world.

Act: Examine the routine of your daily living to make sure that you do not find there any threats to your successful pursuit of the Christian life.

mix a double draught for her in the cup she mixed.

7 As she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, so give her a like measure of torment and grief. Since in her heart she says,

‘I rule as a queen;

I am no widow,

and I will never see grief,’

8 therefore her plagues will come in a single day—pestilence and mourning and famine—and she will be burned with fire;

for mighty is the Lord God who judges her.”

9 And the kings of the earth, who committed fornication and lived in luxury with her, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning;

10 they will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say,

“Alas, alas, the great city,

Babylon, the mighty city!

For in one hour your judgment has come.”

11 And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore, 12 cargo of gold, silver, jewels and pearls, fine linen, purple, silk and scarlet, all kinds of scented wood, all articles of ivory, all articles of costly wood, bronze, iron, and marble, 13 cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, olive oil, choice flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, slaves—and human lives.^a

14 “The fruit for which your soul longed

has gone from you,

and all your dainties and your splendor

are lost to you,

never to be found again!”

15 The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud,

16 “Alas, alas, the great city,

clothed in fine linen,

in purple and scarlet,

adorned with gold,

with jewels, and with pearls!

17 For in one hour all this wealth has been laid waste!”

And all shipmasters and seafarers, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off 18 and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning,

“What city was like the great city?”

19 And they threw dust on their heads, as they wept and mourned, crying out,

“Alas, alas, the great city,

where all who had ships at sea

grew rich by her wealth!

For in one hour she has been laid waste.”

^a Or chariots, and human bodies and souls

Read Revelation 18:9–19

The onlookers at the tragedy of pagan Rome's downfall are appalled. In the midst of all this their self-interest shines through—the city's downfall will adversely affect their fortunes.

Reflect: The consequences of sin are wider and deeper than one imagines. The ripple effect of sin is impressive.

Pray: Make me swift to repent my sin, O God, and grant me the peace that is reserved for the pure of heart.

Act: Make the act of contrition part of your daily prayer life.

Read Revelation 18:20–24

Those who have stayed faithful to God have cause to rejoice. They have survived the devil's machinations. The martyrs who shed their blood for Christ are vindicated. The tables are turned: those who prospered during the persecution are now miserable.

Reflect: Pagan Rome fell because of exploitation and greed. In our own time too, neglect of the needy is commonplace. Too seldom do I bestir myself in aid of the needy.

Pray: Give me the courage and strength to put the needs of the poor man above my own wants.

Act: Do something positive this day in aid of a poor person.

20 Rejoice over her, O heaven, you saints and apostles and prophets! For God has given judgment for you against her.

21 Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying,

“With such violence Babylon the great city will be thrown down, and will be found no more;

22 and the sound of harpists and minstrels and of flutists and trumpeters

will be heard in you no more;

and an artisan of any trade will be found in you no more;

and the sound of the millstone will be heard in you no more;

23 and the light of a lamp

will shine in you no more;

and the voice of bridegroom and bride

will be heard in you no more;

for your merchants were the magnates of the earth,

and all nations were deceived by your sorcery.

24 And in you^a was found the blood of prophets

and of saints,

and of all who have been slaughtered on earth.”

The Rejoicing in Heaven

19 After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, “Hallelujah!

Salvation and glory and power to our God,

2 for his judgments are true and just;

he has judged the great whore

who corrupted the earth with her fornication,

and he has avenged on her the blood of his servants.”^b

3 Once more they said,

“Hallelujah!

The smoke goes up from her forever and ever.”

4 And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who is seated on the throne, saying,

“Amen. Hallelujah!”

5 And from the throne came a voice saying,

“Praise our God,

all you his servants,^b

and all who fear him,

small and great.”

6 Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunderpeals, crying out,

^a Gk *her*

^b Gk *slaves*

Read Revelation 19:1–10

The day of reckoning is sure to dawn. The martyrs will be vindicated. God's kingdom has finally come. The bride of this celebration is the Church; the members of the Church are the wedding guests.

Reflect: The Church often comes under ferocious attack. But our consolation is the certainty that in this matter also, God and right will prevail.

Pray: Strengthen me in my day-to-day struggle with evil. Let me have a serene awareness of God's ultimate victory.

Act: Resolve to stride through the daily challenges, confident of ultimate victory.

Read Revelation 19:11–21

Christ is victorious over the power of evil. He is vested in a cloak dipped in blood. It is his own blood, the blood of the triumphant Christ whose crucifixion is his victory.

Reflect: There must be a reaction against oppression and evil in general. Yet it is not to be a violent reaction. There is here no call to arms but a call to patient endurance. In God's good time the forces of evil will be defeated.

Pray: O God, your expectation of us is long-suffering patience. In the end your victory over the forces of evil is assured.

Act: What is called for here is patient expectation and profound faith that God will be victorious over evil.

“Hallelujah!

For the Lord our God
the Almighty reigns.

- 7 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;
8 to her it has been granted to be clothed
with fine linen, bright and pure”—

for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

9 And the angel said^a to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are true words of God.”¹⁰ Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant^b with you and your comrades^c who hold the testimony of Jesus.^d Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus^d is the spirit of prophecy.”

The Rider on the White Horse

11 Then I saw heaven opened, and there was a white horse! Its rider is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.¹² His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems; and he has a name inscribed that no one knows but himself.¹³ He is clothed in a robe dipped in^e blood, and his name is called The Word of God.¹⁴ And the armies of heaven, wearing fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses.¹⁵ From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule^f them with a rod of iron; he will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has a name inscribed, “King of kings and Lord of lords.”

The Beast and Its Armies Defeated

17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly in mid-heaven, “Come, gather for the great supper of God,¹⁸ to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of the mighty, the flesh of horses and their riders—flesh of all, both free and slave, both small and great.”¹⁹ Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against the rider on the horse and against his army.²⁰ And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who had performed in its presence the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.²¹ And the rest were killed by the sword of the rider on the horse, the

^a Gk *he said*

^b Gk *slave*

^c Gk *brothers*

^d Or *to Jesus*

^e Other ancient authorities read *sprinkled with*

^f Or *will shepherd*

Read Revelation 20:1–10

These verses speak of the overthrow of Satan and the glorious reign of Christ. During the rule of Christ, Satan will be powerless for a thousand years (the number is symbolic). Those who have suffered for Jesus shall reign. For the faithful, Christian death is resurrection. The forces of evil will be destroyed in the “lake of fire.”

Reflect: It is consoling to know that in the end, evil will not prevail. It is gratifying also to realize that the good who have suffered for their virtuous living will be vindicated.

Pray: Grant me patience and strength to hold out until, in your goodness O Lord, you vindicate me.

Act: Cultivate patient waiting until, in God’s good time, a difficult situation rights itself.

Read Revelation 20:11–15

Judgment is inevitable because, in the new age, God reigns supreme. There can be no trace of evil.

Reflect: God’s ways in the last analysis are inscrutable. It is his will that we be judged by our deeds. Still salvation comes as a free gift. We are to strive to do good and throw ourselves on God’s mercy.

Pray: Merciful and loving God, I place my trust in you.

Act: Determine to live bravely, trusting in God’s mercy and love. Allow no room in your life for worry.

sword that came from his mouth; and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

The Thousand Years

20 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. ² He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, ³ and threw him into the pit, and locked and sealed it over him, so that he would deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be let out for a little while.

4 Then I saw thrones, and those seated on them were given authority to judge. I also saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony to Jesus^a and for the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. ⁵ (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. Over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him a thousand years.

Satan’s Doom

7 When the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will come out to deceive the nations at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, in order to gather them for battle; they are as numerous as the sands of the sea. ⁹ They marched up over the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from heaven^b and consumed them. ¹⁰ And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

The Dead Are Judged

11 Then I saw a great white throne and the one who sat on it; the earth and the heaven fled from his presence, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Also another book was opened, the book of life. And the dead were judged according to their works, as recorded in the books. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and all were judged according to what they had done. ¹⁴ Then Death and

^a Or for the testimony of Jesus

^b Other ancient authorities read from God, out of heaven, or out of heaven from God

Read Revelation 21:1–8

Creation will be renewed, evil will be canceled out. The new Jerusalem will have no sin. Those who have any hope of enjoying life in the new city must here and now definitively renounce sin.

Reflect: Closeness to God demands sinlessness. This is as true in these times as in the end times.

Pray: Grant me the courage and strength to banish sin from my life, so as to be closer to you.

Act: Identify the times and places in which it is especially hard for you to avoid sin.

Read Revelation 21:9–27

The unimaginable splendor of life with God is here suggested. God's presence infuses the whole city, making it a temple.

Reflect: To qualify for citizenship in the new Jerusalem, God's people must eradicate from their lives any taint of sin. Still in the last analysis salvation is the work of God and not of man.

Pray: Implant in me, O God, evermore powerfully the nostalgia for uninterrupted life with you.

Act: Reflect more often on your ultimate goal: a life of uninterrupted happiness with God.

Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire;¹⁵ and anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

The New Heaven and the New Earth

21 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.² And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“See, the home^a of God is among mortals.

He will dwell^b with them;

they will be his peoples,^c

and God himself will be with them;^d

⁴ he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more;

mourning and crying and pain will be no more,

for the first things have passed away.”

⁵ And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.”⁶ Then he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.⁷ Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children.⁸ But as for the cowardly, the faithless,^e the polluted, the murderers, the fornicators, the sorcerers, the idolaters, and all liars, their place will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

Vision of the New Jerusalem

⁹ Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.”¹⁰ And in the spirit^f he carried me away to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.¹¹ It has the glory of God and a radiance like a very rare jewel, like jasper, clear as crystal.¹² It has a great, high wall with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates are inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of the Israelites;¹³ on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates.¹⁴ And the wall of the city has twelve foundations, and on them are the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

¹⁵ The angels^g who talked to me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls.

^a Gk the tabernacle

^b Gk will tabernacle

^c Other ancient authorities read people

^d Other ancient authorities add and be their God

^e Or the unbelieving

^f Or in the Spirit

^g Gk He

Read Revelation 22

The book closes as it opened, with the notice that what has been revealed is the word of God, coming through Christ.

Reflect: It is nothing less than a huge grace to be instructed, as one is, by these sacred writings. They are a welcome help to us as we attempt to chart our way through life.

Pray: In your love and kindness, Lord, lead me safely through life to you.

Act: Plan to set aside an hour or a day of recollection to ascertain the direction in which your life is going.

¹⁶ The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width; and he measured the city with his rod, fifteen hundred miles;^a its length and width and height are equal. ¹⁷ He also measured its wall, one hundred forty-four cubits^b by human measurement, which the angel was using. ¹⁸ The wall is built of jasper, while the city is pure gold, clear as glass. ¹⁹ The foundations of the wall of the city are adorned with every jewel; the first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, ²⁰ the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoptase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. ²¹ And the twelve gates are twelve pearls, each of the gates is a single pearl, and the street of the city is pure gold, transparent as glass.

²² I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. ²³ And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴ The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. ²⁵ Its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. ²⁶ People will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. ²⁷ But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

The River of Life

22 Then the angel^c showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life^d with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³ Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants^e will worship him; ⁴ they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

⁶ And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true, for the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants^e what must soon take place."

⁷ "See, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

Epilogue and Benediction

⁸ I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to

^a Gk twelve thousand stadia

^b That is, almost seventy-five yards

^c Gk he

^d Or the Lamb. ²In the middle of the street of the city, and on either side of the river, is the tree of life

^e Gk slaves

worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me; ⁹ but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant^a with you and your comrades^b the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God!”

¹⁰ And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. ¹¹ Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.”

¹² “See, I am coming soon; my reward is with me, to repay according to everyone’s work. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

¹⁴ Blessed are those who wash their robes,^c so that they will have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates. ¹⁵ Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and fornicators and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

¹⁶ “It is I, Jesus, who sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”

¹⁷ The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.”
And let everyone who hears say, “Come.”
And let everyone who is thirsty come.
Let anyone who wishes take the
water of life as a gift.

¹⁸ I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this book; ¹⁹ if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away that person’s share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

²⁰ The one who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.”
Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

²¹ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen.^d

^a Gk *slave*

^b Gk *brothers*

^c Other ancient authorities read *do his commandments*

^d Other ancient authorities lack *all*; others lack *the saints*; others lack *Amen*

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