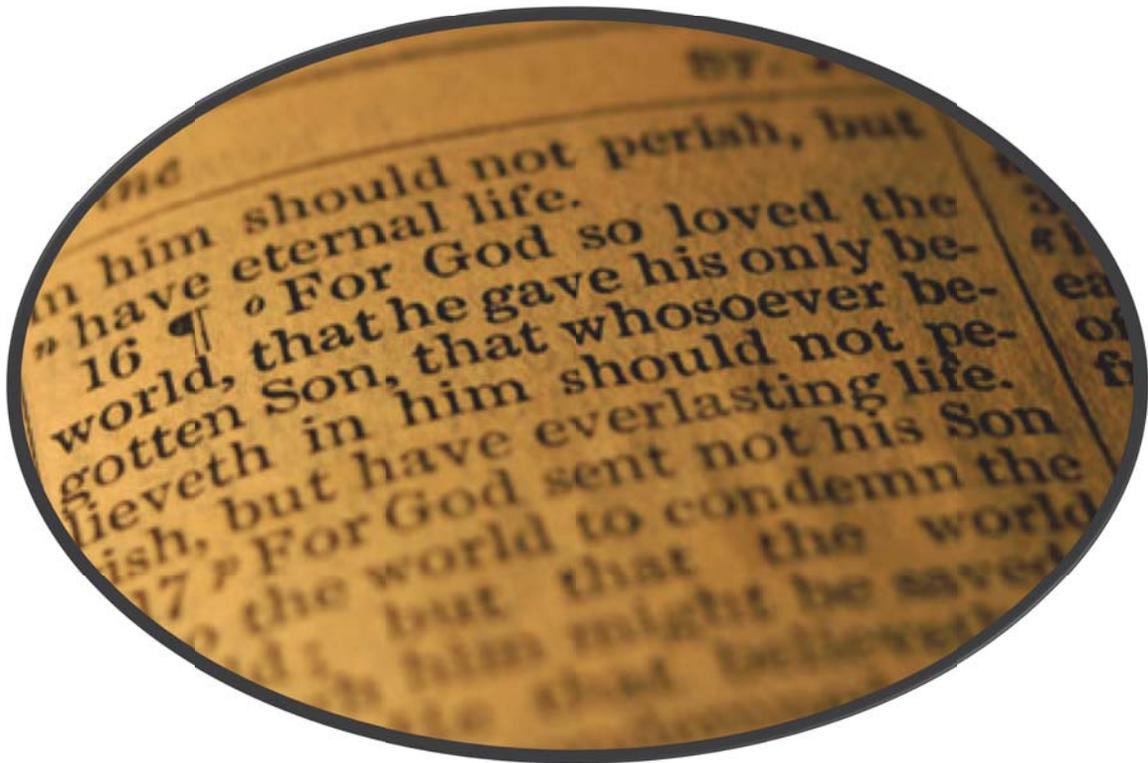


THE HEART OF GOD

THE END IN SIGHT



T. M. Moore

A Scriptorium Study

And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets,

He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Luke 24.27

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Heart of God: The End in Sight
Copyright 2016 T. M. Moore
Susie Moore, Editing and Finishing
The Fellowship of Ailbe
www.ailbe.org

Except as indicated, Scripture taken from the New King James Version. © Copyright 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Introduction to *The End in Sight*

The book of Revelation is one of the most difficult books in the Bible. But it offers a message of hope, intended to equip God's covenant people to endure in living for and proclaiming Him, even in the face of hostile opposition.

Central to the unfolding of the story of Revelation is the Lamb of God, Who is also the Ruler of kings, and Who is putting all nations and peoples under His feet as He rides forth from day to day. We are His witnesses, and we must be faithful in holding fast to our testimony and the commandments of God as we prepare to join our Lord at the marriage supper He is preparing for us.

Revelation offers some frightening spiritual insights and historical scenarios, but none of them is outside the will of the Father, as He works to bring His covenant to fulfillment in the new heavens and new earth. Our studies in the heart of God – the covenant relationship He maintains with His people – end on a high and glorious note in the eternal City of God.

We're pleased to provide *Scriptorium* studies in PDF format at no charge. We hope you will find them helpful and encouraging as you press on in your journey toward spiritual maturity with the Lord.

Please visit our website, www.ailbe.org, to discover the many other resources available to serve your needs. The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Visit our website also to subscribe to our worldview study *ReVision*, our devotional newsletter *Crosfigell*, and our worldview newsletter *The Week*.

If you find these studies, or any of our other resources helpful, we hope you will consider making a contribution to help support our work. You can do so by using the donate button at the website or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 19 Tyler Dr., Essex Junction, VT 05452.

T. M. Moore, Principal
tmmoore@ailbe.org

1 Ruler of Kings

Read and meditate on Revelation 1.

Following an introduction, which sets the stage for the rest of the book (chapters 1-5), the book of Revelation unfolds around a series of visions which convey, in ever-expanding manner, a vision of the last days and of the return of Christ. Revelation begins with a vision of Christ exalted, and ends with the vision of Christ returning in glory. Revelation is about Jesus, the Ruler of kings.

For reflection

1. Meditate on verses 1-3. John says they are “blessed” who read and keep the things written in Revelation. How does the use of this word tie Revelation into God’s covenant program? What kind of blessing should we expect from reading and studying this book?
2. The “seven Spirits” should probably be understood as the *sevenfold* Spirit, following Isaiah 11.2 (note the seven attributes by which the Spirit is described). According to verse 4, what is the purpose of Revelation? What does God intend readers to gain from this book? How would you explain these ideas?
3. John says that, in the Kingdom of God, we exist in the tension between patient endurance and tribulation (v. 9). What does this suggest about life in God’s covenant? How should we expect to experience this?
4. Meditate on the vision of Christ revealed in verses 9-20. Should this vision have any role in our lives today? Explain.
5. Christ is the Ruler of kings and Lord of His Church. He tells us not to be afraid (v. 17). How is it possible for us *not* to be afraid? What is the source of our courage and confidence?

Summary

The book of Revelation intends to give grace and peace and blessing to all who read it, and who see in it Jesus, the Ruler of kings and Lord of the Church. By exercising patient endurance in Him – come what may – we may expect to realize increasing fullness of God’s covenant and promises. The book of Revelation should give us great hope and encouragement. Is this the way people normally think about Revelation? Explain.

Closing Prayer

Then He shall speak to them in His wrath,
And distress them in His deep displeasure:
“Yet I have set My King
On My holy hill of Zion.”
“I will declare the decree:
The LORD has said to Me,
‘You *are* My Son,
Today I have begotten You.
Ask of Me, and I will give You
The nations *for* Your inheritance,
And the ends of the earth *for* Your possession.
You shall break them with a rod of iron;
You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.”
Now therefore, be wise, O kings;
Be instructed, you judges of the earth.

Serve the LORD with fear,
And rejoice with trembling.

Psalm 2:5-11

2 Letters to Churches

Read and meditate on Revelation 2 and 3.

King Jesus has a message for seven churches. The number seven suggests completeness (the number for God, three, plus the number for earth, four), so these messages, while to real historical congregations, speak to the whole Body of Christ for all times. Let's see what we can learn from them.

For reflection

1. Summarize the Lord's message to the churches in Revelation 2. Do we see any of these same tendencies or situations in churches today? What does it mean to have *ears to hear*?
2. Summarize the Lord's message to the churches in Revelation 3. Again, how do we see similar situations or conditions in churches today? What threats does Jesus hold out to His churches in these two chapters?
3. List the words Jesus uses in chapters 2 and 3 to instruct the churches in what they should do. Put these all together into a single sentence, summarizing Jesus' counsel to His churches. In what ways does this command apply to your church?
4. How do you see the themes of "patient endurance" and "tribulation" in these letters to the churches?
5. These letters seem to have a bearing on the Church (and churches) in every age. How might your church use these letters in ministry planning and assessment?

Summary

From the beginning, the Lord takes the Church as the central figure in the unfolding drama of the last days. He is building His Church, as He promised (Matt. 16:18); but He is building it *His* way, for *His* purposes, and not ours. How can we know when our churches are operating according to the Lord's plan and purpose?

Closing Prayer

Restore us, O God of hosts;
Cause Your face to shine,
And we shall be saved!
You have brought a vine out of Egypt;
You have cast out the nations, and planted it.
You prepared *room* for it,
And caused it to take deep root,
And it filled the land.
The hills were covered with its shadow,
And the mighty cedars with its boughs.
She sent out her boughs to the Sea,
And her branches to the River.
Why have You broken down her hedges,
So that all who pass by the way pluck her *fruit*?
The boar out of the woods uproots it,
And the wild beast of the field devours it.
Return, we beseech You, O God of hosts;
Look down from heaven and see,
And visit this vine

And the vineyard which Your right hand has planted,
And the branch *that* You made strong for Yourself.
It is burned with fire, *it is* cut down;
They perish at the rebuke of Your countenance.
Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand,
Upon the son of man *whom* You made strong for Yourself.
Then we will not turn back from You;
Revive us, and we will call upon Your name.
Restore us, O LORD God of hosts;
Cause Your face to shine,
And we shall be saved!

Psalm 80.7-19

3 Sovereign Lamb

Read and meditate on Revelation 4 and 5.

Next John is given a vision of the heavenly court, where God rules, and saints and angels and other creatures worship and serve the Lord continually. The purpose of this vision is to assure us that the Ruler of kings, Who is the Lamb that was slain, is absolutely in charge of everything that will be revealed in the chapters that follow.

For reflection

1. Meditate on the various ways John describes the heavenly court. What colors, substances, sights, and sounds does his description include? What is your general impression of this place? Meditate on Colossians 3.1-3. How can Revelation 4 and 5 help us to fulfill Paul's command?
2. All angels, all departed saints (represented by the 24 elders), and all creation (the living creatures) worship, celebrate, and serve Him Who sits on the throne. For what things in particular do they praise the Lord (4.8, 11; 5.9-14)?
3. As we shall see, what is written on the scroll contains all the events that will unfold in the chapters following. God has "written" in advance everything that will come to pass. Who rules the unfolding of that process? How has He "prevailed" to be able to do this? What is the Lord saying to John about the rule and Kingdom of Jesus Christ?
4. Revelation 5.6 suggests a closeness between the Lamb and the Spirit of God. How did we see this closeness in the book of Acts?
5. According to Revelation 5.9, 10, what is the effect of the Lamb's having fulfilled the covenant thread of redeeming a people for God? In what ways should we expect to "reign on earth"?

Summary

Some fairly scary scenarios will be revealed in Revelation 6-19, but before we get to that, we need to know the situation is well in hand. The Lord Who has fulfilled God's redemptive plan and work is completely in charge of things in heaven and on earth. We may rest in His sovereign rule, and hold fast to our testimony of faith in Him. How does Revelation 5.9-14 suggest a pattern for how we should live in the Kingdom and covenant of God, in the tension between tribulation and patient endurance?

Closing Prayer

I will declare Your name to My brethren;
In the midst of the assembly I will praise You.
You who fear the Lord, praise Him!
All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him,
And fear Him, all you offspring of Israel!
For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted;
Nor has He hidden His face from Him;
But when He cried to Him, He heard.
My praise *shall be* of You in the great assembly;
I will pay My vows before those who fear Him.
The poor shall eat and be satisfied;
Those who seek Him will praise the LORD.

The Heart of God: The End in Sight

Let your heart live forever!
All the ends of the world
Shall remember and turn to the LORD,
And all the families of the nations
Shall worship before You.
For the kingdom *is* the LORD's,
And He rules over the nations.

Psalm 22.22-28

4 Conquering and to Conquer

Read and meditate on Revelation 6 and Revelation 9-12.

We'll need to consider these chapters somewhat out of order if we want to make sense of what we see here. Read chapter 12 first, then go back to Revelation 6, then 9-11. A kind of "timelessness" pervades the book of Revelation. We glimpse things in time backward and forward, again and again, from various perspectives. This is the way God "sees" things in time. He does not exist *in* time but *over* it, so He sees *all* time in a single comprehensive glance. John's report is the best we can do to enter God's perspective on time, and it helps us to keep this in mind as we read.

For reflection

1. Meditate on chapter 12. This chapter is in many ways a key to understanding the book as a whole. What happens in verses 1 and 2? What event does the second part of verse 4 recall (cf. Matt. 2.1-18)? Verses 3 and 4a actually follow, in time, verses 7-9. What happens in these verses? Verse 5 covers the New Testament from Matthew 1 to Acts 1, and verses 6 and 10-17 encompass the book of Acts and the rest of history. How do you see the theme of patient endurance and tribulation in these verses? What kind of endurance?
2. Revelation elaborates what we should expect of conditions on earth. What does the rider on the white horse represent (cf. Ps. 45.3-7)? What do the other riders and horses represent? What are we supposed to gather from this vision about the continuing progress of God's covenant plan in history?
3. According to chapter 5, the effects of the "star fallen from heaven to earth" are pervasive. Explain. How does chapter 12 suggest that we understand this "star"? How can we see in this chapter that, in spite of the widespread effects of sin, God and His hosts are still in charge of events on earth? How do we account for the fact that people fail to repent at the temporal judgments of God?
4. In chapter 10 John receives a book, which he eats. What makes the book sweet to the taste? What makes it bitter to the stomach? What was John supposed to do as a result of "eating" this book? How does this relate to our callings as brethren and companions of John (Rev.1.9)?
5. Who are the "two witnesses" of Revelation 11. How does their work compare with what John was called to do in chapter 10? How should we understand the power these witnesses wield? I think we should read chapter 11 not as a once-for-all situation, but as a *representative* situation, one we should expect to recur again and again. What proclamation accompanies the work of these witnesses (Rev. 11.15-18)?

Summary

On earth the struggle that began in heaven continues, as Satan tries to frustrate the progress of Christ's rule on earth. But God's Word is on our side. Angels help in Christ's unfolding plan. Not even persecution or death can prevent the proclamation and progress of the Kingdom. Christ continues to ride forth, according to His Word, by His Spirit, in His witnesses, conquering and to conquer over all the earth. How should the message of these chapters guide a local church in thinking about its ministry?

Closing Prayer

You are fairer than the sons of men;
Grace is poured upon Your lips;
Therefore God has blessed You forever.
Gird Your sword upon *Your* thigh, O Mighty One,
With Your glory and Your majesty.

The Heart of God: The End in Sight

And in Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth, humility, *and* righteousness;
And Your right hand shall teach You awesome things.
Your arrows *are* sharp in the heart of the King's enemies;
The peoples fall under You.
Your throne, O God, *is* forever and ever;
A scepter of righteousness *is* the scepter of Your kingdom.
You love righteousness and hate wickedness;
Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You
With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.

Psalm 45.2-7

5 Rampage of Sin

Read and meditate on Revelation 13, 17 and 18.

Sin on earth affects even the institutions by which people and nations organize their lives. We should expect that governments, religions, and other human institutions will join in the fight to oppose the Ruler of kings, as He goes forth conquering and to conquer.

For reflection

1. The beast described in chapter 17 probably represents human government in corrupt form. What about this beast suggests that? What is this beast's purpose? But (v. 17) Who is in charge of this beast and its raging? How should we understand the word *overcome* in verse 14?
2. How many different ways is it clear that this beast is opposed to the covenant purposes of God? Do we see indications of this in governments today? Explain.
3. We first meet this beast in Revelation 13, where a second beast is described as collaborating with the first (vv. 11ff.). This beast represents false religions. How can you see that? What are some examples of false religions in our day? Do all false religions necessarily *look like* religions? Explain.
4. "Babylon" in chapter 18 represents both Rome as an empire and the "world city" which Augustine referred to as the City of Man. God's people are called to "Come out of her.." (v. 4). What does this mean? Can we *completely* "come out" from this city? But what *can* we do to fulfill this command? Why should we?
5. The collapse of the City of Man leaves the world in mourning and lamentation (vv. 9ff). Why? What does this suggest both about the *power* and the *priorities* of the City of Man? Are all these things evil in themselves? What makes them evil? How should the citizens of the heavenly Kingdom respond to the collapse of the City of Man?

Summary

The history of the world, and of cultures, nations, and societies, is a history of struggle. Men's hearts, pervaded by sin and wickedness, seek the good things of the earth to satisfy their needs and desires. Their pursuit of things leads to wars, ravaging of the earth, and corruption and strife. God will bring all this to judgment. Meanwhile, the Lord's "witnesses" must persevere in their calling to live righteously and proclaim the Kingdom of God. In what ways does your church equip its *witnesses* to live for the Kingdom in the midst of the City of Man?

Closing Prayer

God *is* our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear,
Even though the earth be removed,
And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;
Though its waters roar *and* be troubled,
Though the mountains shake with its swelling.
Selah
There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God,
The holy *place* of the tabernacle of the Most High.
God *is* in the midst of her, she shall not be moved;

The Heart of God: The End in Sight

God shall help her, just at the break of dawn.
The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved;
He uttered His voice, the earth melted.
The LORD of hosts *is* with us;
The God of Jacob *is* our refuge.

Psalm 46.1-7

6 The King Returns

Read and meditate on Revelation 19 and 20.

The reign of sin and of the City of Man will not continue indefinitely. An end of history is coming, when Jesus Christ returns with all His saints to overcome His foes and bring His Kingdom and covenant to fulfillment in the new heavens and new earth.

For reflection

1. Revelation 19.1-10 introduces and provides a summary of chapters 19-22. A marriage and supper await us beyond the end of history. Who will partake of this? How will it be seen that they are the true guests for this event? In what ways are these apt images to describe what Christ is preparing for us? How should we prepare for this (cf. 1 Jn. 3.1-3)? What can we expect at this marriage supper (v. 9), and how does this tie this event in with God's covenant?
2. The Rider on the white horse of Revelation 6 reappears in Revelation 19. How is He described? In what ways does this recall the vision of Christ in Revelation 1?
3. How do the people of the City of Man respond to the appearing of the Lord? Are they sorry for having been so wicked? Do they express any regret for their sinful ways?
4. Revelation 20 enlarges on the events of Revelation 19.11-21. The "angel" (literally, *messenger*) of Revelation 20.1 is probably the Lord Himself (cf. Rev. 1.18). It's possible that what we read in verses 2 and 3 occurred at Matthew 4.1-11 (cf. Matt. 12.22-29 and the "binding" of Satan). If so, then Satan was "bound" at the beginning of the "thousand years." There is no reason to take this number literally. It stands for a *complete* period of time, during which Satan is bound and the plundering of his house goes forward. He is released at the end of this period (v. 3), and this may refer to what we read in Revelation 19.19-21 and 20.7-10. If in fact, Satan is bound during this "thousand years," what should God's saints be doing?
5. The saints are promised they will "reign" during this thousand years (vv. 4-6). In what sense should we expect to reign? The "first resurrection" is the blessing of those who have been born again from the dead (Eph. 2.1) in Jesus. What is the second death, and why does it have no power over those who have partaken of the first resurrection? Summarize the events of Revelation 20.11-15. How can you see that this parallels and enlarges on Revelation 19.19-21?

Summary

The meanings and events of these final days may not be entirely clear, and believers will differ in how they understand the details of what is described here. But what is the main message? Should that message divide believers against one another or unite them? For what purposes? Explain.

Closing Prayer

The Lord *is* at Your right hand;
He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath.
He shall judge among the nations,
He shall fill *the places* with dead bodies,
He shall execute the heads of many countries.
He shall drink of the brook by the wayside;
Therefore He shall lift up the head.

Psalm 110.5-7

7 All Things New

Read and meditate on Revelation 21 and 22.

John is shown a vision for the new heavens and new earth. But he is also given to understand that this great *there and then* is becoming a reality in the *here and now*.

For reflection

1. Meditate on Revelation 21.1-8. In what ways do you see this language is deliberately contrived to invoke the unifying threads of God's covenant – His glory, His people, His work of redemption?
2. John is shown the Bride of the Lamb in verses 9ff. Does he actually see a *Bride*? What *does* he see? How is this described, and how can you see that this description is meant to draw the Old and New Covenants together into one new entity?
3. It seems clear from verses 22-27 that this New City already exists and is coming while things that defile or cause abomination are still operating (v. 27). Where *is* this New City, this Bride of the Lamb, and how do verses 22-27 teach us to think about its existence in the midst of the City of Man?
4. Meditate on Revelation 22.1-5. How many covenant images or referents can you identify in these verses? This passage intends to tell us that all the covenant promises of God come to full realization *beyond* time, in the new heavens and new earth. Explain.
5. According to Revelation 22.6-21, how are we supposed to respond to what we have learned from the book of Revelation?

Summary

The City of God has come, is coming still, and will come to full and glorious realization in the new heavens and new earth. There, as the Bride of the Lamb, she will abound with beauty, goodness, and truth, resting and delighting in the blessings of God, without sorrow or sin, for all eternity. Why is it important that we as believers understand and focus on this vision *here and now*?

Closing Prayer

Those who trust in the LORD
Are like Mount Zion,
Which cannot be moved, *but* abides forever.
As the mountains surround Jerusalem,
So the LORD surrounds His people
From this time forth and forever.
For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest
On the land allotted to the righteous,
Lest the righteous reach out their hands to iniquity.
Do good, O LORD, to *those who are* good,
And to *those who are* upright in their hearts.

Psalm 125.1-4

For reflection or discussion

1. Summarize what we learn from Revelation about the state and condition of the Church during the time before Jesus returns. What is its mission? How should it expect to fare in the world? What kinds of problems will it face?
2. How is it clear from the book of Revelation that all the events of human history are in the hands of God? How should this comfort and encourage us as believers?
3. The book of Revelation pulls all the unifying threads of divine revelation together into one final story. Explain.
4. What is the Christian's hope, according to the book of Revelation? How should that hope lead us to live in the *here and now*?
5. What are the most important lessons for you from this overview of the book of Revelation?

Glory to Glory

We are transformed into the image of Jesus Christ *from* the glory we encounter in God's Word *to* the way we live for His glory in the world (2 Cor. 3.12-18; 1 Cor. 10.31).

What have you encountered *of* God's glory in our readings and meditations in this week's studies? That is, how has He shown Himself *to* you more clearly?

How do you expect this *experience* of God's glory to help you *live more consistently for* His glory in the daily details of your life?

What have you learned about yourself from this week's study to help you in knowing more of the presence, promise, and power of the Kingdom? To equip you for serving Christ in your [Personal Mission Field](#)?

For a deeper study of the book of Revelation, download the 13 installments in our series on Revelation. You can get all 13 studies for free by going to our website, www.ailbe.org. Click the Resources tab, then the Scriptorium Studies tab. Scroll down until you come to the studies in Revelation.

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

The Fellowship of Ailbe offers many opportunities for training, prayer, personal growth, and ministry. Visit our website at www.ailbe.org to learn more.

We hope you found this study helpful. If so, please consider making a gift to The Fellowship. You can contribute to our ministry by using the donate button at the website, or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 19 Tyler Dr., Essex Junction, VT 05452.

Thank you.