

Praying Revelation

By Dana Olson

It is easy to get caught up in the curiosity of Revelation's imagery. *When* and *how* will these judgments take place? *Who* are the 144,000? *What* is the meaning of the number 666?

You may have strong opinions or you may find yourself confused about millennial or tribulational positions. My point is *not* to take a stance, but rather to answer the question: in light of our reading of Revelation, how ought we to pray?

The answer, I think, is very clear.

In chapter 13, in between the descriptions of the two beasts and their war against the saints, the apostle John makes a very clear and unequivocal statement: "Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints" (v. 10, esv).

Then, in chapter 14, the Lamb is on Mount Zion with the 144,000, and three angels appear, bringing the promise of global proclamation of the gospel as well as judgment by God's wrath against the wicked. Once again, a very clear and unequivocal statement is in verse 12: "Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus."

How do we pray in these tumultuous times? In the present circumstance of wars and rumors of wars, moral and political corruption, false teaching and corruption of the gospel and the Scriptures, what is the cry of the believer's heart?

Heavenly Father, by the power of Your Holy Spirit, by Your grace and strength, grant me the grace to endure. As a child of the King, help me trust You with my entire being. Let me walk in the obedience of faith, keeping in step with Your Word and in fellowship with Your saints.

If you make it your goal to be certain about every image and picture in Revelation, you will likely be frustrated. I recall the statement a well-known Christian leader made to me, speaking of the comment another famous preacher had spoken to him, saying, "I wish I understood the Book of Revelation as well as I used to!" The point: even from one period of life to another, perception about some of the imagery may change.

Straight to Prayer

There is much fuel for prayer in this remarkable book that closes the New Testament. Let a reading of Revelation lead you into earnest and fervent prayer.

Praise the Lord who is and who was and who is to come, the Alpha and Omega, the Almighty! Father, give me grace to hear and to keep what is written here (Rev. 1:8).

Father, I love the Church of Jesus Christ, wherever it may be found! Grant Your people endurance and faith; help us keep our first love for Jesus and Your gospel. Where we must repent, grant us conviction and the willingness to change. Keep Your Church free of false teaching. Deliver us from the wiles and deceptions of the evil one. Wake us up! Give us patient endurance! We throw open the door to Jesus and ask our Lord to come into His Church and revive us and awaken us and set our house in order.

2. *Holy, holy, holy are You Lord, Almighty God! Only You are worthy of worship and praise. You are the Creator of all things. Only Jesus Christ, Your beloved Son, is worthy to open the scroll and its seals. We exalt you, Jesus—Lion of Judah, the root of David, the Conquering King of kings—for You were slain and by Your blood You ransomed people for God from every people on earth (Rev.*

5:5–10).

Father, grant courage and endurance to every martyr who will die for Jesus in these latter days. We know that the day of Your wrath has been set by You. Until that day, give the grace of perseverance to every believer and the hope of Christ's return! Whatever suffering is Your plan for me, enable me to hold firmly onto hope in Christ and the ultimate triumph of the Conqueror King Jesus.

3. *O God, what a blessing to see in advance the success of the gospel in reaching every tribe and tongue and people and nation! Certainly, it is true: "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" (Rev. 7:10).*

As a Christian believer in an evil day, give me the endurance I need to walk in the steps of Jesus, to endure to the end, to grasp firmly onto hope, to fulfill all You have called me to do. Let me remain steadfast and immovable, always abounding in Your Kingdom work, O God, knowing that this labor will never be in vain (1 Cor. 15:58).

Brothers and sisters, pray the promises and exhortations of the grand Book of Revelation. Look to the Lamb and look to the future in the new heavens and new earth.

Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus!

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