

The Last Chapter

Have you ever read a book that contained a lot of adventure and conflict but before you had read the half of it you found yourself thumbing the last pages? Then as the suspense builds you read the last chapter so you can know how it all ends. It sort of ruins the book but it satisfies you to know your character is going to make it. This is not the best reading plan, but you know how it finishes.

Life on planet earth is suspenseful to say the least. There is a lot of conflict not only between nations and people but also between good and evil. In fact, the human race is involved in a cosmic conflict involving Satan and the rebellious angels and fallen mankind who are at enmity, hostility with the holy sovereign God. The Bible's use of this concept is recorded in Hosea 4:1ff

Hear the word of the Lord, O children of Israel,

for the Lord has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land.

There is no faithfulness or steadfast love, and no knowledge of God in the land...

And Isaiah 1:1ff the vision of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

² Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth;
for the Lord has spoken:

"Children have I reared and brought up,
but they have rebelled against me.

³ The ox knows its owner,
and the donkey its master's crib,
but Israel does not know,
my people do not understand."

⁴ Ah, sinful nation,
a people laden with iniquity,

offspring of evildoers,
children who deal corruptly!
They have forsaken the Lord,
they have despised the Holy One of Israel,
they are utterly estranged.
⁵ Why will you still be struck down?
Why will you continue to rebel?
The whole head is sick,
and the whole heart faint.
⁶ From the sole of the foot even to the head,
there is no soundness in it,
but bruises and sores
and raw wounds;
they are not pressed out or bound up
or softened with oil.

Fallen sinful humans greatly need reconciliation with the holy God!

There are times in life in our spiritual blindness when we wonder who is going to win in the end. Never fear! There is no doubt the Lord God Almighty is the victor.

Listen to these verses from the Bible which addresses this matter:

"The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 15:56-57

¹³ When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴ having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. Colossians 2:13-15

Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: "**Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns.**" Revelation 19:6

As an encouragement God has given his people a glance at the last chapter on the scroll of human history. The reading of the last chapter assures us that we know the conflict is worth the effort for the glory of God and ultimate deliverance of his people. So what does the last chapter reveal?

First, the last chapter reveals that Jesus Christ is the ultimate conqueror of sin and evil and Satan. Here is how John describes it in Revelation 19. ¹¹ I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. ¹² His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. ¹³ He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. ¹⁴ The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. ¹⁵ Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter."^[a] He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written:

King of kings and Lord of lords.

Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to wage war against the rider on the horse and his army. But the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur.

The last chapter also reveals that the effects of the fall of mankind in Adam are reversed. There is a restoration that is even better than the first paradise. Sickness, pain, and death are no more. Instead, there is fullness of life and eternal harmony. Even the effects of mankind's own nature is destroyed. In the end Jesus will right the wrongs and usher in his eternal rule of righteousness.

John writes: Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death'^[b] or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away" (Revelation 21:1-4).

In the end all people and all angels and every created being will acknowledge either with joy or in utter defeat that Jesus Christ is Lord. From heaven itself will peal the shout – "Hallelujah! For our Lord God the Almighty reigns!"

The last chapter tells us that God will one day finish in us his work of grace.

He has promised it and he will do it. *I am sure of this, that He who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.* Philippians 1:6

³ Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to His great mercy, He has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead ⁴ and into an inheritance that is imperishable, uncorrupted, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. ⁵ You are being protected by God's power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. 1 Peter 1:3-5

²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ **I give eternal life to them. They will never perish,** and no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father who has given them to me is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand. ³⁰ I and the Father are one."

On the day of Christ Jesus return we shall shine forth in the glory of God.
Colossians 3:4

Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. 1 John 3:2

We shall see Jesus as he is on the day of his return, and we shall be transformed into his perfect image by the power and grace of God. In the end Jesus reigns and we who share his life through faith in his name shall reign with him.

Listen to the words of this glorious hymn by Henry Alford celebrating this great day of the Lord Jesus:

Ten thousand times ten thousand
In sparkling raiment bright,
The armies of the ransomed saints
Throng up the steeps of light:
'Tis finished, all is finished,
Their fight with death and sin;
Fling open wide the golden gates
And let the victors in.

Bring near Thy great salvation,
Thou Lamb for sinners slain;
Fill up the roll of Thine elect,
Then take Thy power and reign;
Appear, Desire of nations,
Thine exiles long for home;
Show in the heavens Thy promised sign;
Thou Prince and Savior, come.

Now since we have had a glance at the last chapter, we are ready to continue the journey with assurance of faith and a hope that will not disappoint!

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