



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. (prchurchofchrist.org)

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Revelation 20:11 *“And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and Heaven fled away, and no place as found for them.”*

As I write these words, things are tough. There is a war going on in Europe that we do not know how it will end. Gas prices are at an all time high. There is just a lot of uncertainty that fills the air. But, it's not just these times. Uncertainty is a part of life. Which team will win the championship? We don't know. Will our investments grow and make money or will they tank? We don't know. Even the weatherman often gets the forecast wrong. The future is simply a mixture of the unknown. And, that alone is enough to make some worry. We want to know. There are some things we simply cannot know. Thus we walk by faith and not by sight, as the apostle reminded us. Some have turned to the extremes, such as reading tea leaves, lines in one's hand, looking at the stars or even asking questions to crystal balls. But all of those things are bogus. They are just a way for some to be taken advantage of.

However, as Revelation ends, there are four divine truths that God shares with us. This is what is coming. And, we know. We know, because God knows. We know because God has revealed. The most important things, we know. We know just what will happen.

First, Satan is punished forever. The Revelation vision has Satan being cast into the lake of fire where he will be punished for eternity. No longer able to tempt mankind, this accuser will be put where he belongs. The cartoon images of Satan jabbing people with a pitchfork in Hell is made for the comic strips. It's not Biblical, nor hopeful. Satan will get what he deserves. We know the outcome.

Second, Christ is reigning forever. That's a running theme not just through Revelation, but the entire Bible. God has always been on the throne. Jesus ascended to Heaven to sit on the right hand of God. There He reigns. God has always been in charge. Christ wins, that's a simple two word description of the book of Revelation. Rome was nothing. Satan was nothing. There is no power, no forces, no times in which Jesus will not be reigning. Everything will turn out fine, and how we know that is because Jesus is reigning. Everything will turn out just as the Bible says. We know that because Jesus is reigning.

(OVER)

Third, Troubles will cease, at least for the righteous. The book of Revelation is filled with trials and trouble. Some would be tossed in prison. Antipas lost his life. Satan has been engaging in a war against God's people. But as Revelation closes, so do those troubles. Troubles don't go with us to the other side. Troubles are not resurrected as we are. Troubles will trouble us no more. Now, for those who are not righteous, they will experience trouble like they never have before. They may think their life is "hell" now. It's nothing like the real Hell. Corruption. Arrogance. Oppression. Wars. Crime. Anger. Hatred. Evil. Wickedness. They will all end for the righteous. As one of our hymns announce about the coming of Jesus, "There is a great day coming." It will be great.

Fourth, our story ends with us surrounding the throne of God in Heaven. That's the picture presented. The cemetery cannot hold us. Our story does not have a "The End," to it. Around the throne, with all the angels, and the righteous from all time, that's the glorious conclusion to God's story of the world. That's where He wants us to be. That's where we belong. The righteous that we have read about in our Bibles. The righteous that we fellowshiped and worshipped with. The righteous from other times and other lands. All of us together, rejoicing, happy and never again to be bothered by the things of the world. No lights to turn on. No doors to lock at night. No medicine to take. No cemeteries to drive by. No bad news. No tears filling our hearts.

We know the outcome. We know how all of this will end. We know because God has shown us. What blessed hope this brings us. Little to worry about. Nothing to fear. Back in the presence of God, just where we want to be.

Roger Shouse (Used by Permission)
