

Experience God's Blessing Through Studying Revelation

A. Importance (Aspects) of this Study

A2. Recognize: The Promise of Blessing

Revelation is the only book in the Bible that specifically promises to bless the one who reads the words written in it. The reader is blessed, and the hearer is blessed as well. The one who keeps the words of the prophecy is blessed twice: once in chapter 1, and again in chapter 22. The word 'keep' in Greek¹ is a verb that denotes taking careful attention to the object. Guarding it, as in keeping the words safe: yes, but more than that. Keeping it, as in not changing a word: yes, that too, but still more. This verb is also used to describe the action of observation, keeping careful watch. Much as a shepherd watches over his flock, he knows them by watching them. He knows their names, and their quirks that make them unique. The shepherd knows when one of them is missing, when one has learned something new, or even when one has grown to maturity. As we are to watch over the words of Revelation, we are to learn to know them closely, familiarize ourselves with the concepts, and recognize how they relate to us.

The concept of keeping also implies spending time with the words. More than reading and hearing, which have their own reward, keeping the words is perhaps an even greater blessing, as the words then become a part of us. As we spend time considering the sayings, contemplating the meaning of certain phrases, with concepts running around in our mind, we absorb their meaning and digest the content. Many times in Scripture we are exhorted to read God's Word, even to

¹ τηρέω = Tereo, tay-reh'-o, Strong# 5083: 1. to attend to carefully, take care of; 1a. to guard; 1b. metaph. to keep, one in the state in which he is; 1c. to observe; 1d. to reserve: to undergo something.

digest it as Ezekiel was instructed to do. The things we learn, then, we keep close to our heart. God informs us that He even writes on our hearts!

Of course, there are many promises given to those who abide in God's Word. Perhaps to 'abide' is another way of keeping the words of this prophecy? The terms, abideⁱⁱ and keep, do not prove to be synonymous, however. 'Abiding' seems to keep something that is known of the past. 'Keeping' seems to abide in something that is expected of the future. These are similar actions, but the focus is changed regarding whether the matter has occurred, or is still to occur. The two correspond side by side: we can 'abide' in the surety of the past, and 'keep' watch for those things, just as sure to happen, in the future. Knowing that God was in control in times past assures us of His control in the present. We should then be confident of God's continuing control in the future. Our assurance of prophecy grows as we familiarize ourselves in the awesome power shown by God in the past. With confidence we abide in the first coming of Christ; and with the same confidence, we eagerly keep watch for the second coming.

'Abiding' proves to be more than just keeping words close to your heart, however. As Jesus illustrates this point in John 6:56,

"He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him."

To 'abide', then, applies more to who we are, than what it is we do. To 'keep' is more than reading and hearing, and yet is somewhat less than who we are. Still, the two actions, abiding and keeping, do something wonderful together: they both converge in one person, Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul penned this eloquently in his letter to the Colossians 3:2-4,

"Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."

ⁱⁱ μένω = Meno, men'-o, Strong# 3306: 1. to remain, abide; 1a. in reference to place; to sojourn, tarry; not to depart; 1b. to continue to be present; 1c. to be held, kept, continually; 1d. in reference to time; to continue to be, not to perish, to last, endure; 1e. of persons, to survive, live; 1f. in reference to state or condition; to remain as one, not to become another or different; 2. to wait for, await one.

Keeping the words of prophecy, Paul renders as, “*Set your mind on things above.*” Whereas to the definition of abiding in Jesus, he writes, “*your life is hidden with Christ in God.*” Keeping the word is something we do, and abiding in the Word is who we are as believers and followers of Jesus Christ.

What then of those who do not believe? Jesus tells us what ‘abides’ on them in John 3:36,

“He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but *the wrath of God abides on him.*”

This is a sober reality for all. How should we, as believers, respond? We know that it is not God’s will that any should perish, as Peter 3:9-10 tells us,

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, *not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.* ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.”

This passage also reminds us that the end of heaven and earth is coming. So there is only a finite amount of time before then. Yet, this raises more questions for the believer: How much time is there before the end? What are we to do with the time we are given? Our Lord compels us to go forth throughout the world and tell everyone of Him, “*who delivers us from the wrath to come*”ⁱⁱⁱ.

Therefore, we are accountable to respond to God’s calling on our life: to reach out to non-believers and make disciples of them^{iv}. How shall we fulfill this revealed will of God? Is there a sense of urgency in our efforts to connect with non-believers? If not, why? What is holding us back from accepting the great commission? Is it fear of rejection, ridicule, or worse? Do we suffer from a lack of confidence, not feeling qualified to take on such a task? Our motivation, our confidence, and our

ⁱⁱⁱ 1THES 1:10, wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even *Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.*

^{iv} MATH 28:19, Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

ability to overcome fear do not come from ourselves, but from the one we serve. We must realize that we are ambassadors of the King^v, and that we have all been called to serve Him. Yet, we all have different gifts, ministries, and activities appointed to us^{vi}, with which to serve. Although we have such diversity, in serving the King we are to be unified. After all, how can we call Him Lord and not do what He says^{vii}?

[NEXT: B1. Unity in Understanding]

^v 2COR 3:3, clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.

^{vi} 1COR 12:4-6, There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. ⁶And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.

^{vii} LUKE 6:46, why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?