

The War to End All Wars

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 (Revelation 19:11).

Scripture: Revelation 19:11–21

Song: “Onward, Christian Soldiers”

Many called World War I “the war to end all wars,” but it wasn’t. War reparations imposed on Germany sowed bitter seeds that Adolf Hitler would water with lies. Twenty-one years later, the world entered another war. And that one has been followed by numerous military conflicts and other wars. Wars and rumors of wars will haunt us until time’s end (Matthew 24:6).

As Christian history has unfolded, believers have had many interpretations of Revelation. But regardless of how we interpret it, one thing is clear: good will win in the end, and God will destroy evil.

However and whatever events transpire when the world ends, God will control them all. He promises to create a new Heaven and earth, where Christ will reign in righteousness. If we look with eyes of faith and gratitude, we can still see traces of good in our world—in God’s good gifts, including nature and our relationships. After the final war, though, good will prevail, and Christ will reign in righteousness. Take a moment to thank God for what He will do one day.

Father, I trust that You will prevail over evil and usher in righteousness forever. In Jesus’ name, amen.

January 6–12. **Martin Wiles** is a Christ-follower who is also a teacher, pastor, freelance editor, author, husband, father, and grandfather. He has authored seven books and contributed to numerous publications.

Giving with a Joyful Heart

[David prayed,] “All these things I have given willingly and with honest intent. And now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you” (1 Chronicles 29:17).

Scripture: 1 Chronicles 29:10-20

Song: “Take My Life, and Let It Be”

Florence Nightingale is the founder of modern nursing. Countless others have followed in her footsteps, acquiring the education and skills to tend to those who are ill or injured. From the emergency room, to the operating room, to the intensive care unit, to home health care, to hospice care, nurses keep giving to those who need their services.

Today’s passage reveals that King David and the people of Israel were also givers. David desired to build a temple for the Ark of the Covenant—the symbol of God’s presence with His people. God commended David’s intentions, but He wanted David’s son Solomon to accomplish that task. Although David could not fulfill his dream, he still gave joyfully to the project by gathering building supplies for Solomon to use.

The Bible instructs us to give cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7) and provides examples of joyful giving as in today’s passage. God gave His all when He sent His Son. We give to show our gratitude to God and to advance His kingdom’s work on earth. God does not force us to give, nor does He want us to give under compulsion or with impure motives. Like David, we are called to give joyfully, sacrificially, and proportionately.

Father, please help me see new ways I can give to bless You and others. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Tell the Good News

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation (Isaiah 52:7).

Scripture: Isaiah 52:1-12

Song: “Our God Reigns”

Sharing good news can deliver an adrenaline rush—such as when a couple shares their “We’re having a baby” announcement. One couple did this at their pandemic-delayed wedding reception, held several months after the wedding. By the time the reception took place, the bride was pregnant. As the couple was enjoying their special dance together, the rhythm of the music suddenly changed. The couple separated, and the bride rubbed her stomach while the groom snatched a diaper bag and threw diapers to the audience.

God also gave His people good news. God would deliver them from Babylonian captivity as He had done from Egyptian slavery. But the better news was that the Messiah would come and provide an even greater deliverance, ending the necessity for their endless animal sacrifices.

Living on this side of the cross, we have the best news to share. The Messiah has come in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus paid for our sin, and when we receive His gift of redemption, He delivers us from sin’s bondage and condemnation. Abundant life is ours in the present, and Heaven lies in our future. But God doesn’t want us to keep this good news to ourselves. There are people who have yet to hear the message of salvation. Let’s keep sharing it faithfully!

Father, thank You for the good news. Strengthen me to keep carrying it to others near and far. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Inheritance in the Waiting

He chose our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob, whom he loved (Psalm 47:4).

Scripture: Psalm 47

Song: “Count Your Blessings”

I received an inheritance from both sets of my grandparents. One of these gave to me continuously over their lifetime, including gifts of time. The other pair gave little monetarily while they lived. I thought they were poor, but after that grandfather passed away, I discovered he had accumulated quite a nest egg. Each of the grandchildren received a lump sum of money.

The sons of Korah also received an inheritance as members of the nation of Israel. They inherited an awesome and mighty God who reigns over all creation. Through faith, they worshipped God, who controls all things and to whom all things belong. They praised God through song and encouraged others to do so as well.

Believers today also have a rich inheritance—one that is both present and future. Upon receiving the gift of salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9), we inherit complete forgiveness of our sins. God casts them into the depths of the sea (Micah 7:19) and removes them from us as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12). We inherit freedom from condemnation, worry, anxiety, and fear and receive abundant life. But the inheritance gets even better upon Christ's return. God has prepared a new Heaven and earth for us where the ravages of sin's curse are absent. Take a moment right now to praise God for the wonderful inheritance He has chosen for you.

Father, I praise You for the inheritance I have through Christ. In Jesus' name, amen.

Love Humbly

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves (Philippians 2:3).

Scripture: Philippians 2:1-13

Song: “Love Lifted Me”

He watched residents come and go in the house next to where he and his wife lived. Then a young couple moved in with two kids in tow. They seemed to have their hands full as they were settling in. The yard was a mess since no one had lived in the house for quite a few months, and the grass had grown tall. So the next time the man cut his grass, he decided to cut their front yard too. After all, he was retired and had nothing pressing to do. The young husband and wife were amazed. Their neighbor had chosen to show love to them in an unexpected, humble way.

It's the way Jesus has treated us. Paul uses Jesus as the perfect example in his discourse on love and humility. Christ left the realm of Heaven and came to a sin-broken world, where He demonstrated humble love and then gave His life for humanity's sins.

Love shows up best through actions. And when we carry out those actions with humility, love shines. Loving others is the second greatest command, but doing so with the proper motives is essential. Humility is not weakness, nor is loving people. And when we combine the two, we experience life at its best and sprinkle our world with the love of Christ. What are some ways you can love humbly today?

Father, it's my desire to love others humbly, as You have loved me. In Jesus' name, amen.

Faith, Not Fear

[Jesus] said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?” (Mark 4:40).

Scripture: Mark 4:35-41

Song: “It Is Well with My Soul”

My son and I once enjoyed an overnight camping trip on the Appalachian Trail in Georgia’s northeast mountains. To heighten the adventure, we planned to stay in a shelter rather than a tent. We were alone except for two young men who tented 20 yards away. Bears entered their camp twice that evening, stealing most of their food. Fearing for our safety, I was awake most of the night. But my son, who had faith I would protect him, slept like a log.

As Jesus and His disciples crossed the Sea of Galilee in a fishing boat, a storm raged. Like my son, Jesus slept soundly. And like me, the disciples feared for their lives, not trusting yet in the one who could—and did—quiet the wind and waves.

Fear comes in two forms: healthy and unhealthy. We should have a healthy fear of some things and situations, such as hungry bears. But living in a constant state of fear will keep us from enjoying life and prevent us from doing God’s work. God remains with us at all times through the person of the Holy Spirit. Nothing can happen to us that the Father does not filter through His loving hand. We can trust that Christ is with us, and His presence provides the calm we need in the storms of life.

Father, when I am in an emotional, physical, or spiritual storm, I will turn my eyes to You for peace. In Jesus’ name, amen.

A Mighty God

Mightier than the thunder of the great waters, mightier than the breakers of the sea—the LORD on high is mighty (Psalm 93:4).

Scripture: Psalm 93

Song: “What a Mighty God We Serve”

In May 2023, passengers on the cruise ship *Carnival Sunshine* experienced a terrifying day and night as they traveled back from the Bahamas to Charleston, South Carolina. A low-pressure weather system was camping off the coast, and the ship would need to pass through the storm to get back to port. According to various sources, 40-foot waves pounded the huge cruise liner and caused it to tilt and take on water at one point. Passengers were knocked about, and items floated down watery hallways. Finally, a few hours later, the ship docked.

The author of Psalm 93 assures us that God is mightier than great thunderstorms or churning seas. He is sovereign over His creation and over all things. As His children, we can be assured that nothing that comes against us in this life is more powerful than He is.

There are different kinds of might in the world. “The pen is mightier than the sword,” novelist and playwright Edward Bulwer-Lytton wrote. However, no matter what sort of power may confront or threaten us, God is mightier still. When circumstances pound against us like massive waves, or adversity seems to march against us like an army, we can carry on without fear, knowing that we serve a mighty God who cares for us (John 14:27).

Father, no matter what confronts me today, I will call on Your mighty name and renew my trust in You. In Jesus’ name, amen.