

## Revelation 1:7-20

Before I begin this message, I want to share a piece of news that always surfaces this time of the year. Have you ever heard of the “Doomsday Clock?”

Natural News reports: The scientists responsible for setting the “Doomsday Clock” have warned that the world is now just 90 seconds to midnight – the closest the planet has ever been to nuclear annihilation.

The Doomsday Clock, handled by the Science and Security Board of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, a nonprofit organization focused on global science and security issues, is a reflection of how close to total annihilation humanity is. It is adjusted every January, and the Science and Security Board just moved the clock 10 seconds forward to 90 seconds to midnight.

This means that the Science and Security Board believes the threat of nuclear war and other global catastrophes has significantly risen this year.

Central to the movement of the Doomsday Clock closer to midnight is the United States’ role in making sure the conflict in Ukraine escalates and preventing any kind of peaceful resolution.

“If the U.S. really wants to avoid war with Russia, it must realize that, barring the use of nuclear weapons, Russia is not only determined to prevail, but it has the means to prevail,” wrote Ray McGovern, a former Central Intelligence Agency Russia analyst. McGovern wrote a scathing criticism of President Joe Biden’s administration for its hawkish policies against Russia, which, coupled with a refusal to open any kind of diplomatic channels, is what could lead to a nuclear apocalypse.” (unquote)

In as much as our Lord warns wars and rumors of wars will characterize the times leading up to his return, the possibility of widespread destruction from another World War is real. While we need not occupy our minds with this subject constantly, we nonetheless need to watch and be ready. No one has the promise of tomorrow. Regardless of how we leave this world, one day will be our last. You need to watch and be ready for either the return of Christ, or for your departure from this world.

May I ask you a question: is my warning to watch and be ready falling on deaf ears in the church? What might it take to get you fully awake? What will it take to break the power of this world on your heart? What will it take to fire up your walk with the Lord and stir again passionate obedience to Christ?

These are good questions for any Christian to answer.

As we begin, return with me to verse seven.

You will notice that our Lord's interaction with the apostle begins as he makes the same declaration twice. Jesus says in verse eight, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." Again, in verse eleven Jesus says, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last."

We should carefully note that only God can say he is the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Only God contains in himself the bookends of eternity. Only God holds in his hands the history of mankind from the original very good creation to the consummation of all things when a new heaven and a new earth is founded by the Alpha and Omega!

Verse eight goes on to describe our Lord as the one "which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." Clearly these words reveal the absolute deity

of our Lord. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. From everlasting to everlasting, he has possessed the one, Divine nature equally with the Father and the Spirit.

I must remind you of this truth today: all genuine believers confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord from heaven. Genuine believers bow the knee to the Lord Jesus Christ and like Thomas we confess Jesus to be our Lord and our God!

I just read again in two different Christian publications that 43% of evangelicals believe Jesus was a great teacher but was not God. Let that sink in for a moment. That means 4 out of 10 so-called Christians in many professed Christian churches are LOST! If a so-called Christian cannot bring himself to confess that Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us, he is a tare shown amongst the wheat. He is like a cloud with no rain and like a well without water. He is no better than the lost Pharisee whom Christ described as a whited sepulcher full of dead men's bones!

In order to be a real Christian one must have a relationship with the Son of God. One must confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus. We don't simply confess Jesus, we confess the Lord Jesus Christ! Those within Christendom who think of themselves as Christians but at the same time deny the deity of Christ are deceived. It is time for many in the churches to repent and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ before it is too late!

Now look again at verse nine. Notice John says he is our brother and companion in tribulation, or trouble. The apostolic era was characterized by strong persecution against the church. In fact, John says he was in the isle called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. The small, barren, rocky island called Patmos is located just off the southwest coast of modern Turkey. It was used as a prison in John's day, thus his persecutors exiled him to the isle because of his stand for the word of God. John was exiled because he refused to stop preaching and teaching Jesus Christ.

May I ask you a question: are you prepared to stand for the word of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation among whom we are to shine as lights? Are you prepared to bear witness to Jesus Christ in the face of a growing censorship aimed at silencing Bible Christianity?

Are you prepared to remain true to the Lord Jesus Christ even as many in the professed church succumb to the world and deny the Lord that bought them? Are you prepared to go outside the gate and suffer with Jesus?

The book of Hebrews says, “Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate (outside the city walls of Jerusalem). Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.”

My friends, in this walk of life like John we may face our own trouble simply because we bear the name of Jesus. But gird up the loins of your mind and be ready to endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ; for here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come. We are pilgrims in this old world traveling toward home. We are seeking a city whose builder and maker is God. We are destined for a place prepared by the nail scarred hands of the one who loved us and gave himself for us!

Hear me today: whatever we may face in the way of suffering for his name’s sake will be worth it all! The old hymn says it so well:

It will be worth it all when we see Jesus!

Life’s trials will seem so small when we see Christ.

One glimpse of his dear face, all sorrow will erase.

So, bravely run the race till we see Christ.

Amen!