

# The First and the Last

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During a very troubling time in Israel's history, God directed His prophet Jeremiah to speak words of hope and encouragement to the exiles in Babylon. **"For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope'" (Jeremiah 29:11).** If we are going to reach our full potential, we must understand a very important truth: God is for us. He is not against us. This also is the message of the book of Revelation.

Between its pages we discover God's truth given to the church from a new perspective. Instead of reading the words of itinerant preachers, we are given entrance into John's private inner sanctuary as he records the words given to him by God.

What a wondrous privilege we have been given by God! Through reading the book of Revelation, we are given an opportunity to step into God's classroom and learn from what was once hidden and sealed away. This is exactly what happened to God's prophecy that was given in the book of Daniel—it was sealed until the appropriate time, but this is not the case with the book of Revelation. From the moment it was given, God's clear instruction was to send its message to the church. ([Revelation 1:11](#))



Jeremiah, Daniel, and others were prophets who warned of impending judgment. Their words were meant to expose religious complacency and sin. Israel was to be taken into captivity because they had drifted in their love for Him. However, God never leaves His people hopeless.

Even in times of discipline, God comes to us with a promise of victory and deliverance. This is the message of Revelation. **"Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades" ([Revelation 1:17–18](#)).**

It was in Babylon that Israel sorted out its faith and rediscovered a deep need for the Lord. Often God uses trials to position us for greater blessing. Even in times of great disappointment, He always has our best in mind. His greatest desire is for us to see Him as our only source of salvation and blessing.

If you are in an emotionally or physically difficult spot, don't become discouraged. Ask the Lord to reveal His will and plan for your life. Commit yourself fully to Him and pray to be obedient no matter what the obedience costs you. If you take this approach, God will provide for you in ways that go far beyond human understanding. This is a foundational truth concerning all that we do and especially as we read through the book of Revelation. God has a wonderful blessing in store for all who read His revelation to the church.