***No more Hunger, Thirst, or Tears

RV136-02***

We are on the home stretch of completing Revelation 7:9-17. Chapter 7 has been a parentheses (a concentrated focus) upon one little factor in terms of final events, giving us a picture of what is going on in heaven while the tribulation is taking place here on earth before Jesus Christ returns a second time. We are continuing with our subject of the tribulation converts. This is segment number seven.

People who are not born again, I think all of you understand, are thereby spiritually dead, and under the control of what the Bible calls their father the devil. Satan causes these unbelievers to hate Christians and to resent God's work here on earth, which is being performed by these believers. Satan uses his children, therefore, to undermine Christian work, and to eliminate Christian workers by revisionism or by death. Christian workers fall by the wayside in one of those two ways. Either they die and go into the Lord's presence, or something happens in their lives and they get off-track from the will of God. They are negative toward an aspect of the Word of God, and they fall into reversionism, and thus into spiritual incapacity. In neither case, it serves Satan's cause.

**Persecution of Christians**

People tend to view past persecutions and atrocities toward believers as something that is just too based and too brutal for modern civilized societies, and that is a great mistake. Hatred for Christians is not past. Hatred for the work of God is not a thing of the past. It is a very current thing. All you have to do is to have the great misfortune of being born in a communist country today to experience all of the brutality that any of the people of God have ever experienced in the past. And I mean brutality of the most unmitigated kind (the unbelievable kind) – brutality of the most vicious, inhumane kind such that you cannot believe that human beings could do this to one another.

But that's an old story. Human beings have been doing that sort of thing to one another for centuries. There was a common expression after World War II, when all the world discovered what had been done to the Jewish people and to the people of Eastern Europe, which were under the hatred of the Nazi regime. The phrase constantly was, "How could human beings have done such inhuman things to other human beings. And as the pictures, and see the scenes of those concentration camps, and you hear the stories of what was done, it is unbelievable. We must remember that this was done by one of the most civilized countries of the Western world, Germany, with all of its heritage of learning and culture.

So, Satan still hates the children of God, and he is intent on destroying them, and he uses the nations of the world and the power structures of society to bring Christians down in any way he can. The current inhuman treatment of believers will, however, rise to a crescendo of brutality in the tribulation era that we have been studying. So, we have observed many times that people have not seen anything yet, like what is still to come.

Martyrdom in that future era will be a common experience among God's people under the dictatorship of the antichrist. People will not know from day to day what will be the state of their existence. Those who are believers will particularly be under the antagonism of the whole society. Terrible things have happened to believers in the past. Brutal suffering is being experienced by believers today. A holocaust is on the horizon for the future.

**Martyrs**

The apostle John, in this preview that has been given to him of God's throne room in heaven, sees a multitude of the martyrs in heaven who have come out of the future tribulation conflict and persecution. These born-again martyrs are seen in heaven as being from gentile nations all around the world. They will, of course, include some Jewish believers as well, along with the gentile believers. But by and large, the picture here is mostly of gentiles who have been martyred during the tribulation.

The suffering martyrs are seen by John in heaven, rejoicing now in God's presence, and praising him for their grace salvation. They have direct access to the throne of God. These people are enjoying serving God in His heavenly temple, night and day, we're told. God has, furthermore, we are told, spread his protective care over these martyrs to shield them from ever having to suffer again because of their faith and loyalty to Him.

**No More Hunger**

So, we begin here in Revelation 7:16. This is the end of all privation: "They shall no more neither thirst anymore, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. They shall hunger no more." The word "hunger" is the Greek word "peinao." This is the word that simply means a lack of food. It is something, furthermore, that is to be in the past. It's something that is simply, for these people, never to happen again. These tribulation people have had considerable suffering from lack of nourishment for a variety of reasons. These tribulation saints were denied access to food because of the controls which the antichrist will have instituted over the business ventures of that time.

**Electronic Commerce**

We have this indicated to us in Revelation 13:17, for example, where we are told that, during the tribulation period of seven years: "No man might buy or sell except he that had the mark or the name of the beast or the number of his name." People will have to carry a certain mark upon their foreheads or upon their hands. It will be a variation of what is called the smart plastic credit card today, which has all kinds of information on a small magnetic strip that is now embedded in this card about you; about your dealings; about your financial condition; about your trustworthiness; and, about all kinds of things that can be brought up immediately on a screen by simply taking your credit card and running it through a reader.

In Singapore, now, you can't use money. In everything you do, you must use the plastic card. That's the only way you can do business. That's the only way you can purchase anything. So, there is now a total control over that particular population. They can't do anything without the authorities knowing what they're doing with their money.

This will be the condition that will actually exist under the antichrist. The computer revolution that we are going through now (the computer expansion and refinement) will come to the point where it will be absolutely impossible for anybody to do anything that is not fully documented immediately. So, it will be a very easy thing for the antichrist to cut off a food supply from a person by simply saying that that particular identification card is now void, and you can't use it.

As you may know, this is what is done in communist countries today. You must carry an identification card. If they want to starve you to death, which they do with certain dissidents, they simply cancel out the validity of your identification card. Then you can't buy food; you can't purchase things that you need and clothing; and, you can't secure housing. You are absolutely turned out in the wilds. The only way you'll survive is if people are sympathetic to you, to share what they have with you.

Matthew 25:35 may be referring to the fact that, while these believers are going to be in a state of hunger in the tribulation era, there will be people who will rally to their support to help them. For here, we read concerning a group of gentiles (which are described as sheep, meaning that they are born again people). The Lord says, "For I was hungry, and you gave Me food. I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink. I was a stranger, and you took Me in." Verse 42 says, "For I was hungry, and you gave Me no food. I was thirsty, and you gave Me no drink." Here He is addressing the goat group. So, some people will refuse to help the people of God because they are unbelievers. Those who are believers will assist them.

However, in any case there will not be enough assistance, and once you become a believer in the tribulation, you should (you will) be faced with a stomach that growls with hunger pains repeatedly and constantly, and you will not be able to do anything about it. Here, these people who have suffered that on earth are now told, after their martyrdom, that God is going to see to it that they will never lack food again. This is future tense. The words "shall never again hunger" is future tense. They'll never go hungry in the future. It is active; that is, the martyrs themselves will not experience this. It is indicative in its mood. It's a statement of fact.

God will now provide the necessity and the pleasure of food, though, in their resurrection body condition, they won't need to eat. But like the Lord Jesus did, He could eat, and He did eat. And there will be a certain pleasure and satisfaction in eating. He promises that these people will never again lack the food they need.

Also, of course, we must apply this basic principle to people who are believers who do not get killed in the tribulation. Some of them will survive through that tribulation era. This promise is very significant to them – that while they may have, and will have, suffered hunger during the tribulation, they won't ever again in the Millennial Kingdom, even though they still have their bodies that need to consume food.

**No More Thirst**

Furthermore, he says that they will not only not hunger, but they will not thirst." The Greek word looks like this: "dipsao." This refers to the lack of water which is necessary to sustain physical life. You can go for quite a few days without eating food, and you will still live. You can maybe survive three or four days without water, and that will be the end of the line. Water is absolutely essential for the sustaining of life. So, these people have been in conditions where they did not have enough water to drink, so they suffered thirst. Here, again, as we saw in the Matthew passage, some people will come to their aid, and of all things, they'll sneak water to them so that they may survive under the antichrist's persecution. They will have some source by which the water will be provided to them. Perhaps the 144,000 Jewish evangelists will be in a position to help these people with food and water that they need.

This, again, is in the future tense. They are told that they will never in the future again thirst, now that the tribulation has passed and they're in heaven. This is active voice. This is the condition of the martyrs themselves. And it's a statement of a fact. There will be no thirst which will silence the vocal chords in praising God.

Of course, this is what thirst does to you. One of the first things that thirst will hit will be your vocal cords, so that you will not be able to speak, and you will increasingly become very hoarse and unintelligible. So, the significance here is that these people will have all they need to keep their vocal cords actively praising God.

**No More Scorching of the Sun**

Furthermore, he says that there will be one other thing that they will not suffer again, and that is: "No more scorching of the sun." The word "sun" is "helios." This is the noun for the star which is the earth's sun. We're told that there will be no more sunlight. This idea is "sun falling." The word "light" is "pipto," which means "to fall," in the sense of "beating upon." It is in the aorist tense, which tells us that at no point in time are they ever going to be under the condition where they will be under the beating of the sun. The martyrs have felt this, and particularly the beating, it says, "Of the light" – the sun falling on them, nor the consequences of that: "any heat." The Greek word for heat is "kauma," which is a word for "high temperature." From time immemorial, ancient people have destroyed their enemies (have killed people) by staking them out under the sun where they dehydrated. It's the easiest and fastest way to kill a person. Just take them out under the intensity of the sun. He will dehydrate very rapidly without being able to replenish water, which at best, you can only go a few days without. He will quickly die. So, here these people have been facing some kind of struggle in reference to being exposed to the sun's heat.

As we have indicated, during the tribulation, it will be illegal for the believers to buy food and to secure water. So, they will suffer from the lack of both of them. For some of them, there will be the desire to escape this persecution by fleeing to isolated wilderness areas. That's the picture that you have here. People in that context, of the picture here in New Testament times, they'll be fleeing out in the desert areas with exposure to an intensity of the sun.

Many of these saints will indeed die from hunger; from thirst; and, from exposure. Some do survive because other believers choose to help them, and to hazard their own condition, because they view them, as Matthew 25:34-40 indicates, as are deprived brethren.

Now, finally, in heaven, here the picture is that these saints who are martyrs are going to be forever freed from such sufferings. They will not have to face any of these privations again.

This is not really a new promise, because, as you know, the Old Testament previewed many of the conditions which would exist in this future time of the tribulation. Interestingly enough, this very subject of privation is touched upon by the prophet Isaiah when he's talking about the future trials of the Jewish people in the tribulation. Isaiah 49:10: "They shall not hunger, nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor sun smite them, for he who has mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them. So, Isaiah was predicting that, while there will be suffering, God will intervene in their behalf.

These images of divine provision actually, of course, go beyond the physical needs, which will be very great, and which will need to be met. But we must also recognize that the Bible often has a symbolic connotation to those things which are the concrete physical things. And in this case, you can see very readily that the Bible also recognizes that this is the kind of provision that God must make for our spiritual hunger; for our spiritual thirst; and, for our spiritual exposure to the opposition of false doctrine and to error. So, in Matthew 5:6, we read, "Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." So, the physical provision of food is also a symbolic provision of righteousness for which we hunger and thirst.

In John 4:14, we have the same idea. Jesus says, "But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him, he shall never thirst. But the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Here, the reference is clearly to spiritual water that the Lord gives.

John 6:35: "Jesus said unto them, "I am the bread of life. He that comes to Me shall never hunger, and He that believes on Me shall never thirst." Jesus Christ is the bread of life in the fact that He has the truth concerning access to eternal life and to heaven.

John 7:37: "In the last days, that great day of the feast (this is just before His crucifixion), Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink.'" Obviously, He is not talking about actual drinking of actual water there. He is talking about any man who thirsts spiritually – that he should come to Him, and he would be satisfied.

So, we have a symbolic reflection of spiritual satisfaction for, indeed, these same people, as we have physical satisfaction given to them. So, what the Lord says that these people who have suffered hunger; who have suffered thirst; and, who suffered exposure on the earth – that's all passed. He says, "That's never going to happen again. I'm going to see to it that you will never be hungry again; you'll never be thirsty; and, you'll never suffer exposure.

**The Lamb**

Then in verse 17, we come to the ministry of Jesus Christ: "For the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne." The word "for" Greek word "hoti." This word actually means "because." Why won't you hunger again? Why will you not thirst? Why will you not be exposed to the elements? "Because," He says, "I'm coming into the picture." Who is it? It's the "arnion." This is the Lamb. By the context, it obviously refers to the Lamb that we have seen here in the heavenly throne room; namely, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We're told that He is "standing in the midst." He is the one who is standing particularly in the center of the "thronos," the throne of God the Father. This is actually the imperial throne. It says, "For the lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them. The word "feed" is the Greek word "poimaino." Actually, this word does not mean "to feed." It means "to shepherd." So, it says that: "Jesus Christ, the Lamb who stands in the midst of the throne is going to shepherd these people." It's in the future tense, which means that anytime in the future, when they have a problem, He will be there to guide them. It is going to be done by Jesus Christ Himself.

Also, it says that He is, furthermore, going to shepherd them by "leading" them. This is the Greek word "odegeo," which means that he's going to lead the way as a guide. So, the Lord Jesus Christ, at some time in the future, personally will lead these suffering sheep to pasture and to peace. This is just at the point of time when they need this help.

**He will Lead them to Living Water**

What's he going to lead them to? We're told that he's going to lead them to something which is "living." This is the Greek word "zoe." The word "zoe" actually is the word for "life." It connotes something which, in effect, will sustain life. And he describes the thing that will sustain life by the word "fountains" ("pege"). Actually, this word in the Greek means "springs." So, He's going to lead them to some kind of living springs that are made up of "hudor." "Hudor" is the word for "water" (H2O). The source of the living water of life is what is going to lead them to. They have suffered thirst. Now He says, "I'm going to lead you to waters that are living waters, springs of living waters." And that is the very presence of God Himself. The fountain of life is with God, and that's what these people in the tribulation have discovered. They believed it. They listened to the gospel. They were told that if you want life, you must find it with God through Jesus Christ. Now, indeed, they have discovered that this really was the springs of living water.

This was indicated in the Old Testament, for example, in Psalm 36:8-9: "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of your house, and you shall make them drink of the river of your pleasures. For with You is the fountain of life. In Your light we shall we see light." So, all the religions of the world, for example, such as Hinduism and Islam, which envision a heaven of a considerable sensual indulgence, because that's the way they view as having satisfaction and pleasures – all of those have rejected the God of the Bible. They have invented a God that doesn't exist. And what the Word of God is telling us is that unless you are in the presence of the God who has written the Scriptures, there will be no living water for you to drink, and thus to preserve your soul.

In the New Testament, this same concept was declared in John 4:14, where the Lord Jesus stressed this verse again: "But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

In John 7:38, we have that same concept again. It is what Jesus Christ can give, as God, who provides fountains of water, which is water of life.

So, what we are told here in Revelation 7, and confirmed in other Scriptures, is that the Lord Jesus is going to give them relief. And He's going to do this as a shepherd. We have the picture here of Jesus Christ shepherding His tribulation saints to the point of food and water to sustain life. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Great Shepherd of the believers, and therefore, He is the One, and the only One, who could bring them to that kind of care.

We have the dramatic statement of His shepherding of responsibility in John 10:1-8, where the Lord says, "'Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that does not enter by the door into the sheepfold, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and the robber. But he that enters in by the door (which is Jesus Christ) is the shepherd of the sheep. To him, the porter opens, and the sheep hear His voice, and He calls His own sheep by name, and leads them out. And when he puts forth His own sheep, He goes before them, and the sheep follow Him and they know His voice. And they will not follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.' This parable spoke Jesus unto them, but they did not understand what things they were which He spoke unto them. Then Jesus said unto them again, 'Verily, verily I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.'"

So, here, in a very forceful way, the Lord Jesus is stressing His role as the shepherd. Here again, what we have is stressing the fact that He is not only a shepherd, but He is the only shepherd. Nobody gets into heaven apart from Jesus Christ.

When the Mormons say that nobody gets into heaven without the approval of Joseph Smith, they're wrong. What Joseph Smith thinks about it is not worth a Fig Newton. Nobody gets into heaven who is not under the approval of Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 13:20 says, "Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant."

1 Peter 2:25 says, "For you were a sheep going astray, but now are returned unto the shepherd and bishop of your souls."

So, when it says that the Lord Jesus Christ will lead them, and that He will shepherd them to springs of living water, it is because He is the only true shepherd who can lead you to springs of living water. These suffering saints are going to be relieved of all the problems they had before by the very presence of Jesus Christ. In heaven, there is no suffering. There's only joy, and the satisfaction of having all needs met.

This divine care in God's presence was predicted to the people of God in the Old Testament in Ezekiel 47:1 – that God's presence is where it's all at. It is in God's presence that every need is ultimately to be met. Ezekiel is speaking about a river of living waters. This is the same image, way back in the Old Testament: "Afterward, He brought me again unto the door of the house, and behold, waters issued from under the threshold of the house (referring to the temple) eastward, for the forefront of the house stood toward the east. And the waters came down from under from the right side of the house at the south side of the altar. Then He brought me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way outside unto the outer gate by the way that looks eastward. And behold, there ran out water on the right side."

All of this is water coming from inside the temple through the various gates: "And when the man that had the line (that is, the measuring stick) in his hand went forth eastward, he measured 1,000 cubits, and he brought me through the waters. The waters were to the ankles. Again he measured 1,000 cubits, and brought me through the waters. (He went farther downstream, 1,000 cubits, then he measured the depth again.) The waters were up to the knees. Again he went downstream another 1,000 cubits, and brought me through. The waters were now up to the loins (up to his hips). Afterward, he measured 1,000 cubits, and it was a river that I could not pass over, for the waters were risen – waters to swim in: a river that could not be passed over."

What he means by that is that now it was such a mighty stream of water, gushing and pushing forth, that he could not resist it. If you've ever had the experience of being in a river of rushing water, you'll appreciate the hydraulic power of moving water. That's what he's saying here. Here is a power of God illustrated (symbolized) by this water satisfying our needs, but satisfying with such force and power that nothing can stand in the way of it.

Verse 6 says, "And He said unto me, 'Son of Man, have you seen this?' Then He brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river. Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other." Now remember that we're talking about God saying, "After you've done your suffering on earth, because you've been through to Me, the time is coming when I'm going to come through for you, and I'll provide you with everything you need. There'll be no more hunger; no more thirst; no more exposure; and, no more suffering." Here is the Old Testament picture, and, as you know, we have this repeated later in the book of the Revelation.

Verse 8: "Then He said unto me, "These waters issue out toward the East country, and they go down into the Arabah (that is, the Jordan Valley), and go into the sea (that is, the Dead Sea): and being brought forth into the sea, the water shall be healed." Today, we know that the Dead Sea will bear no life. The Jordan River flows into the Dead Sea, and nothing goes out of the Dead Sea. It is an intensely salt-laden with minerals. It is easy to float in the Dead Sea, but it is terrible to get its water in your eyes. Here we are told that the waters are going to be healed by a special living water. Again, you have these springs of living waters that are going to flow.

Verse 9: "And it shall come to pass that everything that lives, which moves, wherever the river shall come, shall live. And there shall be a very great multitude of fish because these waters shall come there, for they shall be healed, and everything shall live where the river comes. And it shall come to pass that the fathers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto Eneglaim. They shall be a place to spread forth nets. Their fish shall be according to their kinds as the fish of the great sea (that refers to the Mediterranean Sea), exceedingly many. But the miry places and the marshes shall not be healed (the areas around the Dead Sea). They shall be given to salt. And by the river upon its bank, on this side and on that side, shall grow all the trees for food, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall its fruit be consumed. It shall bring forth new fruit according to its months, because their water is issued out of the sanctuary, and its fruit shall be for food and its leaf for medicine."

If you ever have the opportunity to visit Israel, and to go down to the Masada mountain next to which lies the great Dead Sea, you will be in a country that is dead. It is dead desert country, and you would have a better appreciation for all of the picture here of the privations and suffering if you've ever seen that country. It is very difficult to read this Scripture and believe, that around the Dead Sea, in that absolute burning desert, there are going to be trees whose fruit is replenished every month, and whose leaves have a medicinal effect when they are used upon the wounds of people. What you have here is a picture of the millennium, and how God is going to prosper that area. Again, this is a picture of what John is seeing in heaven. God is going to come through. He's going to give you a living water. So, He's going to heal all the problems you've ever had before.

So, there's going to be comfort from the Lord Jesus Christ.

**No More Tears**

Then the chapter ends with a statement of one more comfort. This time the comfort will come, we are told, from God. In the Greek Bible, it's the Greek word "theos" for God. But it's important for you to know that the Greek says "*the* God," which equals God the Father. So, we are told that God the Father shall "wipe away." The word "wipe" is the Greek word "exaleipho." "Exaleipho" simply mean to take your handkerchief and wipe something away. This word is in the future tense, which means that sometime in the future, God the Father is going to do this for these people. It's active voice, which tells us that God the Father Himself is going to do this. It's a statement of fact. He says that what He is going to wipe away is "total." He uses the word "pos," which is the adjective "all," indicating every one. And what he's going to wipe away are their "tears" ("dakruon"). The "dakruon" refers to the water that comes out of the tear ducts of the human eye; water that comes from the tear ducts when you suffer pain; and, water that comes from the tear ducts when you are in sorrow. He explicitly says that He's going to remove this which comes from the "aphthalmos." This is the word for the human organ: the eye.

So, the final statement here of this little special cameo insight of what's going to take place in the tribulation era is that a lot of these people who are now in heaven will have shed a lot of tears. They will have suffered pain, and they will have suffered sorrow. And the tears will still be there on their cheeks, like a child who has suffered something, and he's cried his eyes out. Now the crying is passed, but there is all that little damp face with all the tears still streaking down. The picture here is that God the Father, like a tender parent, reaches down and wipes away the tears that have been left there. The sorrow is past. The tears are still lingering there. The pain is past. He's wiping away the last evidence, and the last residue of what once was.

At the end of the book of the Revelation, in Revelation 21:4, this tender work of God is again stressed: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there should be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are done away with." All of the things that cause the tear ducts to flow will be a thing of the past. It will not happen again. There'll be no more tears.

Now this condition can only happen in the presence of God in heaven. Then tears will forever become a thing of the past. This cannot be for us here on this earth. It will be for those who enter the Millennial Kingdom, because these promises will also apply to the people who survive the tribulation. They go into the Millennial Kingdom. For them, too, God says, "I'm going to make the provision, and everything that causes tears, I will remove. It will be a thing of the past."

All the success clinics that you hear about to make you happy, and all of the courses that you can take to remove all of these unhappy, distressful things of life are only limited. There are things that cannot be removed. The tears are going to be there, even if you know what life is all about. Somebody in the family dies. You know where they're going. You know that someday there will be a face-to-face confrontation again. But the tears are going to be flowing. Until you are in his presence in heaven, the tears will be there. But once you're there, they may still be on your face, but they'll no longer be flowing. The Father is going to reach down and wipe them away.

We cannot exclude the fact that some of these tears may be, and probably are, because of the memory of a wasted life, and of unconfessed sins. These believers will get to heaven and remember how many sins they just refused to admit, and how many times they refused to confess. Do you realize the enormity of the cost to a person who steps out of the will of God at some point (at some critical point in his life)? He thinks that God is leading him to do something, and he makes that move. God is not in that at all, but once the move is made, he's out of the will of God. He can spend years out of temporal fellowship. When he gets to heaven, all the picture becomes clear. And it'll be pretty hard to think that, "Oh my, I was on track, and suddenly I spent the last 15 or 20 years of my life way out there in the boondocks," and the tears are going to burst forth. Yes, I think even those tears will be there, but you will not continue crying. The time will come when the crying will stop, but the tears will be on the cheeks.

Even for that believer, God the Father is going to come up and, with a comforting hand, wipe those tears away. And that sad memory of your loss will then be adjusted. You will be related to it; you'll be able to live with it; and, you'll be able to wish that it had not been. You'll wish that it could have been. The doors that were potentially opened to you, you'll wish that those were the doors you had followed. But God is going to comfort, and you're not going to cry about it anymore. Even the tears of a wasted life, and the tears of unconfessed will be wiped away. In heaven, God's children just are not going to brood and grieve over past mistakes which cannot be changed. You shouldn't even grieve and brood over your mistakes now. You should just change them. You should just confess them, and get them behind you, and forget them.

So, the saints in heaven are going to be preoccupied with the Lord Jesus Christ, and with the wondrous glory of the eternal heavenly home. The Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, is also going to shepherd another group. He's going to shepherd the believers to their full satisfaction and happiness. But we must close with reminding ourselves that this is a God of justice.

**A Rod of Iron**

Therefore, we are told that, when He is King of all the world in the millennium, He will again shepherd (and we have the same word). He will shepherd the nations of the millennial world, and his shepherding there will not be the tender hand that is comforting those whose tears need to be wiped away. We are told that it will be a shepherd who has in His hand a rod of iron.

Revelation 12:5 says, "And she (that is, Israel, symbolized by this woman) brought forth a male child symbolizing Jesus Christ, who was to rule all nations (the nations on the earth) with a rod of iron." The word "rule" there is "shepherd" all nations with a rod of iron: "And her child was caught up unto God and to His throne."

Revelation 19:15 adds to that idea: "And out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He shall smite the nations (that is, the nations here on the earth during the millennium), and He shall rule them with a rod of iron." Here again, you have the same idea of His shepherding them with a rod of iron: And he treads the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God."

So, the Lord Jesus Christ is going to be the leader. For us who are in the family of God, and who are obedient to him, it will be a shepherding of a comforting, tender hand. For those who are rebellious and resistant, it's going to be the shepherding of a rod of iron. They'll be comfort for His saints on earth in the millennium after their suffering in the tribulation. There will be comfort for the martyrs who are in heaven that John sees, and who will now return indeed to the millennial earth in their resurrection bodies, fully comforted, and fully with all the memories of the sorrow behind them.

So, heaven is going to be a very happy place. It's easy for us to get caught up in the demands and the pressures of our daily lives, and for us as Christians to forget that that's where we're going. When you know you're going to heaven, you also know you're going to accountability. Therefore, while there's going to be comfort there, wouldn't it be nice that there will only be a minimum of tears on your cheek for him to wipe away? Wouldn't it be nice if you could come in there, and it's going to be all smiles and very little comfort that's needed? That's the kind of children we like to have – the kind who do right, and that we don't have to discipline, so we don't have to raise their tears. But when it becomes necessary, then we do it. And so will God our father. May we appreciate the fact that heaven is before us with all that that implies.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1984

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