***God's Patience is not Indifference

RV150-01***

We are studying "The Seventh Trumpet Blows" in Revelation 11:15-18. This is segment number four.

**Satan Controls the Earth**

Since the time of Cain, at the dawn of human history, mankind has been in rebellion against God's sovereign authority. People have rejected giving their allegiance to God, and have instead allied themselves with Satan. Satan controls the earth, and the mankind on this earth, by right of conquest through his defeat of Adam in the Garden of Eden. Satan is a powerful creature who controls people through their old sin natures. Satan's daily objective is to create a world in which God is irrelevant, and mankind can create its own rules of conduct. In Satan's world, all that pertains to God and to the Word of God (the Bible) is ridiculed, and is viewed actually as inhibiting man's freedom and highest aspirations. The Bible is therefore the special object of satanic attack because it is the depository of God's mind and God's truth, which undermines everything that the kingdom of Satan is trying to do.

**Satan's Kingdom**

For centuries, Satan has been building the kingdom of man on his earth, trying to produce happiness for mankind, only to find one effort after another in some tyrannical condition and utter destruction. History reveals a steady stream of civilizations which have brought nothing but misery and unhappiness to mankind. The latest example of that historically, of course, is the communist system – a system which was to create a new man; a man who would knock himself out working because he was so altruistic; man who would, by his efforts, be able to provide in abundance for his own needs and the needs of everyone else; a society in which there would be no exploitation; a society in which everyone would have more than enough of everything they could possibly need, and a society that would produce nothing but total and complete happiness.

**Communism**

That dream has been in effect for over 75 years in the Soviet Union, and now we see that it is a that it is a will-of-the-wisp that has been chased to no avail, because if you travel through the communist countries, what you find is not happiness and joy, but a gray depressive-like lifestyle with very little to buy in the stores, and very little of human needs being provided an adequate way. It is just the opposite. Yet, this philosophy began on a high expectation.

**God's Word**

Well, the problem of all with all these civilizations is that the key factor in building a civilization which is a blessing to mankind is the divine viewpoint wisdom of Scripture. That is the absolute necessity, so that the people of that society have some guidance and some frame of reference for their actions. The reason for this is that only God, who is the Creator, understands the mechanics of the nature of man – man's human spirit; man's soul; and, man's body. Only God understands the workings of natural creation. Without God's wisdom to guide in building a culture, there can be no stability in society which is necessary for creativity and for actually preserving freedom.

**The Dark Ages**

For the era that we refer to historically as the Dark Ages, civilization was on a downward trend. There was nothing but misery, and superstition, and agonies, and human suffering on an increasing scale. Finally, along came the Protestant reformers, and they brought back the basis on which a civilization must rest. They brought the Bible back into prominence. They pointed to the Scriptures as the Word of God that has the information from God. They broke free of 1,000 years of cultural darkness, and of abysmal ignorance. Today, where this Bible doctrine wisdom is rejected, mankind is in the process of destroying freedom; and, where it is accepted, a civilization grows, which has a basis for blessing and for freedom. It is a great contrast to look at a nation like the United States, with its Christian heritage, built upon biblical principles, and to look at communist countries which have rejected those very factors.

**Solomon**

Israel itself is a great example of a nation being built on biblical principles. Israel reached its golden age under Solomon. When Solomon came to reign, he became the finest channel of divine viewpoint wisdom that had ever existed in the human race up to that time. In 1 Kings 4:29-34, we have this happy condition referred to: "Now God gave Solomon wisdom and very great discernment and breadth of mind, like the sand that is on the seashore." That is a powerful analogy. Solomon knew all the details (the ins and outs), like one would know all the grains of sand on the seashore. He had a tremendous insight into the mind of God. That's what we're talking about. He had capacity to think God's truth after God's thoughts. Much of that, he later recorded in a book, for example, like Proverbs. On the other hand, when he himself deviated from his vast divine viewpoint knowledge, he ended up writing a book like Ecclesiastes, which is full of human viewpoint, and expresses the hopelessness of a civilization where God has been abandoned. For a large part of Solomon's life, he abandoned the truth that he knew, and he wasted a lot of years until near the end he came back. He is a splendid example of what happens to a nation, for under his leadership, Israel blossomed out as the greatest nation on the face of the earth.

Verse 30 says, "Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the sons of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt, for he was wiser than all men: than Ethan the Ezrahite, Heman, Calcol, Darda, and the sons of Mahol; and his fame was known and all the surrounding nations. He spoke 3,000 Proverbs, and his Songs were 1,005 and he spoke of trees from the cedar that is in Lebanon, even to the hyssop that grows on the wall. He spoke also of animals and birds and creepy things and fish." This was an amazing renaissance type of man who seemed to know everything, and he was certainly very adept in biology and in scientific matters: "And men came from all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom."

The nation benefited when Solomon was, as its leader, functioning on this kind of divine viewpoint wisdom. Of course, while he had great opportunities to teach people the Word of God, he also squandered great opportunities by his own personal example, where he got involved with paganism and with pagan women, to the extent of having 700 wives and 300 mistresses on the side. This whole picture reminds us again that the old sin nature is the problem. The leaders of the world in general have nothing but the sin nature to guide them. Therefore, they are always trying to create a civilization that comes crashing down around their ears. But you and I, as Christians, like Solomon (a born-again believer), can also give in to that sin nature. We can get drift off from our instruction in the Word of God and become the victims.

**Learning God's Word**

I wonder sometimes, when people come to me with personal problems they have and the stresses and crises in their lives, I know that they haven't been in church. I have been seeing their faces, and they think that they can make it in life without their faces and their minds being present in this auditorium morning and evening on Sundays, and you can't do that, unless you've got some other real big source of being said on the Word of God. I guarantee you that there's going to be a lot of shuffling of feet and causing of tears at the Judgment Seat of Christ, when Christians look back and realize how much their slovenliness, in being present for feeding on the Word of God (their indifference to that), will have cost them for all their eternity. Israel's national culture under Solomon stemmed from the wisdom of God, which Solomon had received by revelation, and by his presence in the nation at that time.

**Moses**

In Deuteronomy 4:6-7, Moses observes this, concerning doctrine (the principles of the Word of God): "So keep and do them, for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who will hear all these statutes and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what great nation is there that has a God so near to it as is the Lord our God whenever we call upon Him?'" The great thing that Moses pointed out was that if you function on doctrine, you are functioning the way God made you to live and to operate. When you operate that way, you're right next to God. He is immediately at hand. There is no situation in life where you're out there floating on your own, flapping in the breeze. You are under the close walk with the living God.

**Gentile Nations**

The gentile nations around Israel try to build a lasting culture with their wise men, but their wise men only had their human viewpoint. Those civilizations inevitably fell into decay because they were cut off from Scripture. The divine viewpoint frame of wisdom is what enabled Israel to develop a fully rounded culture. They were magnificent in the arts. They were magnificent in the areas of science; areas of literature; in politics; and, in social relationships. All areas of life have to be interpreted with the frame of reference of the Bible, or you cannot understand how to live.

Western civilization, that you and I are the inheritors of, is actually the product of the influence upon the gentiles, of Israel's knowledge of God. When Israel's knowledge of the Word of God began to permeate gentile societies, then Western civilization blossomed out in all of its magnificence, because before then, the gentiles were a bunch of superstitious weirdos. They acted upon hunches and things that they presupposed which were not true, and they interpreted life accordingly. There was no frame of reference by which they could judge and reason. Suddenly, history records for us that we get to the sixth century before Christ (the sixth century B.C.), and all of a sudden, out of Greece, there blossomed logical thinking as the human race had never seen in the gentile world before. How did that happen? Why would that happen?

It happened because at that point in time, these people of the gentile world came in contact with Jewish culture and with the Jewish Scriptures. This was the same time that the Old Testament canon of Scripture was almost completed, and its divine viewpoint influence permeated over from Israel into Phoenicia, and from Phoenicia into the gentile world. So, the divine viewpoint changed the whole perspective of the way people thought. Suddenly they said, "Hey, there are natural forces out there, but they're not under some kind of spirit gods. These are natural forces that are under some orderly control that a Creator God has put together. These laws are going to work the same way. Once you understand that there are laws of nature, then you are ready to become scientific. When you're superstitious, in thinking that you're at the whim of the gods, you cannot have science. Once you understand that things work in an orderly fashion because of an orderly God, then the scientific era is born, and that's exactly what happened.

So, Western civilization blossomed out, and it fulfilled the promise in Genesis 9:27 that the descendants of Japheth, which is what most of us are, would in time dominate the world. Their influence would expand, and it would expand, the Scripture says, to the direct degree such that Japheth's descendants would continue to dwell in the tents of Shem, the originators of God's divine viewpoint. That is a very simple connection. As nations operate on the Word of God, they dwell in the tents of Shem, and they have the basis for having a civilization which could be a blessing and provide maximum freedom without chaos to a people. So the Japhetic people have prospered throughout the centuries. But as those same gentiles abandoned the divine viewpoint frame of reference of Scripture, they have now returned, and particularly in our day, to Spiritism; to magic; and, to the occult in desperation to find something beyond the material realm that is real. When you move away from Scripture, then you go to try to find reality in psychic phenomena. The devil is out there giving it his best, and giving people all the psychic, occult experiences that they're looking for, in their desperate effort to find reality outside of the Word of God.

**The Seventh Trumpet**

So, when the seventh trumpet sounds, here in Revelation 11, it is signaling a transition on earth from the kingdom of man, which has been operating over all these centuries with such considerable failure, to the Kingdom of God taking over on this earth. Verse 18 deals with that transition. This causes the saints in heaven to excitedly proclaim the arrival of the Lord Jesus Christ, finally, to rule the nations of the world. This reign of King Jesus begins with the Jewish millennial kingdom, and then goes on forever. The 24 elders in heaven, who represent the church, thank God for His governmental authority over the earth, and for removing that authority from Satan and his humanist followers. God's sovereign, omnipotent power will not be frustrated now in carrying out His plan for the Millennial Kingdom of God under His Son.

The arrival of Jesus Christ to rule over the nations enrages, of course, the political leaders of the tribulation world. Their sinful anger, in turn, triggers God's holy wrath against them, and the Bible uses the same word for both. They have their anger against God, which is a steady antagonism and rejection; and, God responds with the same kind of steady indignation against their sin. There's a play on the words. Man's anger triggers God's holy wrath against them. The result is that the rulers of the world decide to consult with each other on how to defeat Jesus Christ, and preserve their power.

We pointed out in the previous session that Psalm 2:1-3 is a preview of this very event that John is seeing and recording here in the book of the Revelation: "Why are the nations in an uproar?" Well, they're in an uproar, at this point in the tribulation, because they see that they're going to be cut off from their basis of power. Politicians do not like to be cut off from their base of power. This is the beauty of communism. It is the greatest system ever devised by the mind of man for being able to control people. It was never intended to make life better for people. It was never intended to remove poverty or anything like that. That was only the front story. What it was intended to do was to have a few people who could make decisions for the rest of the people, and could exercise power over them. Those who make the decisions indeed live very well.

Why are the nations in an uproar? Because Jesus is going to push them out and take over: "And the people devising a vain thing." What are they devising? Some way to frustrate the plan of God. The kings of the earth take their stand. The rulers take council together – fools consulting the fools. They do this against the LORD and against His anointed one. You will notice in your Bible that the word "LORD" is all capital letters. That tells you that the Hebrew word is the name of God, "Yahweh," which is God in His most holy and most powerful and most dignified character presentation. They are actually striking against this very supreme God the Creator, and against His anointed (that is, against His messiah), which is Jesus Christ.

Verse 3 gives us the decision of their conference: "Let us tear their fetters apart." These are the fetters that the Father and son are placing upon them: "Cast away their cords from us." They decide that what they need to do is to get world unity, and to reject the authority of God and His sovereignty.

Verse 4 tells us how God responds: "He who sits in the heavens laughs." The Lord scoffs at them. The arrogance of the old sin nature of man knows no limitations in raging against the Creator Himself. Their puny efforts will be for naught.

In Psalm 2:5-6, we have now the response of the anger of God – the very thing that we read of in Revelation 11. Man gets angry at God for putting Christ in charge of the world, and God returns that anger also: In verses 5-6, we read of the divine wrath against the tribulation's political rulers: "Then He (God the Father) will speak to them in His anger, and terrify them in His fury: But as for Me, I have installed My King (the Lord Jesus Christ) upon Zion (the city of Jerusalem), My holy mountain." God is going to express His wrath in the tribulation against these evil doers.

**God's Wrath**

The concept of God acting in wrath against evil is very offensive to humanists. A lot of people who think that they're intellectual sophisticates do not like the idea of a God of wrath who judges and punishes. What they want to do instead is to exalt man as deity. They tell man that he himself is a god, and to look within himself for the answers to life. They like to stress the love of God, but they deny the holiness of God. Thus, they don't understand His anger. So, vile sinners have no fear of God because they think that He will be tolerant of their evil. What they are doing is living in a fool's paradise.

**God's Patience Does not Indicate Indifference**

The truth of the matter is that, at the very beginning of Romans 1:18, the apostle Paul made very clear what God's attitude is toward moral evil: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness." God's attitude toward wickedness is His holy wrath. Evil rulers always make the mistake that God's patient longsuffering in dealing with them is a sign that He is indifferent and tolerant of their evil, instead of realizing that he's patiently waiting for them to repent.

In Romans 2:4-5, Paul touches upon this very misconception: "Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance. But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." If you are a rebel against the Word of God; if you are a rebel against the authority of Scripture; if you are rebel against decent moral principles; or, if you are a rebel against taking care of your body, and of your soul, and of your spirit, then you are in these two verses. You are the people that are demonstrating a misunderstanding of God's patience. Suddenly, when He comes in with judgment and wrath, then you will remember, and you will wonder why you didn't act upon your knowledge.

2 Peter 3:4 stresses this same principles, where Peter points out that there were some people saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." They're saying, "We're having a lot of snide remarks about this talk of you fundamental Christians (you fundamentalists) that Christ is coming back – this talk about the rapture." And the attitude is, "What are you talking about that for? We've heard you doing that for decades. So, where is He?"

**God is not Indifferent**

Verse nine: "The Lord is not slow about His promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you; not wishing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance." The reason God is holding off is because He would like you to change your mind. He'd like you to come to your senses. He'd like to preserve you from the destruction that is ahead for you. *So, don't mistake his patience for indifference toward evil. God is not indifferent.*

I'll tell you something else. Once He decides to kick in with His judgment, it's goodbye. You are not going to turn back, and you are not going to reverse. Many a person is suffering physical debilitations that are irreversible as a result of the lifestyle that they lived. Now they look back and wish they could change it, and you can't change it. God's judgment, once it's put in motion, will run its course. That's what John is seeing here in the book of the revelation, that God's judgment finally kicks in against the nations of the world, and there is no stopping it any longer. These people are getting together to figure out how they can outwit God, and how they can stop His King, and they're stupid, and not understanding that when the time of God's judgment comes, you're not going to turn it back.

Isaiah 13:9 speaks of God coming in tribulation with great anger to punish sinners. Isaiah says, "Behold the day of the Lord is coming, cruel with fury and burning anger, to make the land a desolation, and He will exterminate its sinners from it." I don't care how you want to look at God. This is a loving God who is going to do this. He is a God whose love would have preferred to take you to heaven. Peter has told you that He'd rather not see any of you end up in the lake of fire. He'd rather not see any of you Christian shedding tears at His Judgment Seat. He would rather that all of you came out on top. However, He will not override your volition. You will make your decisions, and the time will come when He will give you the just recompense of your decisions.

God declares his inevitable establishment, then, of Jesus Christ as the ruler of all nations in the millennium. God the Father will establish the reign of Jesus Christ over the earth in the face of defiant anger of national leaders all over Satan's tribulation world. In Revelation 16:9-11, this is indicated: "And men were scorched." These are the bowl judgments that we haven't come to yet, that we are going to be studying: "Men were scorched with fierce heat. They blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him the glory." You can see by this very verse that these people know who's doing these things to them (these judgments and punishments).

Verse 10: "And the fifth angel poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became darkened, and they gnawed their tongues because of pain."

Verse 11: "And they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and they did not repent of their deeds."

Verse 21: "And huge hailstones, about 100 pounds each, came down from heaven upon men, and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because this plague was extremely severe." Have you ever been in the presence of people who use inordinately foul language, using the name of God in the most vulgar obscenities and curses? This is what we're talking about. You'll have to fill out the picture for yourself, and imagine it. But these are people shaking their fists at the God of heaven who they know who is responsible for these judgments coming upon this earth. You would think that, at that point in time, they would say, "Wait a minute. Maybe we better reconsider our attitude." But they are so hardened, under the nature evil, that they will not reconsider. They will insist on striking back at God. That's why, while it seems insane to you and me, perhaps, for them to even think that they can stop Christ from ruling on this earth, their intense hatred of God causes them to do what Hitler did in the final days of World War II.

When Hitler saw that the war was lost, he made the decision that the German people had demonstrated that they were inferior after all, and did not deserve to win World War II. Therefore, they did not deserve to live. He gave the word to put out a scorched earth policy: to burn everything; and, to destroy everything in Germany as his armies retreated. That meant that after the war was over, the people who had to go back to those places had absolutely nothing to begin with.

This is the way the people of the tribulation are going to act. They are going to want to destroy everything they can. When they can't stop God, then they're going to destroy everything within their power, to try to make it hard on those who are the followers of God.

Well, the Lord Jesus is going to reign on this earth. Jerusalem will be the capital of the world, and God's wrath is going to clear the earth of the rebels who are now flaunting their moral evil. That's why, by the middle of the tribulation period, 50% of the world's population (something like perhaps 3 billion people by today's count) will be dead. That is an enormous amount of death. But you can see how readily a disease can be turned loose for which there is no solution; which is a quick killer; which is very contagious; and, which can wipe out millions of people without any difficulty, let alone all the other ways that man has for destroying himself.

**The Great White Throne**

The final expression of God's judgment against unsaved humanity, of course, will take place at the great white throne judgment. We have that recorded in Revelation 20:11-15. This is the final expression of the judgment that God is going to bring upon the rebels of the earth. John says, at this point, "I saw a great white throne, and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence on earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened, and another book was opened which was the book of life. And the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books according to their deeds."

This is a picture of unsaved people. The 1,000-year millennial kingdom has passed. We have gone to heaven; we have returned with the Lord; and, we have been reigning with Christ. Now, all of unsaved humanity from Adam's time on to the end are raised: "The sea gave up the dead which were in it. And death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them. And they were judged; every one of them." And again he hits the same phrase: "According to their deeds. And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire (which we call 'hell' – death and Hades are holding stations). This is the second death, the lake of fire. If any one's name was not found written in the book of life (the Lamb's book of life), he was thrown into the lake of fire."

The unsaved rebels will be judged on the basis of their works. What works? Will they have recorded? Lots of them. They will be in two forms. They'll be in the form of sins, but they will also be in a form of human good. Both will be the product of the sin nature, and therefore, both will be tainted and unacceptable to God completely. The lost here will not have the work of Jesus Christ on the cross to cover their sins (to remove their sins from God's site), so they'll stand there completely nakedly exposed with all the evil hanging on them. And all of their human good is nothing but evil in the sight of God.

**Degrees of Punishment in Hell**

So, this is an interesting observation – so these people will have performed much sin nature human good, which is what most people do – all of these human do-goodism works of mercy that people do on the motivations of their sin nature. The more of that that they do, the more they will suffer for all eternity. That is because the principle of the Word of God says that the punishment in hell is by degrees. The greater your evil (sins and human good), the greater punishment you will have.

Notice that Revelation 20:12 indicates that people are going to be judged out of God's record, and their record is dealing with their deeds. Now compare that, on the basis of the evaluation of their deeds, with Luke 12:47-48, which set forth the doctrine that punishment in hell is varied for people, just as rewards in heaven are varied for those who are there: "And that slave who knew his master's will, who did not get ready to act in accord with his will, shall receive many lashes. But the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and, to whom they entrusted much of him, they will ask all the more."

So, you people who are well-versed in doctrine and well-taught in the Word of God, I can guarantee you that when you stand up before that Judgment Seat of Christ, you better be prepared for the expectation of God, which is going to be very great upon you. He's not going to expect as much from the little rinky-tink churches where people gather to be inspired; to be moved to tears; to clap their hands; or, to hoot and holler. Those poor dudes are so disoriented from life and from the Word of God, that they are no significance in God's program, nor any hindrance to the devils. However, for those of you who know, God will expect more from those of you who have been prepared. It is the same way for the unbeliever. The unbeliever who has received warning and caution – from him will be expected a greater response, and he will suffer more for his negative response.

**The Judgment Seat of Christ**

The works of all of us as Christians, of course, we're told in the Word of God, will also be judged, not relative to our going to heaven, but relative to what God will have in rewards for us. 2 Corinthians 5:10 puts this very explicitly when it says, "For we (Christians) must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body according to what he has done, whether good or bad."

**Degrees of Rewards in Heaven**

I am amazed at how often people come to me and say, "It's really strange. When I attend Berean Church, I hear regularly these Scriptures read about rewards. And where I go to church, we're almost not aware that that Bible even talks about that. We never hear about, 'Get yourself ready for inheriting a kingdom or losing it; ruling authority, or losing it; or, get yourself ready for an accountability of what you've done with your life.' We're just given the impression that, "Boy, we're all saved; we're all going to stand before the Lord; and, we're all going to sing the Hallelujah Chorus together."

The Lord Jesus Christ is not going to be welcomed on this earth when He comes to rule, but those who reject Him are going to come under the most severe judgment of God. Those who had opportunity to know more about Christ, and who He is, because of some information given to them, will suffer the more. Can you imagine what would happen if the Lord Jesus Christ were to show up on the streets of some major American cities today? Would the political rulers of these nations receive Jesus Christ and be subject to him? I doubt it. At the Second Coming of Christ, God the Father is going to dethrone all of these political rulers, and He's going enthrone His Son, Jesus Christ, as King of kings and Lord of Lords. At that time, even unbelievers are going to be forced to acknowledge Christ as Lord. They're going to be forced to bow the knee to Him.

However, the worst part about that is going to be that they can't be saved. At that point in time, there's no second chance. At that point in time, they can't admit that they made a mistake, and accept Him as Savior. They will bow to Him, but they will bow to Him in their lost and hopeless condition.

The final expression of human rebellion against God, of course, is in the form of the world government of the antichrist. Psalm 2:7-12, therefore, goes on and declares the irreversible decree of God. God declares that his Messiah is going to reign. I read this to remind you that this is hundreds and hundreds of years before what John saw on the island of Patmos. It is the same thing being dealt with, but in greater detail here in Psalm 2. This is the Messiah speaking: "I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord (His Father). He (the Father) said to Me, 'You are My Son. Today I have begotten You.'" The Lord Jesus Christ is going to rule on this earth as the result of God's decree. This decree is going to be an expression of a relationship between Him and His Father. This is a reference back to the Davidic Covenant, where in 2 Samuel 7:17, God says to David, "I'm going to do something marvelously great for you. What I am going to do will be the relationship of a father doing something for His Son."

So, here, this Song is actually quoting this phrase from 2 Samuel 7:14: "You are My Son." That relationship of father to son is referring to Christ as the Son, the Messiah. He says, "Today I have begotten you," which is the day of Christ's coronation, when He is established as ruler upon this earth. And "begotten" here is not physical birth like the Mormons say, but it is simply an expression of divine appointment by the Father. This Son, Jesus Christ, is going to inherit, from God the Father, the authority to rule the whole earth.

Verse 6 says, "Ask of me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession.

Then in verse 9, the reign of Jesus Christ on this earth is going to be absolute. He's going to smash all opposition: "You shall break them with a rod of iron, and shall shatter them like earthenware" – like a potter going through a pottery shop, breaking the pots that have been made.

In Psalm 2:10-12, God expresses His warning to the earth's rulers at the time of the tribulation. In verse 10, He points out that the kings of the nations are admonished to submit to Jesus Christ before they feel His holy wrath: "Now, therefore, O kings, show discernment. Take warning, O judges of the earth." God is saying, "I'm warning you. Consider what you're doing in resisting the King Jesus.

In verse 11, these kings are told to worship Jesus Christ, and to lead lives of submission to Him: to rejoice before Him, but rejoice with trembling. Verse 11: "Worship the Lord with reverence, and rejoice with trembling."

Then, in verse 12, they're told to do homage to the king, and this Hebrew word "homage" here really means "to kiss: "Submit to King Jesus with a kiss of homage. Do homage to the king. Do homage to the Son, lest He become angry, and you perish in the way. For His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him?" There's an urgency here of submission before Christ's wrath is kindled against them. There's not going to be any old sin nature nonsense tolerating evil here. But for those who do submit to the King, there will be great blessing among the world's rulers.

Peter, in Acts 4:25-26, made reference to this very same passage in the book of Acts in his day when he was evaluating what the leaders of Israel did with this Son, King Jesus. When Jesus came to offer Himself as the King of the Jews, Peter shows the connection here of how the tribulation rulers are going to treat Jesus, as the rulers of Israel treated Him at the time when the Lord was here on this earth: "Who, by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father David, your servant, did say, 'Why did the gentiles rage, and the peoples devise futile things? The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ.'" This is exactly what both Roman authorities and what the Jewish authorities did at the time.

The rest of Psalm 2 ties it all up. God says, "Now, therefore, O kings, show discernment. Take warning, O judges of the earth. Worship the Lord with reverence. Rejoice with trembling. Do homage to the Son, lest He become angry and you perish in the way. For His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are those who take refuge in Him."

Back in Revelation 11:18 (with this warning, and this background), John says that the nations were enraged; God's wrath returned that enragement; and, then there came a time for the dead to be judged. The dead here are referring to the physically dead, and it is referring here to Old Testament dead saints. At this point in time, the church will already have been in heaven for seven years. We will be judged relative to our lives and our service during that time. So, this cannot refer to the judgment of Christians. The Bible tells us that people who are unsaved will not even be resurrected until after the 1,000 year reign of Christ here on this earth. That's called the second resurrection. It takes place at the end of the millennium. So, that cannot be referring to the dead here. These are the dead at the end of the tribulation, and at the beginning of the millennium. So, the dead here are the Old Testament dead saints. They're being raised not for judgment as unsaved, but they are being raised in order to face a reward from God.

In revelation. 20:4-5 we're told about the judgments here of God: "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them. And judgment was given to me. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus (these are probably martyrs of the tribulation), and because of the Word of God, and those who had not worship the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand. And they came to life and reigned with Christ for 1,000 years. And the rest of the day (the unbelievers) did not come to life until the 1,000 years were completed. This is the first resurrection." The first resurrection is the resurrection of believers only.

So, the church saints are not in view here. As a matter of fact, when the 24 elders, that we read about in Revelation 4:4 are introduced, they already have their garments of their righteousnesses on them, and they also have crowns on their heads of gold, indicating that they have faced the Judgment Seat of Christ, and have received their rewards.

This is a time to judge Old Testament believers then. This is God's purpose – to judge Old Testament believers and tribulation believers. For what purpose? It says that God is going to judge them to give them a reward. That's the Greek word "misthos." This is the word for "a benefit" as the result of your commendable performance. All believers will receive a place in heaven as a grace gift because of their faith in Christ. But some believers are also going to receive a reward for service to God during their lifetimes. Here we see that Old Testament saints are rewarded because of the way they invested their lives in God's work.

Then he specifically points out that this will be: "Your bond servants, the prophets" – men in the Old Testament who received revelation, and faithfully delivered it. These are not the false charismatic prophets who are constantly popping off that God told them something; that God gave them a revelation; and, then they are telling us what God has said. These are true prophets. They are bond slaves of the living God who have actually received revelation from God.

Then it says, "The saints." This is a general word for Old Testament believers. These are specifically saints who are characterized by fearing the name of God. The name of God means the character of God, and everything that God stands for. Then it specifies it even more by saying, "The small and the great." It includes Old Testament saints from all social levels of life. God never forgets the loyalty or the faithful service of His servants in Old Testament or New Testament times.

So, these people, from the Old Testament, again are going to be evaluated. And God says, "I'm starting the millennium by rewarding these people in some way." They're raised from the dead. They have glorified bodies like Christ, just like our bodies are. They don't have the relationship to Jesus that we will have, as His bride, but God says, "I have something for you, too." He doesn't have for them what He will have for us – the rewards that He will give to us, and the ruling authority that He will give to us, because we're going to rule over the Jews. But God says, "For my Old Testament faithful believers, I've got something for you too.

Then there is a very sobering thing. At the end of verse 18, we read that God is going to raise people for their rewards. And then, for those who are alive on this earth, the rulers of the world's nations: "To destroy." This word looks like this in the Greek: "diaphtheiro." This is the word for ruining something by corrupting it. And it adds this little preposition "dia" to this normal word which means to ruin by corrupting. When you add this little preposition, this "dia," it means to ruin it completely. We're talking about moral corruption. We're not talking about wiping out of existence. That isn't what God means by destroying. God is allowing the rulers of this world to destroy themselves by their very own evil works.

In Romans 1, the Holy Spirit made it clear that he would deal historically with homosexuality by letting the people who do that destroy themselves. If anything is taking place in our day, this is what's taking place. Notice Romans 1:24: "Therefore, God gave them over," speaking about the gentiles, and the knowledge that they had of God. First of all, it says, "Therefore, God gave them over, in the lusts of their hearts, to impurity, and that their bodies might be dishonored among them, for they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator who is blessed forever. Amen."

Verse 26: "For this reason, God gave them over to degrading passions, for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural."

Verse 24: "Therefore, God gave them over to the lusts of their hearts, to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them."

Verse 28: "And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind to do those things which are not proper."

Verse 32: "And although they knew the audience of God (concerning homosexuality), that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them."

So, here we have a word that says, "God is going to utterly destroy. He's going to remove from powers of leadership certain people on this earth in positions of influence. How? He's going to let them run the result of their evil. He's going to let them indulge their evil. And out of it will come destruction. In the Word of God, homosexuality is condemned as a capital crime, and the penalty for that is death. Under a theocracy, such as under Judaism, this was imposed. We cannot do that today, so God is imposing it Himself. And again, the extent of this disease within that community of homosexuals is enormous. And the government isn't about to let you know it.

I was surprised to see, on TV this past week, an extensive interview with a young woman who is engaged in a legal suit because she had a dentist who was a homosexual, and was not alerted to the fact that he was an AIDS carrier. And she, by simply having her teeth worked on, has now become infected. That has blown the lid off of everything that everybody has been told: "Sure, let this kid sit in your classroom. He can't contaminate the other children." Baloney. They don't know that. Here they now have a clean-cut case where they know that there's no other way this woman could have become infected except as the result of the infection where a wound was open in the process of fixing a tooth.

God says, "I'm going to let you destroy yourself. And he uses this word “diaphtheiro," which means corrupting yourself to the point of your own destruction. Also, He says that He is doing this "To those who destroy." He uses the same word again. He is doing this to those who have been destroying (that is, ruining and corrupting) planet earth. The leaders of the nations have destroyed the earth's environment, and they have destroyed humanity spiritually. Communist countries have done both. They have destroyed the environment. They have destroyed the spirituality (the spiritual quality) of people.

In Eastern Europe, you wouldn't believe the pollution we saw everywhere. You would not believe the spewing out of pollution. Before I went to Europe, I heard a program which was analyzing the pollution of Europe, because the communists were trying to survive. They could not keep from going ahead and polluting, no matter what, because they could not take the time, if they were going to survive at all, to be worried about polluting the countries – the atmosphere; the land; and, everything. Now, the program said that it is so bad it'll take 25 years and billions of dollars to be able to clean up the mess.

I can remember something from years ago in Gary, Indiana. I was driving by to an administrator's conference at Winona Lake. I'd never been to Gary, and there were these huge smokestacks in this steel town, spewing out pollution. Yellow smog was settling all over everything. I wondered how on earth people could even live there. Everywhere in Europe, this is what we are seeing. If you put on a clean shirt in the morning, before noon, you have a black ring around the collar. It's terrible if you have a ring around your tub, but around your shirt collar, it's even worse. You live with it all day long, and you're wondering, "How come I'm getting such a black collar?" It's because everywhere you walk, you're picking up this pollution. These are destroyers of the earth. These are the rulers. These are the political powers. God says, "I'm going to destroy you."

In these communist countries, the pollution is so great that some people who have respiratory problems actually have to check in, and they pay a fee to go down into that salt mine I was telling you about, where they have arrangements made with beds so that people can sleep down there, because the air is perfectly pure and clean there. So, they can go down several hundred feet in the salt mines underground, and have a night's rest so that their lungs can clear, and they can breathe. That's how bad it is up on the surface. The destroyers of the earth, of course, include the antichrist, the false prophet, and all of his New Age followers. They are all going to be brought to their destruction (Revelation 19:20, Revelation 20:1-3, and Revelation 20:10).

The Bible tells us in Romans 8:19-22 that the Lord Jesus Christ has redeemed the earth from the corrupting influence of sin which was imposed upon it by Adam. Christ covered both the environment and the moral pollution of the earth.

The last destroyer of the earth, and of humanity, and of all of God's creation, that God is going to wipe out is death itself. In 1 Corinthians 15:25-26, we remind ourselves: "For He must reign (Jesus Christ) until He has put all His enemies under His feet. And the last enemy that will be abolished is death." So, for you and me as believers, we have no fear of death when it does come. It is not a personal destruction. It is not something that wipes us out of existence. It is something that is simply a weigh station transfer point, because we are in Christ, and Christ has already with death by His resurrection. There is a man in heaven raised from the dead, and we are told in 1 John 3:2 that we shall follow in His exact pattern. We will be glorified. We will someday be raised to be just like him.

The current world euphoria about creating a new world order is an enormous exercise in self-delusion. Jesus Christ is going to win out. He will be the judge. And when He is judging, He will destroy those who have destroyed and corrupted His creation.

We close with Acts 17:31: "Because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a man whom He has appointed, having furnish proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." God the Father is going to judge this world in the tribulation period, and He's going to do it through Jesus Christ, whose credentials He has confirmed by raising him from the dead.

2 Thessalonians 1:6-7 says, "For after all, it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to you, who are afflicted, and to us as well, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire."

I would not want to be one of the politicians who are running the tribulation world when our Lord returns. I'm going to be very happy to replace those dudes, and to take over, and make this a world once more restored to the Lord's glory, and we functioning in His image.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1990

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