***The Nature of Life in the Millennium  
  
RV158-01***

Please open your Bibles to Revelation 12:7-12, as we continue our study of "War in Heaven." This is segment number four.

Satan and his demon angels, we have found, are defeated in the future in a great, angelic battle which takes place at the midpoint of the tribulation era. The result of this defeat is Satan's permanent expulsion from access to the three heavens of God, and his restriction to the planet earth. Once he is expelled, as a result of this battle with Michael and his angels, and the enormous defeat that will be inflicted upon Satan, he will have no access further either to the atmospheric heavens; the interstellar heavens (or second heaven); or, the third heaven, the throne room of God Himself. This defeat of Satan's forces marks the midpoint of the seven-year tribulation era, and thus indicates three-and-a-half years left before Jesus Christ will return to the earth.

When the Lord Jesus Christ comes again to the earth, He will set up His divine new world order of the Millennial Kingdom. Believers in heaven will rejoice when they see Satan defeated in this great battle out in space, because it will signal that the time is now very near for God to bring to a climax three things that are very important to these believers who at that time are in heaven.

**Salvation**

So, in Revelation 12:10, we read, "And I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, 'Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of God, and the authority of His Christ have come." We have looked at the first event that is to be completed, which is salvation. Salvation that God is provided by His grace will be completed. That means that certain things will be brought about which do not yet exist in terms of our salvation. The time referred to here, as we indicated to you last time, was phase three of salvation. This is the time when God actually saves a believer from the very presence and the power of sin. It makes us what is so unthinkable to us – sinless people, who are always perfect.

**Glorification**

This is the future glorification stage of the believer. In Hebrews 9:28, this is referred to: "So, Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time for salvation, without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him." Christ came the first time to lay the basis of your salvation by paying for your moral guilt. He did that on the cross. He will come a second time apart from that issue, because that's forever settled. He will come a second time, to all of us who so eagerly await Him, in order to bring our salvation to its ultimate fruition. That is phase three glorification. For the believer of the church age, that begins at the rapture of the church, before the tribulation period itself begins. It is at that time, at the rapture of the church, that the Christian is suddenly transformed into a perfect sinless human being. At that point, he is taken into the Lord's presence.

**The Rapture**

This is what John hears: the saints in heaven rejoicing, "Our salvation is finally going to be brought to a completion of stage three." 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 describe that event of phase three glorification for the Christian: "For this we say to you by the Word of the Lord: that we (Christians), who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord." This is you Christians who are alive on the face of the earth when Jesus Christ starts descending from heaven again: "Shall not precede those who have fallen asleep." You will not physically go to heaven before the Christians who have died and are in the graves: "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise first." This is all of our brethren by whose gravesides we have stood, and committed them to the earth (have committed them to this point). They will pop out of those graves with their human bodies in full perfection: "Then we who are alive and shall remain (we Christians who are live at that time, which probably includes most of you here today) shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord."

This is a very great promise. It is very explicit. It is very definitive. We know exactly what's going to happen to all of us in the very near future. We don't know the time schedule, but the people in heaven, when they see Satan lose this great battle with Michael and his angels, and see Satan completely cast out of the three heavens and restricted to the earth, they know that that means three-and-a-half years are left before all the saints, from Adam on to the last believer, will receive the full impact of their salvation. The culmination of phase three causes great rejoicing in heaven, which, John hears. The imminent culmination just stirs the hearts of all these believers. The completion of God's salvation to our sinless perfection and (thank God) to our freedom forever again from death.

So, we Christians are to be alert to the fact that we live in a time span which is going to end in the very near future, as we look at world events. It's going to end with the arrival of the Lord Jesus Christ to this earth. It will end either by your death and direct entrance into His presence; or, by the rapture of the church, which we have just read described in the book of 1 Thessalonians.

**The Judgment Seat of Christ**

Once that event happens, the church-age believer in heaven will face what the Bible calls the Judgment Seat of Christ. Romans 14:10 speaks about this when it says, "But you: why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ." Here the apostle Paul puts a little caution to the Christians not to get too upset about how other Christians act; what other Christians do; or, the way other Christians think, because they may be quite wrong, and you may be quite right, but Paul says, "You better focus more on yourself, because what that Christian does, as wrong is it may be, is none of your business. It is the business of God, and He will deal with it – if not now, then ultimately at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Your business is how you're going to come out at that time. Your business is to realize that the report card on you is the only one that's going to count for your eternity."

**Rewards**

2 Corinthians 5:10 also refers to this event of the Judgment Seat of Christ, where a Christian is not judged as to whether he goes to heaven or not. That's already settled. That has to be settled before you die. But the issue is what kind of a heaven you will have in terms of the rewards. 2 Corinthians 5:10: "For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed (rewarded) for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."

So, since we live in a time span of the church age, and we are now in the intensified stage where things are heating up rapidly, and coming to the end of it, I would suggest that there is no time for any of us to waste in seriously considering storing treasures in heaven through our divine good service, since each day, as Scripture says, "Brings us closer to our salvation than the day in which we believe." What he means by that is: closer to the day of phase three salvation when everything is over and the rewards are put out.

I suspect that there quite a few people who ought to be here today who particularly need to hear this admonition. But as usual, when you're off-target, and we were out in carnality, and when you're spinning off away from God, you're just spiritually crazy, and you do the crazy thing. And once the devil gets you in a spin, you're so disoriented that he keeps you tied up so that you never are on-target to get the information you need. There is no time for any of us to waste in getting serious about serving the Lord and making our lives something more than just a bunch of animals who are existing and making it to the next day. Your indifference toward serving God leads to wasting your life as a Christian in all the temporal, self-centered interests that you think are so important now, but in a couple or three years, aren't going to be worth anything. It is time for Christians to wake up to spiritual realities, and to shake off the slothfulness that exists toward God's work.

Every one of you, as a believer, is in full-time Christian service. There's no difference between you and me. I have my job, and you have your job in the Lord's service. The carnal Christians are in such a spiritual, groggy condition that they are completely oblivious to the fact that God has called them to a mission, and they're completely indifferent to it. They're not fighting the good fight of faith. Instead, they're fighting the good fight of the good life. Once a Christian meets Jesus Christ, however, through death or the rapture, there is no more opportunity to earn rewards in heaven through your divine good works. At that point, there will be only regrets and tears for what might have been.

You may count on the fact that our Lord is going to reward His faithful servants in heaven who have lived to please Him. In Romans 8:28, we have a verse that a lot of people are well familiar with. Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." One of the *good* things that comes to those who are called by God and live according to His purpose, is the good of ultimate sanctification that we're talking about (phase three salvation). Sanctification means being set apart entirely to God's image; to God's program; and, to God's purposes.

At this point, the believer in heaven will have a resurrection body completely free from the old sin nature and all physical defects. The Christian at that point will be sinless, and he will be complete. He will be literally in the very image of the glorified God-man, Jesus Christ. 1 John 3:2 says, "Beloved, Now we are children of God. It has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is." I love that verse. It helps me when some Christians act like a bunch of fruitcakes off the wall. Some Christians live beneath their heritage. They live as commoners instead of aristocrats of the age of all the saints. I like to remind myself what I'm looking at these people that God is not finished with them yet. Someday they're going to look pretty good. I like to know that when they look at me, when I'm off the wall, that they might remember that someday God is going to be through with me, and I'll look a lot better than I do now.

We Christians are going to be changed. Make no mistake about that. We shall be in His very image, and He will recognize what we have done under the guidance of the Spirit of God in His service. It will not be what you have done because some TV evangelist conman has talked you into sending in money to him, and not because you're some kind of an emotional clown who sits in the service waving your hands over your head and rolling your eyeballs upward as a demonstration of your spirituality and love for the Lord. Rather, it will be because you're a people who have learned the doctrines of Scripture so that you know how to walk before God; you know how to live; you know what His purposes are; you know what your objectives in life are; and, you are no man's fool because you know the Word of God. The Lord Jesus Christ will take that kind of a believer, and He will reward you because you will have been able to respond to true Christian service. And the blessings of these rewards will be yours for all eternity.

Heaven will not be the same for every Christian. Some of them are going to be poor hound dogs up there. But some of you are going to be very rich in the enjoyment of the enrichment of your salvation.

**Crowns**

As we mentioned before, some of you will do such an exceptional job that he will give you a medal of honor that not everyone will receive. These are in the form of crowns. There is the crown of rejoicing for a life of maximum divine good production in God's service by using your spiritual gifts (Philippians 4:1, 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20). There's a crown of righteousness for a life that was spent in a maximum time of temporal fellowship – godly living in the inner circle (2 Timothy 4:7-8). There's the crown of life for a life which is progressing to the level of super grace living, and staying there. (James 1:12, Revelation 2:10).

If you don't know what all this means, that means that you don't have a frame of reference. We cannot explain everything to everyone, every service. But those of you who've been around here a while, you know exactly what these things mean. These are very real events and very real things that God is going to do. There is a fourth crown that is called the crown of glory. It is only for pastor-teachers, and it goes to those who have faithfully done their job of spending their time in the pulpit teaching doctrine to people (1 Peter 5:4), so that the Christians of God have had a chance to live their lives like the princes and princesses of God that they are.

This is what Romans 8:28 refers to as the ultimate divine good – Christians who have made their lives count in the service of God, so that they have preserved the value of their lives forever. There is a special place in heaven, with eternal blessings, after the era of suffering here on this earth, that is the final good. The Judgment Seat of Christ is not going to be good for a lot of Christians who have wasted their lives doing their own thing.

The culmination phase of salvation that rejoices these saints in heaven includes one other thing. That is that it includes the release of nature itself from the curse of sin upon it as the result of the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. In Romans 8:18-22, we have this described. Nature itself will be released from the curse of sin. Paul says, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed in us. For the anxious longing of creation awaits eagerly for the revealing of the Sons of God (that is, for the return of the Lord from heaven with the church). For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption, and to the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now."

**The Effects of Man's Sin on Nature**

The world of nature that God created, that Adam and Eve enjoyed, was considerably different from that which we see today. It was a perfect place. It was a marvelous world in which to live. It was an absolutely perfect environment. Once sin came into the picture, the sin of man spilled over and affected nature itself.

**The Restoration of Nature**

The time is going to come such that the salvation of man, in its ultimate stage, will also bring about the salvation of his environment – the correction of what sin has done. Paul says, "The world of nature itself looks forward to the glorification of phase three of the believers." At the Second Coming of Jesus, after the tribulation, nature will be released from decay and death, which has been brought on by the sin of Adam. All the struggle to grow food will be over. All the diseases that threaten our lives will be gone. All the weather calamities will be terminated. Everything in nature that is destructive will suddenly be reversed, and the whole world will become a marvelous place to live once more.

Believers themselves are going to be resurrected with perfect bodies, freed from the sin nature, never again to be subject to death or disease. All of nature now groans when suffering, while it eagerly awaits salvation in the millennium from the curse of sin. The Bible compares it to a woman who is giving birth to a child. She is eager to get the event over with, so that she can pass from pain and suffering to the stage of joy. The product of nature is compared to being in birth pangs, and the product that it will produce is the millennium, where there will be joy as a new Eden is created.

**The Nature of Life in the Millennium**

The Bible gives us a great deal of detail about how things will be changed.

1. **No Thorns or Brier Patches**

One of the things that it tells us that the release of nature from the curse of sin will produce is that there will be no more thorns and brier patches, but only fruitful fields (Isaiah 32:13-15). We're told that the efforts of the farmers will result in great abundant crops being produced (Isaiah 35:1-2). There will be rain in proper amounts at the right time, and in the proper places. Ezekiel 34:26-27 tell us that. We're told that no one (in the world of nature, which is finally saved from the effects of sin in the coming of Christ) will face famine (Ezekiel 36:39-40).

**New Water Sources**

Areas of the world which are now wastelands will become productive by the appearance of water sources (Isaiah 35:6-7). We know how that works in desert areas ourselves. If you've ever traveled in the western United States, you've seen how you can be in desert country, and all of a sudden you can come to an area where they're irrigating, and you've got an oasis where there is great fertility. Well, God is going to place the water that's needed in the right places so that wastelands become productive. The Bible actually tells us in Ezekiel 47:1-12 that there will be a miraculous stream of water which flows from the temple in Jerusalem into the Dead Sea. And along that stream will grow trees; the river will be filled with fish; food will be produced in abundance; and, that water pouring into the Dead Sea will restore it to life.

The Dead Sea is really dead. I have been in it, and I've never felt alive since. I mean, it is dead. Nothing, can live in it. It is so salty. It's the only time I've ever been able to go swimming; lie on my back; put my hands and my feet straight up; and, I still floated. Try that at Grapevine Lake, and you'll go to the bottom. The buoyancy is enormous because the salt and the minerals are so great. It's a very valuable place of mineral value. But the time is going to come when this sea, which has no exit, is going to become an area of fertile marine life productivity.

1. **No Diseases or Deformities**

A third thing that will change is that disease and physical deformity is going to be removed from mankind. We now live in a world that's filled with potential illness, which the body has to resist. God has structured, at creation, within the human body, an immune system that will kill every foreign element that comes into it. But the effects of sin on this part of nature gradually deteriorates the immune system of the body, and unless you do something to perhaps reinforce that by the things you eat; by the reinforcements of vitamins and minerals; and, by the exercise to try to maximize that immune system into operation, when the immune system quits working, then every disease element that comes into the body is able to destroy the body. People die when their immune systems no longer work the way God designed them to work. All of that is going to be changed. Every immune system will be at maximum operating condition. The Lord Jesus Christ himself will exercise great healing, and He will impose, as the world ruler upon all of society, appropriate preventive health measures. Isaiah 33:24 and Isaiah 35:5-6 tell us that.

1. **A Greatly Expanded Lifespan**

There is going to be, as a result of this widespread help, we will have a greatly expanded lifespan (Isaiah 65:22). I want to remind you again that I'm talking about the millennial world. This is the phase three ultimate salvation over which the saints in heaven are rejoicing. Then, three-and-a-half years down the line, they're going to see this finally brought to fruition. I'm reminding you that some of us will be in this millennial world as the agents of the living Lord Jesus Christ, and we will have bodies that are glorified like the God-man Jesus Christ. We will be absolutely sinless. We will never be able to sin. We will have bodies that are absolutely perfect. They will never be subjected to disease or to death.

However, other people will have entered the millennium, as saved people, but in their natural bodies, both Jews and gentiles. This is why Satan is using Saddam Hussein as his latest agent to try to destroy the Jewish people. That's what this combat is all about, because Satan wants to frustrate God's plan that he is going to build a kingdom in this whole world, which will be based upon the Jewish people. Jerusalem will be the capital city. Jesus Christ is the reigning monarch, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. But in that kingdom, there will be people in their natural bodies who will grow up; who will marry; who will have children; and, life will go on for them in the regular way. They will be subject to sin. They will be subject to death. But when God's health program is in place, life will be preserved so that the Bible, in Isaiah 65:20, says that if somebody dies at the age of 100, people will mourn as we now mourn for the death of a child. He will have died so early. People will live for hundreds of years.

There will of course, be a population explosion because of extended longevity and a high birth rate. The Bible tells us in Jeremiah 39:19-20 that this will be true for Israel. Ezekiel 47:22 says that this will be true for gentiles. There will be a great expansion of population for both of these main groups.

We have idiots today who are running around trying to limit the population of the earth, telling us that the earth cannot sustain the population explosion which is being taking place now. They're quite wrong about that. God will make ample provision, and there is ample capacity on the face of the earth now to support many times the 6 billion people we have now. This is, again, people who do not know the Word of God, so they talk like fools, but because they've got college degrees, people think that they know something.

1. **Termination of Wars**

One of the things that will happen that will preserve life is that there will be a termination of wars (Isaiah 2:4 and Micah 4:3). This cannot be done until Jesus Christ Himself is here. 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3 make that clear – that when He is here, then wars will cease. A strong military establishment is necessary now to ensure peace. And those who understand the biblical doctrine of warfare know that the way you make peace is to destroy the material and the personnel of your enemy, that he simply cannot make war. Some people do not understand that principle. The American government demonstrated that it did not in Korea, and it did not in Vietnam. It did not proceed to make it impossible for the enemy to fight by simply destroying him. There was no peace, and there will never be peace at any point in conflict until that is done. It seems that (thank God) the American government at this point in this current conflict understands that principle, and they are going all out to destroy personnel and material. If they do that, they will have peace.

The UN is a force of human viewpoint counterfeit by Satan. It is a false hope. But it is fascinating to see that we are living in a time when people are thinking about the world working together; world government; and, world activity. The United States is part of that system. The antichrist is standing off in the wings, ready to come on stage-center and take over. Yes, he's alive today. Yes, he's breathing. Yes, he's standing by. Yes, the world is rapidly shaping up for a psychological and mental outlook that will reach out and accept him. I guarantee you that the Jews, with the scud missiles currently and everything else that is going to come in on them, are themselves being psychologically prepared to welcome a strong man who will come to them and say, "I can control the Arabs. You can go ahead and build your temple, and I will be your protector," and they'll make a deal with him. And for three-and-a-half years, the Bible says that all goes well for the Jews in that tribulation era.

However, then the strong man turns against Israel, and sets his own image up in their temple and says, "Now, I'm your god, and you start worshiping me." Then the greatest persecution of the Jews that the world has ever seen takes place. What Hitler did to them becomes a Sunday school picnic by comparison. All of these things are now being prepared before your very eyes. Those of you who are versed in Scripture know that you watch the news with different eyeballs and different brains than everybody else sitting around you, even in the American government. You know what God is doing, and you're seeing the pieces being prepared and fitted together.

1. **No More Danger from Natural Disasters or Animals**

Another thing which will result in the salvation of nature is that the danger from natural disasters and animals are going to be removed (Hosea 2:18, Ezekiel 34:25, Isaiah 65:25). Those of you who have always wanted a cougar for a pet will be able to have one, and he will not eat you up. He will be calm. He'll be the biggest, nicest kitty cat you could ever hope for. I'm happy to say that your dog will stop barking unnecessarily, and animals will act in a marvelous way. All of their ferocity will be gone. They weren't like that originally. Adam and Eve were always kicking those cats out of the way in the Garden of Eden as they walked through, because they always trying to stumble up. You know how those cats are. They love to come up and rub against you, and Eve would say, "Now, stop that, will you? For crying out loud!" Suddenly, they became ferocious, and started attacking, and became bestial. It's hard to imagine a world where it's all going to go back to Eden, and the world of the animals will be totally back to its mild and domesticated patterns.

1. **General Prosperity**

A sixth thing that is included in the salvation of nature is general prosperity in the restored environment of the millennium. How does a people become prosperous? I'm going to pause to read some Scriptures on this, because I think this is important. All these are important. But this we need to be aware of in our day. Amos 9:13-14 speak about this prosperity in the millennium: "'Behold, days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when the plowman will overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes will overtake him who sows seed; when the mountains will drip sweet wine, and all the hills will be dissolved. Also, I will restore the captivity of my people, Israel, and they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will also plant vineyards, and drink their wine, and make gardens, and eat their fruit." This is a general description of the prosperity that will exist in the millennium.

What will be the economic basis that makes people so wealthy? "What kind of an economic system will this be? Micah 4:4: "And each of them (the people of God) will sit under his vine and under his fig tree with no one to make them afraid, for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken." Did you see that word "his" repeated? Do you know what that means? That means private property ownership. That means no more socialism. It is socialism that causes shortages; that causes poverty; and, that causes enslavement to government.

When Mrs. Danish and I were traveling in Eastern Europe this past summer, we saw the poverty; the shortages; the low life; and, the low standard of living that socialism has produced for the people of that part of the world. And they have caught on, and they hate it with a vengeance now.

Isaiah 65:21-23 may be added to this, speaking again of the people in the millennium: "And they shall build houses and inhabit them. They shall also plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit." Under socialism, you build, and somebody else benefits. They shall not plant and another eat. As for the lifetime of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, and My chosen ones will fully enjoy the work of their hands." Isn't that something? You're going to make something for yourself, and you're going to wear it out yourself. Somebody else isn't going to take it benefit by your labors: "They shall not labor in vain or bear children for calamity. For they are the offspring of those blessed by the Lord, and their descendants with them."

So, the result will be that your children will be born into a family that possesses something to pass on to the children, because God will preserve your own efforts. Even under world government, under the authority of Jesus Christ, in His new world order of the Millennium, there will be no socialism. It will be totally rejected.

So, the culmination of salvation releases nature from the corruption of sin in the wonderful world of tomorrow.

**Power**

The next thing that John hears the saints in heaven glorifying God for releasing is called power. Let's lay the groundwork for that, and we shall look at that more deeply. This is a very special word in the great Bible for "power." It's a Greek word "dunamis." The word "dunamis" is a Greek word that refers to inherent power in a person or a thing to be able to perform something. It is something that's just within a person or a thing, and it can accomplish something. It refers, in one sense, to a power in the sense of ability.

For example, 2 Corinthians 8:3: "For I testified that according to their ability (here's the same word 'dunamis' – their inherent power), and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord." Here, Paul is talking about the poor Christians in Macedonia who didn't have very much. Their ability to give money to God's work was very limited. That's the power they had. Yet they gave liberally to the fund which was being raised to relieve the famine conditions for the Christians in Jerusalem. So, one sense of this word "dunamis" is ability to do something.

Another sense of power is in the sense of strength. Ephesians 3:16 uses the word in that respect: "That he would grant you according to the riches of His glory to be strengthened with power (there it is) through His Spirit in the inner man." "Dunamis" is power. It is capacity. It is ability to do something.

In the Greek language here in the book of the Revelation, it says, "*The* power:" "Now *the* power of God is coming to completion" – to its fruition. This is indicating that it is referring to a very specific expression of the power of God. It is dealing here with the power of God in its expression at the end of the tribulation. In relation to God, this word describes His omnipotence and His sovereignty. He has a capacity to do anything, and he has the capacity to enforce His will. He is omnipotent, and He is sovereign. The pagan gods (as idols) had no power to control things beyond the ability, perhaps, of the demons which were behind those idols. But idol gods had no power. They had no ability. The Old Testament repeatedly pointed that out to the Jewish people.

One of the saddest books in the Old Testament is the book of Jeremiah. For many weeks now, our faculty has been reading through it chapter-by-chapter during our morning prayer and devotion time before the school day begins. Repeatedly, the teachers that sat around that table in the morning, and they shook their heads in disbelief of what we were reading – that the Jewish people did, in the face of the knowledge that God. They were worshiping Semiramis, the old Babylonian mother-and-child cult. They were worshiping the phallic gods – the sex gods. They were doing all of the things in their very temple in worship of these creatures. These were people who had the Scriptures. We find it hard to put ourselves in their place, such that they would act that way.

These pagan gods, they should have known, had no capacity. They had no power to do anything. In Jeremiah 10:9-11, Jeremiah tried to point that out to them: "Beaten silver brought from Tarshish, gold from Uphaz, the work of a craftsman, of the hands of a goldsmith, violet and purple are their clothing. They are all the work of skilled men. But the Lord is the true God. He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth quakes, and the nations cannot endure His indignation. Thus you shall say to them, 'The gods that did not make the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth, and from under the heavens."

They should have known that. That should have been self-evident. Are things different today? No. Go into any Roman Catholic context, and see how many little images of saints and Mary and Jesus are all decked out in beautiful costumes of one kind and another. What are they doing? They're building their own little gods with their own little dress on them, and they're pretending that these creatures can somehow help them.

Drop down to verses 14-16. Isaiah says, "Every man is stupid, devoid of knowledge. Every goldsmith is put to shame by his idols, for his molten images are deceitful, and there is no breath in them. They are worthless, a work of mockery. In the time of their punishment, they will perish. The portion of Jacob is not like these, for He is the maker of all. And Israel is the tribe of inheritance. The Lord of Hosts is His name." Remember that that expression "Lord of hosts" means "Lord of Armies." Our God has power. The gods of the pagans were dumb idols without capacity. So, the point is that God alone is truly the all-powerful sovereign who is able to do things, and knows how to fulfill His purposes.

In 1 Chronicles 29:11-12, this is put in a very beautiful way: "Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; indeed, everything that is in the heaven and the earth, Yours is the dominion, O Lord, that You exalt Yourself as head over all. Both those riches in honor come from You. You rule over all, and in Your hand is power and might, and it lies in Your hand to make great, and to strengthen everyone." That is a very important insight. It is in the hand of God to make you rich or to make you poor. It is in the hand of God to prosper you or to put poverty on you. It is the hand of God to exalt you or not. You may be sure that while you may be living very high and very confident as the result of your own efforts, tomorrow it could all be brought down. If God has not promoted you, you haven't been promoted, and you should recognize that that's the case.

Why are these people in heaven so excited about the power of God coming about? The thing that they understand, as we understand, is that man sees evil flourishing in the world, and concludes that God does not exist, or that He is powerless to stop it. People think that God does not have power. People think that God is standing there twiddling His thumbs like a ninny who cannot deal with Satan and his demons, who are filling the world with evil. So, you'll hear some dumb remark like: "If there is a God, why are these children born blind? Why are these people suffering with these diseases? If there is a god in heaven, why does He permit wars?" And wars are bad. Wars are horrendous. Wars, when they become serious, are very terrible. And that ignorance of not knowing what man has done to himself, from the Garden of Eden on, because of sin that he brought into the human race, is what we are suffering from.

God is not powerless. What God is doing is permitting evil to have its day in order to demonstrate its hideousness before He terminates it. This is the way God has always worked. He has permitted evil to have its day. He permits Satan to ride high so that there will be no question how just and right He is when He brings it all down.

In Luke 22:53, Jesus is speaking to His enemies. Here he is in the Garden of Gethsemane. He has been betrayed by one of His own. Now they have seized Him. Jesus turns to these soldiers who are taking him, and to the Jewish religious leaders who are standing there, and he says to them, "While I was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on Me. This hour, and the power of darkness, are yours."

Jesus says, "You're taking Me now, but I want you to know that it is because this is your hour, and your hours is going to pass. I'm going to stand here. I'm going to let you take Me. I'm going to let you do all the things that you plan to do. I know that tomorrow morning, you'll be putting me on the cross, and from 9 o'clock to high noon, I'll be there in increasing agony. I know that from high noon to 3:00 in the afternoon, God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit will pour out the sins of the world upon Me so that I will bear them as the Lamb of God, and they will turn their backs upon Me, and I will die spiritually. And I will hang there in spiritual death from noon to 3 o'clock, and I'll be crying out, My God, My God,' addressing the Father and Holy Spirit, 'why have You forsaken Me.'" Jesus, in His humanity would be crying out? In His deity, he knew exactly why.

Finally, He died, and even then He said, "You tried to take my life many times, but I control it. At a certain point on that cross, I will permit My life to be given in death, so that the payment for the sin of all mankind will be made." That's how it happened. When He was dead, the priests; the scribes; and, the civil authorities breathed a sigh of relief. They were through with this troublemaker. They were glad that He was gone, and they wanted Him out of sight as quickly as possible. And then on Easter Sunday morning, it all came apart. An angel came by and kicked the stone aside. The soldiers looked in and said, "There's nobody in here." The word was out: Christ has risen from the dead. Then the hour and the moment of the power of darkness was over.

So, what we see going on in the world today is not because we have a powerless God. He is in full command; totally sovereign; and, totally omnipotent, but He is letting evil have its day. He's letting Saddam Hussein, this evil man who worships a demon god named Allah, is having his day.

I noticed on TV some of the servicemen (the personnel) stringing the bombs under the plane. One of them taking a piece of chalk, and he was writing, "Saddam, if Allah won't hear you, try calling on Jesus." I hope that one drop right in Saddam's lap. But that's the advice he needs indeed. What a pity! But God is permitting evil to run its course. It's all going according to plan.

Psalm 66:7 says that unbelievers are so indifferent to the laws of God, that they foolishly do not fear the power of God: "He rules by His might forever. His eyes keep watch on the nations. Do not let the rebellious exalt themselves." Don't kid yourself. God is there; He knows what's going on; and, He has power. He just hasn't unleashed it. The people in heaven in mid-tribulation are sensing that He is about ready to unleash the ultimate expression and accomplishments of His power.

This is stressed in Jeremiah 10:6-7: "There is none like You, O Lord. You are great, and great is Your name and might. Who would not fear You, O King of the nations? Indeed it is Your due. For among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like You." Who can compare to God? God knows what is going on.

However, the unbelievers make this mistake: that God does not have power; that God is not on top of things; and, that things have gotten out of hand. This is expressed in 2 Peter 3:3-10, with which we will close this section. This is a statement by Peter of what was going on even in his day. Unbelievers were making the mistake that God does not have power, and that God has somehow lost control of things. "Know this first of all, that in the last days (where you folks are living), mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts (the sin nature pattern), and 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."

How often have I, in recent days, heard that argument even from Christians? "Oh yeah, you talk about a ten-nation confederacy. Yeah, you say that these things are going to come under a world condition. Yeah, you say that there's going to be a strong man. But you've said that for years. Christians have been talking about this for centuries and nothing has happened. Things are still the same." They did this in New Testament times: "For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the Word of God, the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water, and by water, through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water."

The people who lived before the Noahic flood thought that things were always going to be the way they were: "But the present heaven and earth, by His word, are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men." God put the pre-Noahic world through a flood, and it changed it completely. God is preserving the current heavens and earth for His ultimate cleansing in destruction and renovation. People who think that He's not going to do that, or that He doesn't have the power to create a new heaven on earth, do not know what they're talking about.

The saints in heaven that John hears rejoicing know that God can do that, and they're happy that it's about to happen: "But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved: that with the Lord, one day is as 1,000 years, and 1,000 years as one day. 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." It is His grace that's giving you a chance to change your mind: "But the day of the Lord (the first part of the tribulation period) will come like a thief in which the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up." Who's going to do that? The God of power.

Bible has a great deal more to say about the power of God, and what's going to happen at the end of the tribulation when He turns it loose in its fullest impact, and we shall look at that next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1990

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