***You are Covered by the Glory of God

RV184-02***

**Homosexuality**

You may have read, in the Sunday, March 15th, 1992 (today's) edition of The Dallas Morning News, an article which is reporting the viewpoints of a theology professor at Southern Methodist University on the subject of homosexuality. He is an ordained Methodist minister. He is a renowned New Testament scholar. He makes it clear that he understands, and is acquainted with, the passages in the Bible that deal with the subject of homosexuality. Leviticus 18:22 is very clear that God condemns that. It was a capital crime. Romans 1:26:27 indicates that homosexuality and lesbianism is one of the examples of how far man degenerated when he lost his contact with the Word of God and with the knowledge of God. 1 Corinthians 6:9 confirms that as well.

The professor goes on to indicate that modern science increasingly tells us that homosexuality is not a choice, and not mere aberrant behavior, but a fundamental orientation imprinted at birth or in earliest childhood. There's one major problem with that. First of all, he is, by this very statement, indicating that the passages of Scripture that deal with this do not have to be taken as truth. They do not have to be viewed as a declaration from God on this moral issue.

You also have another problem – that he is telling us that homosexuality is something that people are born with, and they can't help. This puts you in a very difficult problem that the almighty God, whose glory we have been reviewing for two sessions, with all the characteristics and qualities that make up that glory, indicates that He calls something sin over which you are helpless. You'll find that the Bible never calls a thing sin, as this degraded sex practice is clearly called, over which you have no volitional control. That in itself condemns the professor with all his renowned knowledge of the New Testament.

He indicates that there was not a word for "homosexuality" in the biblical languages. There was no conception of sexual orientation at all, he said. Well, there isn't a word for "Trinity" in the Bible either, but it's very definitely a doctrine that is clearly there. And the practice of homosexuality he would not deny is clearly what many Scriptures refer to. It is pointless to say that there was no word for it.

However, to understand this professor's thinking, the article here goes on to say that: "Dr. Furnish believes we are obligated to interpret ancient Scriptures on the subject in the light of modern knowledge. We must always seek to separate Christian truths from outdated assumptions." I don't have to ask you whether this man believes in the integrity of Scripture, do I? It's quite clear that he believes that the Bible is full of human viewpoint misconceptions, but he considers himself fully qualified, as the arrogance of man always does, to be able to distinguish between what is true in the Bible and what is false.

You might ask the professor, "How would you do that?" He'd say, well, by science." He'd say, "Well, by human reason." He'd say, "Well, by what makes sense. That's how we know what's true in the Bible. And what doesn't make sense in our modern day indicates to us that those ancient writers had some misconceptions that they inserted.

Dr. Furnish said that he believes that: "It is real lesson to be drawn from Scripture that lustful, casual, uncommitted sex is wrong, whether homosexual or heterosexual." So, what the professor is saying is that as long as you are a committed homosexual, then it's not wrong. That's one of the evidences that it's OK. I suppose by the same token, if you are really committed (rather than just a casual) fornicator, it's OK. If you are a committed (rather than just a casual) adulterer, then it's morally all right.

He gets paid a big salary for this. And there are scores and scores of young men in the ministry who are going out under this kind of instruction. The article says, "'A committed, monogamous homosexual relationship was never envisioned in the Bible,' he said, 'and does not violate Judeo-Christian teaching." I wonder where he gets his Judeo Christian teaching, because if he's looking to the Bible, there's no doubt about it that this kind of practice is condemned.

The article goes on to say that: "Soon, many more Methodists will take up the debate. A study committee, of which Dr. Furnish was a member, has recommended that the denomination drop its doctrinal statement that homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teachings."

How can this kind of a viewpoint be presented? How can it even come about to suggest such a thing? By the simple fact that the professor does not believe that God has spoken to us in a trustworthy manner; that the Bible cannot be taken at face value for the words that it has; and, that it must be reinterpreted in terms of our modern enlightenment. That is the attitude of people in general who want to escape the condemnation of the Word of God. But they will not escape it.

We are studying Revelation 14:6-7. Our topic is "The Angelic Pronouncement." This is segment number seven.

**The Angel's Pronouncement**

John tells us that an angel is sent by God to give a final proclamation of the gospel to the tribulation world. It is that tribulation world which will take the same attitude that this professor has taken. The most aberrant, degrading, corrupt kind of sexual practices will be accepted as common practice (accepted practice) in that society. And the gospel itself will be treated to the scrutiny of human reason: "Does it make sense? Is this the way it should be?" And that will be the basis of acceptance. This message, we're told, will reach all humanity who is still left alive on the earth near the end of the seven-year tribulation period.

**Fear God**

The angel who makes this gospel of grace pronouncement cautions mankind to listen to the divine message with certain attitudes. First of all, they are told to fear God when they listen to this doctrine of grace salvation. The antichrist, and most of the world's opinion-makers at the time, will hold God in contempt. The course of wisdom, this angel says is to respect and reverence God, and to dread coming under His judgment for their sins.

No doubt, some people living then at the eleventh hour, before the return of Christ, will heed this admonition. But most of the people who hear this angel will not respond with positive-volition faith, and they will spend eternity in the lake of fire.

**Glorify God because He is Unique**

The second attitude of the angel warns people to have is that they are told to glorify God. That is, God is to be honored for what He is, which makes Him unique in all the universe. He is unique. Please remember a little lesson in English grammar. You cannot place an adjective before the word "unique." You cannot say that something is more unique than another thing. That shows that you don't understand the meaning of the word "unique." The word "unique" means there's nothing else like it. You can't be more unique if there's nothing else like it. There is nothing else like Dennis Williams. There cannot be anything more unique than Dennis Williams. He is what he is, and that's it. That's all there is. It's unique. And this is what God is. There's no one like him. There's no one comparable to Him. He is distinct. He is one of a kind.

**The Essence of God**

The glory of God, the Bible indicates, is His essence, which is displayed externally on many occasions in a brilliance of light. So, God is properly to be honored or glorified by His creatures for His essence: His sovereignty; His absolute righteousness; His justice; His love; His eternal life; His omniscience; His omnipotence; His omnipresence; His immutability; and, His veracity. This is what constitutes being God, and God is glorified in what He is. The way we glorify God is by leaving the business of deity to Him, and not assuming godhood to ourselves. Remember the essence of God, and then get out of the way.

**Prayer**

Prayer turns problems and peoples over to Him to deal with appropriately so that there are no mistakes. Because of who God is and what He is, He can do that. We glorify God when we really act like we believe He is all that He claims to be. God's glory is a marvelous truth. Remember that that glory (or essence) is the same thing that comes to our aid, and to the protection of His servants. You, as a child of God, as a servant of God, may find yourself under fire for the fact that you are a Christian, and for the fact that you are bearing a testimony in an unwelcome area. It is well for you to remember that you are covered by the glory of God.

In Exodus 16:6-10, we have the problem (the burden) that was placed upon Moses and Aaron with a complaining and a criticizing group of Jews. God had led them from slavery in Egypt. And they had nothing but gripes and complaints over their circumstance, as if God, being what He is, was not going to take care of them. Exodus 16:6-10: "So, Moses and Aaron said to all the sons of Israel, 'At evening, you will know that the Lord has brought you out of the land of Egypt. And in the morning, you will see the glory of the Lord, for He hears your grumbling against the Lord. And what are we, that you grumble against us now?'"

Moses understood the principle that when people resist you for doing what the Scriptures tell you to do, don't take it personally. It is God whom they are resisting. So, Moses says, "Who are Aaron and I, that you should be jumping on us for this. We didn't lead you out of Egypt. God did that. And you think that He's going to abandon you now?

Verse 8: "Moses said, 'This will happen: When the Lord gives you meat to eat in the evening, and bread to the full in the morning, and the Lord hears your grumblings which you grumble against Him. And what are we? Your grumblings are not against us, but against the Lord.'" Right on, Moses: "Then Moses said to Aaron, 'Say to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, 'Come near before the Lord, for He has heard your grumblings.'' And it came about as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the sons of Israel, they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud."

That was very impressive, God's servant said, "We are communicating to the true Word of God." These Jews didn't think so, and suddenly they see the glory of God surrounding their servant God servant Moses. They got the picture very clearly.

We have a more extended passage in Numbers 14 that I think is worth our reading. In Numbers 14, God's essence comes to your service, protection, and reinforcement when you, as a Christian, come under fire because of your testimony and your stand for Christ. The world does not like to be made to look bad by Christians who will not participate in their evil. This is the incident at Kadeshbarnea, where a group of spies, 12 men, were sent into the land to take a reconnaissance survey before they entered, and the report that these spies brought back was a majority report of ten, and a minority report of two. And here they are.

Numbers 14: "Then all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night." The reason they wept was because the majority report said, "Yes, while it is a land flowing with milk and honey (meaning it is very fertile), it is filled with people who are like giants, and we're like grasshoppers next to them. Caleb and Joshua said, "So what? God has told us to go in. He's going to give us the land. The issue is settled. There's nothing for us to do but to go in." What the people did was they wept, and they wept all night, which in itself was a violation of doctrine. I won't get into that now, but the doctrine of weeping in the Scriptures indicates that sleeping is to be terminated. It is to be short-lived. It should not be extensive. These people carried on and waited all night long. They were that much out of temporal fellowship.

Verse 2: "And all the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. And the whole congregation said to them, 'Would that we had died in the land of Egypt, or would that we had died in this wilderness.'" Now, you have to give Moses and Aaron a lot of credit for being some staunch spiritual leaders, to have led these people from slavery, and to have freed the nation after 400 horrible years of Egyptian slavery. And here, these people were saying, "We just wish we were back in our slavery instead of out here in this wilderness." Here they have a beautiful opportunity to go camping, and what are they grumbling about? They want to be back as slaves in Egypt.

They said, "And why is the Lord bringing us into this land to fall by the sword?" Who said that? Who said that God is going to bring you out in order that you die by the sword? It is tough for people to understand God's essence and to act accordingly.

When Jesus was crossing that Sea of Galilee with the disciples, and suddenly that storm arose, Jesus said, "Let's go over to the other side, boys." The weather was beautiful; they got into the boat; they pulled up the sails; and, off they went under a gentle breeze. They got halfway across, and if you've ever been to the Sea of Galilee, you know that there are mountains there, and the sea sort of creates a wind tunnel. Suddenly, when the winds arise, that sea becomes a churning, horrible mess because it's right in a wind tunnel. So, it was frightening. What did they do? They wake up and say, "Lord, are you going to let us drown?" Now, what did Jesus say? "Boys, let's get on board and go over, and sink in the middle of the lake?" He said, "Let's go over to the other side." What more did you need? Oh, isn't this nice – sailing in a storm? That's fun. It's fun sailing in a storm. They should never have questioned that Jesus said, "We're going over to the other side."

God told the Jews, "I'm going to bring you into this land. I'm going to take it away from those corrupt pagans. I've had my fill of them. They are a cancer upon the human race. And you're going to cut them out, and cut them out completely, and you are going to take this beautiful place over that I have reserved for you." They said, "God's going to kill us. Our wives and our little ones will become plunder. Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?"

How many times when tough things get tough, do you want to go back to the world? In the Bible, Egypt is a symbol for the world. Here you have the sorry picture of Christians wanting to go back to live with the world, because things get tough when you try to live as a child of God.

So, they said to one another, "Let us appoint a leader, and return to Egypt. We'll get rid of the leaders we have. We'll find someone who will take us back into the world:" "Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces in the presence of all the assembly of the congregation of the sons of Israel. And Joshua, the son of Nun, and Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, of those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes." Joshua and Caleb were the minority report. They said, "Let's go. The land is ours."

"And they spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, "The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. If the Lord is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it to us, a land which flows with milk and honey. Only do not rebel against the Lord, and do not fear the people of the land, for they shall be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the Lord is with us. Do not fear." The devil can't protect them any longer. That has been their ace card, and God has said, "The devil is out, and you are in. I'm going to take you into this land, and I'm going to protect you."

**The Glory of God**

That is the glory of God, which is going to come to work for you. What's going to come? Everything that God is – all of the facets of His essence are going to be brought to bear on this situation. And you don't think that with that on your side, you're going to be a winner?

"But all the congregation said to stone them with stones." Can you believe that? They're not only going to get themselves new leaders, but they're going to kill the old ones: "Then the glory of the Lord appeared in the tent of meeting to all the sons of Israel." In comes God in all His glory: "And the Lord said to Moses, 'How long will this people spurn Me, and how long will they not believe in Me, despite all the signs which I performed in their midst? How long they're going to hold My glory in contempt? I will smite them with pestilence and dispossess them. And I'll make you into a nation greater and mightier than they."

God said, "I'll tell you what I'm going to do, Moses. I'm going to send a disease through this crowd, and they're going to fall like flies. Not one of them is going to be left. I'm going to leave you and your family, and I'm going to start the whole Jewish nation that is descended from Abraham over again with you."

However, Moses, like the courageous, gutsy leader that he was, did not turn his back on his flock even when they acted as fools. He knew what his job was, and he knew what his duty was, at that time especially: "Then Moses said to the Lord, 'Then the Egyptians will hear of it. For by Your strength, You brought up this people from their midst, and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that You, O Lord, are in the midst of this people. For You, O Lord, are seen eye-to-eye while Your cloud stands over them, and You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.'" That is the glory of God. Moses said, "These Pagans have seen you leading us. The word has gone out how you let us out of Egypt."

Now, if You slay this people as one man, then the nations who have heard of Your fame will say, 'Because the Lord could not bring these people into the land which He promised them by oath, therefore, He slaughtered them in the wilderness.'" Moses said, "God, I don't really think that's a good idea. These pagans are going to say, "Oh sure, he got them out of Egypt, but when it came to bringing them into the land, their God was incapable of doing that."

So, Moses said, "I pray. Let the power of the Lord be great just as You have declared. The Lord is slow to anger, and abundant in loving kindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression. But He will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations." There's where that horrible principle is laid out that if you have a background of family members who have been evil, the punishment comes down to the third and fourth generation.

"Pardon, I pray, the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of Your loving kindness." That's the Old Testament Hebrew word for "grace" – loving kindness: "'Just as You have also forgiven this people from Egypt even until now.' So, the Lord said, 'I have pardoned them according to your word." God said, "OK Moses, we'll do it your way. But indeed, as I live, all the earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord." God said, "I'm going to demonstrate My glory. Yes, I won't kill them all with disease. We're not going to start over again with just you and your family. But I'm going to demonstrate My glory in what I do in dealing with this rebellion against My authority and My Word."

Here's what He did: "Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the test these 10 times, and have not listened to My voice." At this point, on ten different occasions, they had thumbed their nose at the glory of God which was demonstrated before them. Now, here it is: One more time they've done it: "These men shall by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who spurn Me see it. But my servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit, and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it.

"'Now, the Amalekites and the Canaanites live in the valleys. Turn tomorrow and set out to the wilderness, by the way of the Red Sea.' And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron saying, 'How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who are grumbling against Me? I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel which they are making against Me. Say to them as I live,' says the Lord. 'Just as you have spoken in My hearing, so shall I surely do to you.'"

What did they say in God's hearing? "Well, He's bringing us out here for us to die in the desert? He's bringing us out here so our children will die. He's brought us out of Egypt to death." Well, God says, "I heard you say that. Now I'm going to show you how My glory stands by My true servants, and all My glory deals with the rebels. Your corpses shall fall in this wilderness. You're right about that. Even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from 20 years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me.'" God said, "From this moment on, look at your age. If you're 20 years old and up, you're doomed. We're going to bury you someplace in the desert. From 20 years old, you're responsible yourself personally. Your parents are no longer your priests. Surely you shall not come into the land in which I swore to settle you, except Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua, the son of Nun. Your children, however, whom you said would become a prey (they would die out here in this wilderness), I'll bring them in, and they shall know the land in which you have rejected."

All these kids 19 years old and down, that you were so worried were going to die – they're coming in: "But as for you, your corpses shall fall in the wilderness, and your sons shall be shepherds for 40 years in the wilderness, and they shall suffer for your unfaithfulness until your corpses lie in the wilderness. Your children are going to have to suffer for 40 years out in this desert." That's not a nice place to have to live and move around. I want to take them into the land of milk and honey, but they are going to have to suffer, because they're going to wander in this wilderness until all of you, their elders and their parents, are going to be corpses. According to the number of days which you spied out the land (40 days), for every day you shall bear your guilt a year, even 40 years, and you shall know My opposition."

God said, "'I gave you 40 days by the glory of My grace to see what a wonderful land I had for you, and you rejected that. Now you will wander in the wilderness, dying off, bit by bit for 40 years – one year for every day. I, the Lord, have spoken. Surely this I will do to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness, they shall be destroyed, and there they shall die.' As for the men who Moses sent to spy out the land, and who returned and made all the congregation grumble against him by bringing out a bad report concerning the land, even those men who brought out the very bad report of the land (those ten) died by a plague before the Lord."

God said, "And I'm going to give you a preview that you can believe My essence. You can believe My glory which includes My veracity. You're going to die, every one of you, and I'm going to give you a preview, because the ten men who brought in this evil report, who countered My directions to you are now going to die. I'm going to hit them with a plague. They're going to be the first that you bury in the desert.

"But Joshua, the son of Nun, and Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, remained alive of those men who had gone to spy out the land." I think that's a terrific passage of Scripture which demonstrates this principle that God's glory (or essence) comes to the aid and protection of His true servants. Never forget that the essence of God stands by you.

The Lord Jesus Christ glorified His Father by fulfilling His earthly mission; and so, indeed, is the way we glorify our heavenly Father – by fulfilling our earthly mission.

In John 17:4, Jesus said, "I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do." It would be a shame, wouldn't it, to come into heaven, and to meet the Lord, and to find that you did not glorify Him by fulfilling your mission? That would be a great shame. It would be a great humiliation. This is exactly what Paul said. Paul said, "I'm so concerned about being embarrassed, and coming before the Lord, and being ashamed because I didn't fulfill my mission."

When you die: at home; in a hospital; or, wherever, the immediate thing that happens is that the group of appointed angels appear to your now spiritually opened eyes. And while your body lies there dead, your spirit and soul rises up out of that body, and the honor guard of angels carries you into the third heaven and introduces you to Jesus Christ. That's going to be a great moment of great humiliation to realize that you now stand in His glory, but you did not glorify Him by fulfilling your mission. And there it is – left on earth, all undone, and some other some other believer is brought up to take up the slack of what should have been done by you. Jesus glorified His Father, and He could say, "I've done it, because I've performed that which I was called to do."

Like the title of the song says, "We Know where We're Going." And like Paul, on a later occasion, saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, so will we. Because Jesus was deity, He was there within the glory of God. And in Acts 7:59-60, we read, "And they went on stoning Stephen as he called upon the Lord and said, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. My body is going to die. My spirit and my soul are going to rise up out of this shortly.' Falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' And having said this, he (and isn't most beautiful?) fell asleep." In his mind at this moment, as he was entering the glory of God, was the attitude of Jesus: "These people are blind spiritually. They're horrid. They're terrible. This is a great sin against the glory of God. But God, do not hold this sin against them," meaning: give them a chance to learn better. As Jesus said, "Give them a chance to live long enough to get their thinking oriented with God's point of view." What happened was indeed the angels took Steven, and took him right into the glory land.

This is why we speak sometimes of seeing our loved ones in glory who have passed away into heaven. I remember many years ago when I was a student back from World War II at Baylor University out of the Marine Corps, trying to finish up the last year. And along came that February, and I had to go home. I had a father who was very deathly sick. Before I got there, he had died, and I remember going to the funeral home, and I was alone. Nobody else was there. As I stood by his casket, looking down on him, I had been looking forward for the war years to being finished; finishing my schoolwork; getting back home; and, getting back to an association with him again. And that was not to be. And I remember standing there by myself, and saying, "I'll see you in glory someday, Dad." That's exactly what happens when the angels take you up. You go into all the brilliance of God Himself. You come into the very presence of God. Paul is right. We shouldn't come into that with a sense of embarrassment and shame, because we know better than that.

In 2 Peter 1:17, Peter refers to the God into whose presence we will enter as "that majestic glory." 2 Peter 1:17: "For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to him." Peter is thinking back upon the mount of transfiguration experience. He says, "Such an utterance as this was made to Him by the majestic glory, 'This is My Beloved Son with whom I'm well pleased.'" And He's talking about God the Father – the majestic glory.

The believers are going to return someday, therefore, to the glory which God originally bestowed on Adam and Eve. In Psalm 8:5, the psalmist says, "Yet, You have made him a little lower than God, and You crown him with glory and majesty." When Adam and Eve were created, like everything else that God had done, it was perfect. These were two genuinely beautiful people. And God said that surrounding them was glory and majesty. That's why we suspect that, while Adam and Eve did not wear clothes, yet there was around them a brilliant, glorious light. That's why when Adam came back into the garden after Eve had eaten of the fruit and sinned, he knew that there was something wrong, because while his glory light was still surrounding him (the glory of God's essence was still upon him), it had gone from her, and he saw her in the hideous image of now lacking the brilliant light of God to surround her. He saw her in all her vile, gross, evil sin. And it must have been an enormous shock.

Our being transformed into the glory of God, I'm happy to say, is now in the process. It is not something just in the future. From day-to-day, you are becoming more glorious as you are being transformed into the image of Christ and all of His essence. 2 Corinthians 3:18 indicates this where we read, "But we all with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit." Day-by-day, we're stepping up to a little more reflection of the glory of God.

Colossians 1:27 says, "To whom God will to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Because Christ is in us, that is why we have a hope of glory. As you remember what I have taught you about the meaning of the word "hope" in the Greek language of the New Testament, you know that that is a hope that is certain to be fulfilled. It is not a possibility. It is a sure thing.

One more: 1 John 3:2 says, "Beloved now, we are the children of God, and 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 as He is." What are you going to be like? You're going to be encased in the glory of God. Everything that God's essence is, is what you too will be. What a destiny! What a future!

**Judgment**

The angel goes on to give another admonition to this crowd who hears this gospel message. He also says, "Worship him:" "He said with a loud voice, Fear God and give Him glory." Why? "Because the hour of His judgment has come." The next thing the angel does is explain why you should have this enormous, reverential awe of God, and why you should give Him the glory, and let Him be God, and recognize who he is, and not try to become a little God yourself, because it's time to get your report card. Judgment has arrived. The word "judgment" is the Greek word "krisis." "Krisis" is the word that is used to describe something that a judge does in a court of law. It's the result of a legal action. It's a decision of a legal process. What it connotes is the process of the investigating of the evidence which determines a person's guilt or innocence.

This is the word which, for example, is used in the gospel of John 5:24: "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My Word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life, and does not come into 'krisis' (does not come into a process of judgment, but is passed out of death into life." Once you have accepted Christ, you never again come into the legal process of being evaluated for your fitness for heaven. The evidence which you as a believer will present to a holy God for that fitness is the absolute righteousness of Jesus Christ that has been imputed to you at the point of your salvation when you trusted in Christ to save you. He also gave you His absolute righteousness. That means that you are declared not guilty by God as the judge. This has now come. They have reached a point in history, near the end of the seven-year tribulation period, when the judgment of God has arrived against rebellious humanity. At this point in time, the grace of God is now going to change into condemnation.

The Holy God has tolerated Satan and the evil of his human followers since the Noahic flood. Mankind has built a human viewpoint civilization which exalts sinful man, and which rejects the holy and glorious God. Now, the kingdom of man finally faces a showdown with the Kingdom of God. John sees man's day as being replaced by the day of the Lord. God suddenly is going to sweep aside all the relative righteousness that men depend upon. And He's going to proceed to judge people on the standard of His own absolute righteousness. God's glory is going to be the basis of that judgment – the facet of that glory of God's absolute righteousness.

But before God does that, once more, in loving grace, God warns the lost sinners of the tribulation that He is going to judge them in their lost condition, and he's going to send them to the lake of fire. Remember that at that point in time, these rational beings are living at the end of the tribulation, and they have seen a lot of chaos. Something like three-quarters of the world's population has now been killed. You add that up. We have six billion people in the world today, and three-quarters of them will be dead. The world has been under an enormous attack. Great things have taken place out in the natural world: geologic convulsions; and, heavenly catastrophes. People know very well that God is doing these things. In fact, Revelation says, "They do know:" "They know it, and they look up in heaven, and they curse God." That's how blinded and how jaded they have become.

However, God says, "I'm still going to give you a chance." You would think that when He tells them, "You're going to go into the lake of fire. You'll be conscious forever. The pain will never stop, because you'll never pay for your sins. You'll never be able to cover it. But I've taken care of the problem. Turn away from the antichrist, and turn to Jesus Christ. The one name by which these people may be saved, however, is the name that all the unsaved world hates; and, that unsaved world hates this name today. Acts 4:12 clearly states that: "And there is salvation in no one else. There is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." This is the name that people hate.

If you were to ask Phil Donahue whether he hates the name of Jesus Christ, he would probably be reluctant to say, "Yes." But does he hate that name? You betcha he hates it. Why? Because he does not like the idea that unless you believe in Jesus Christ, you're not going to heaven. He cannot get himself to believe that a loving God is going to send a person to hell (to eternal punishment) just because he decided to be a Muslim, or because he was a Buddhist, or something else. But the Word of God says, "Because we know the glory of God, which includes His justice, that is exactly what He has to do with sin." Otherwise, God Himself would be unfaithful to righteousness. There is no name under heaven. There is no way except Jesus Christ.

So, the lost will, at that point, be matched up to God's absolute righteousness. Then they will be judged worthy of eternal death in hell, which is precisely what will happen to them.

Now, what judgments are we dealing with here specifically? The specific judgment is the first of a series of great judgments that we find in the Bible. The great judgments of the Bible are very important for us to know, because some of them directly apply even to us as Christians. The particular judgment here, that is being referred to, is that Jesus Christ returns, and He now makes the decision of what gentiles are born-again, and in their human bodies are going to go into the Millennial Kingdom; and, what Jews are born-again through the only name of Jesus Christ, and they, in their normal physical bodies, will go into the millennium. Then there will be one more huge death knell upon the earth, as millions of gentiles who are left will suddenly die, and millions of Jews who have escaped the antichrist, but have not trusted in Jesus Christ, will also be finished off.

That is the judgment that is referred to. That judgment has a great deal to teach us, along with the other judgments that we find in Scripture. If you'll join us for the next session, we'll tell you about the judgments of God, and how they impact upon each of us.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1992

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