***Thrones

RV237-01***

We are studying "The First Resurrection" in Revelation 20:4-6.

**The Second Coming of Christ**

At the conclusion of the seven-year tribulation era, Jesus Christ will bodily return from heaven to the earth. This return was promised to the apostles at the time of His departure. We read in Acts 1:10-11: "And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was departing, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them." These were two angels: "And they also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven." That is a very important statement, for it tells us that Jesus Christ is returning, not as liberal theologians would have us believe – spiritually, but He is actually returning physically.

**Armageddon**

After the Second Coming arrival on the earth. Jesus Christ will slay the gentile armies at Armageddon; He will throw the antichrist and the false prophet into the lake of fire; and, He will lock up Satan in the abyss for 1,000 years. All of this is part of the preparation for establishing the 1,000-year Messianic Kingdom of God on earth promised to the Jewish nation throughout the Old Testament and by the Old Testament prophets. For centuries, the purpose of Satan has been decreed on earth – a religion to worship him, and a world government to dominate nations and to restrict personal freedom of the citizens.

**Nimrod**

This was Nimrod's plan – to set up a religion that bypassed the true God, and to set up a religion which ultimately looked upon man as his own god, having a deity within himself. The other part of Nimrod's plan was to set up a dominating government so as to restrict the freedom of the individual citizens in his kingdom. This is what Babylonian Islam is all about. It has a religious factor, and it is a political factor. We have to recognize both of those. We've looked at those in great detail, because they are very much applicable to us today.

**The United States**

For example, the United States began as a nation very definitely resisting these two satanic goals. We created a constitutional republic. This constitutional republic was built upon the recognition that there is a God whose laws have been revealed to us, and a society must conform itself to those laws. It was built upon the fact that individuals have personal freedoms from God. Therefore, no one, including government, can encroach upon that freedom. Americans worshiped the true Creator God, and they obeyed His biblical laws for human conduct, creating a society of great freedom without chaos. That was the problem. Everybody could do his own thing; everybody could work where he wanted to work; go where he wanted to go; do what he wanted to do; and, spend his money as he chose. And yet, you didn't encroach upon other people's freedom. That created the great American culture.

There is a great furor in the state of Florida where in a little town, a group of Christian women had been elected to the school board. And now they're the majority. Now, I've had people talk to me about their concern that biblical Christians are deliberately trying to take over the Irving school board; that Christians are deliberately trying to take over the Irving city council; and, that Christians are going to be tyrants. Now, when have genuine biblical Christians ever been tyrannical? False religious systems, like Roman Catholicism, parading under the name of Christianity, have indeed been tyrannical. But if there's anything that biblical Christians want, it's freedom. We want you to do your own thing, any way you want to do it, within the restriction of laws, and within the restraint of not imposing any injury upon other people.

**Multiculturalism**

What happed was that the state of Florida had directed that the children of the state must be taught multiculturalism. They must be taught about the cultures of other nations. What does that mean? Well, they must be taught, for example, that in Hinduism, the culture said that when a man dies, his wife is alive to burn with him on his funeral pyre. That meant that the Aztec religion in Central and South America, and the other Indian tribes there worshiped the sun God by tearing the hearts out of people by the thousands in human sacrifices. That meant that in Hawaii, when the king or the queen died, the king or queen would gouge his eye out on a rock to express his grief. And you could just go through these cultures, and see the personal, physical mutilation and brutality – offering their children alive as sacrifices to their gods. Those are the cultures of other nations. Under Islam, the culture was multiplicity of lives, and the culture killed everybody who would not become a Muslim because he's an infidel.

So, what these ladies did was that, since the state had a law that people must be taught other cultures, with the idea that then children would be tolerable toward these other cultures and these foreign viewpoints, they passed the school board law that the teachers must make a clear distinction between those cultures and the American culture based upon Reformation Christianity; the principles of the Word of God; and, the concept of personal freedoms from God. And the bottom line was it was to be made very clear to these children that American culture is superior to any culture on the face of the earth, which happens to be true.

Oh, boy, you should hear the howls of pain from the National Education Association – that liberal labor union of teachers. You should hear the howl of pains from the ACLU. What they screamed was, "That will neutralize whatever we're trying to do. We're trying to get the children to believe that other cultures are as good as the United States culture."

**American Freedom**

Well, for centuries, Satan has been creating these horrid cultures around the world. We could regale ourselves all day with the brutality and the ugliness in those cultures. And at the bottom of all of those was domination of the individual so that he did not have freedom. The United States began as a nation resisting these two satanic goals of: worshiping the sun-god and worshiping the deity in man; and, of a government which restricted the freedom of the individuals. Americans worship the true God. They created a society with great freedom under the Constitution Republic (a Republican form of government), as the Constitution says: "Freedom without chaos."

I think it was the philosopher John Locke who said, "Personal freedom begins with the fact that no one owns your person, as one has been made in the image of God. It's very important that you understand that, and that you teach your children that nobody owns you personally. That is why slavery is wrong, which is one of the great customs, for example, of the Arab culture to this very day. Nobody owns you. You are responsible for how you use this self-ownership, and the inherent freedom that it implies before God. You're responsible before God how you exercise the inherent freedom that is implied by the fact that nobody owns you.

American freedom does not come to the citizens from the Declaration of Independence. American freedom does not come from the United States Constitution. American freedom does not come to us as a grant from the government. That's the point. These instruments are valuable, important documents in our history that were designed to protect the freedoms that God has given you, as a person who owns yourself. And through these documents is the recognition that men and women have certain unalienable rights. And they are God-given, by their Creator, to them, as people who have been made in the image of God. And personal freedom comes from God via the divine institution of volition. Please be sure that you remember that.

**The Divine Institution of Volition**

When somebody says, "How do you know from the Bible that nobody owns you; that you are your own person; and, that you have personal freedom from God?" It's the first divine institution. It's the divine institution of volition.

**The Garden of Eden**

Genesis 2:15-19: "Then the Lord God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man saying, 'From any tree in the garden, you may eat freely. You have freedom within the laws of God; freedom to do whatever you want in this garden; freedom to eat whatever you want; to live however you choose; and, total freedom in the Garden of Eden. But there is one regulation (because freedom, in order not to go to chaos, must have some restrictions): From the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it, you will surely die.'

**Wives**

"Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make him a helper suitable for him. And out of the ground, the Lord formed every beast of the field, and every bird in the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever a man called a living creature, that was his name." He was perfectly free in every respect. Then God said that man needs a helper. He needs a woman to be his helper. She was taken out of Adam's side, and the purpose of the woman was to be related to her husband in certain specific categories. As wife, that meant when he came home at night, she was there at home. She cannot be his wife if, when he comes home at night, she is employed by somebody. That meant that, as mother, she would live with her children. She cannot live with her children if she is absent and at a distance many, many times as the weeks go by. It meant that she was there with full strength and capacity at home to make that a citadel of security, joy, and comfort. It takes an enormous amount of physical strength, and physical drain, and emotional creativity to do that.

**Family**

Now, that's God's wonderful, marvelous order for preserving freedom within the family.

**God's Moral Law**

God's moral law is further preserved inerrantly in the Bible are the basis for individual society and a nation to preserve its freedom. When you observe the moral laws, you have freedom. Now that we have abandoned the moral laws in our country, we have chaos. We have an ugly society.

One of our members was telling me just the other day that he went down to Eckerd's late at night. He had to go there to get something. He walked out and he found himself spotted by two young guys. And they're looking him over, and they're looking at one another, and they're talking with one another. They were obviously making an estimate whether he was worth whatever they had in mind to try to secure from him. That's pretty scary. That's right here close at hand, because we have a society that has abandoned caning. Caning on the gluteus maximus, which was designed by God for that purpose, straightens out the heart tremendously.

I read of a man who had been incarcerated in the state of Kansas, and he said, "I got a 5-to-10-year sentence. I served three-and-a-half years, and they were three-and-a-half of the most hellish years of my life, because it was a prison with no comforts. It was a prison of hard time. It was the hardest time I've ever spent in my life. I'll tell you that whatever I do in my life, from now on, I'll never go back to Kansas." And everybody in Kansas applauded, because the moral laws of God say, "You have freedom to do whatever you want. Nobody owns you. But when you break constituted the laws of God and of man, you have the responsibility to pay the price. And this young man said, I'll never want to pay that price in that state again. I'm going to find myself some state where they're nicer to their criminals."

Please note that God does not grant equality to us. He grants freedom. Somehow, in our thinking in this country, freedom has become confused with equality. We're going to make everybody equal. If you don't have something that I have, then we're going to use the government to spread the wealth around so that you have what I have even though you didn't earn it. But that's not in the Word of God. The Word of God never promises equality. It only promises us an equal opportunity to exercise our unequal abilities. It promises us freedom.

**America**

We have often sung, "My country tis of thee." We took that hymn America from England, where it's sung as "God save the king" or "God Save the Queen." It is interesting to note that in every verse, the stress is upon liberty. There is not a whisper about equality:

"My country tis of thee,
sweet land of liberty,
of thee I sing.
Land where my fathers died;
land of the pilgrim's pride;
from every mountainside;
let freedom ring.

My native country, thee,
land of the nobles free;
thy name I love.
I love thy rocks and rills;
thy woods and temple hills;
my heart with rapture thrills;
like that above.

Let music swell the breeze,
and ring from all the trees,
sweet freedom's song.
Let mortal tongues awake.
Let all that breathe partake.
Let rocks their silence break;
the sound prolong."

Then the writers of the verse button and nail it down on the fourth verse that that freedom comes from God:

"Our fathers, God to thee;
Author of liberty,
to Thee we sing.
Long may our land be bright,
with freedom's holy light.
Protect us by Thy might,
Great God, our King."

Brethren, there is no substitute in the Word of God for freedom. That is the supreme thing. That's what grace is all about. Grace is freedom to live your life as a prince of God, or as a dog in the pig pen. That's freedom: to live your life so that everybody is proud of you, and glad that you're part of their team; or, that they're ashamed of you, and hate to think that you're part of the game. Freedom is to live as you choose to live.

In the Word of God, that is where the stress is – our personal freedom: to do what is right; or, to do what is wrong, but the consequences are ours.

The Americans created a government under the authority of the people of the states as their servants to protect their God-given rights and freedom. They have power to act for themselves, and to run their own lives without interference from illegitimate laws of the government.

**America Today**

What has happened? Today, Americans have abandoned the moral laws of Scripture, and the sovereign authority of God, and have made man his own god. So, we have slavery: slavery to the sin nature; slavery to evil; and, slavery to violence. And in some parts of the country, people are even afraid to leave their home at night. Today, Americans have permitted the federal government to exceed its constitutional numerated authority, and become the master of the states on the road to a world government, and total loss of freedom. The federal government was supposed to be the servant of the states. And gradually, Americans have permitted the whole thing to be reversed, because Americans do not know that there is nothing greater than your personal freedom.

**Public Smoking**

I'm not too crazy about the laws that the government is imposing upon individuals that you can't smoke in certain establishments. I can say that to you because you know that I hate smoking as much as I hate root canals, and I'm no devotee of smoking. But how dare some federal authority come and say, "You cannot smoke in this restaurant?" The owner might say, "But I own the restaurant, and I want people to puff in here." Yet, the government says, "You cannot smoke. It's bad for your health," and all the other things. And Americans say, "Yeah, most of us hate smoking." So, we say, "Hot dog, I'm glad."

Have you stopped to think what you're saying? It is the right of the owner of the restaurant to put up a sign and say, "Smoking permitted. Puff away." It is the right of the other restaurant owner down the street to say, "No smoking. Smokers butt out." ...

Now, I'll walk up, and I'll say, "Hey, I'd like to eat in a smoking restaurant," and in I walk. It's wonderful. I love it. You could have a smoking section and a non-smoking section, but the restaurant would have to be divided in two.

I was over Chili's a few weeks ago, and I'm in the non-smoking section, and I'm gasping. There was a guy next to me, cross the little wall, and he was smoking, and his smoke was coming across. But you should be able to choose if you want to go into that smoking restaurant.

One time, I was flying on free airplane passes, and being a non-revenue passenger, you have to sit where they put you. And I got stuck on a long final jump to Dallas in the smoking section. That's when I realized a new dimension of hell. The fire is there, but the smoke is going to kill you. That's for sure. I mean it was horrid. I'm sitting there, and these guys are puffing away at the back of this plane, carrying on like crazy.

Yet, it's up to the airline as to what they want to do. If they want to have sections for smoking and non-smoking, or the whole thing, it's nobody's business. They're the owners. They belong to themselves. What they own belongs to them. And I'll either choose a smoking restaurant, or I'll say, "No, I want to go to a restaurant where they don't smoke." That's exercising my freedom, and I don't impose my freedom upon the man who owns that restaurant.

This business of freedom is so subtle. The state of Colorado is waiting for the governor's signature on a bill. We hope he will sign it. They have passed a bill quite enthusiastically in the state legislature that addresses the federal government, and tells it that the state of Colorado is going on notice in this resolution that the federal government has exceeded its authority under the Tenth Amendment. The Tenth Amendment says that any power not enumerated in the Constitution to the federal government, or denied to the individual states, is reserved to the states and its people. That means that the federal government can only do these 19 specific things: create an army; a post office; and, things that all the states need to have done for them. The state of Colorado is saying, "You have exceeded your authority, and we are not going to pay." That's what Congress is doing. They're reducing the budget now by passing laws and telling the states to pay for these laws (for the execution of these regulations). The state of Colorado is saying, "We're not going to tolerate bureaucrats who are operating under laws that you cannot confirm by an enumerated power in the Constitution."

17 states have this bill in the mill. They're considering it. If we can get 38 states to pass that, then the federal government is compelled to cease and desist. Can you imagine what a revolution that would be? Those 38 state legislatures could now pass this is a law – that they will henceforth refuse to obey any edict from the federal government that is not justified by an enumerated power that they don't have the right to do. The courts have allowed this to happen, and Americans are not taught a subject called civics, like I was taught in high school, on how the government works, and how freedom is preserved, and all that. They don't know what's going on.

So, Americans only do one thing: "Let's work like crazy. As soon as my kid gets out of high school, don't shove him into Vacation Bible School ministry, and don't shove him into summer camp counselor ministry. Shove him into a job. Let him know that the most important thing in his life is not his freedom to serve God, but his enslavement to the god of mammon.

So, the American people are beginning to hurt enough that some rationality is coming, and all that they're doing is just trying to get their freedom back. You don't belong to anybody, and your freedom cannot be encroached upon by a higher authority except God.

The world today is viewing the American republic as a nation which has abandoned the biblical principles of private ownership capitalism, and has substituted for the enslaving security of socialism. The first person was former Vice President Quayle, that I finally heard on public television, saying that the administration's health plan, whatever merits or demerits it has, is an act of socialism. Finally, somebody said this is socialism, because it is. Socialism is where the government owns things. It's different than welfare. Socialism is where government owns the means of production, and owns the operation. Americans should recoil with horror because socialism is enslavement. It cannot be any other way. You cannot be taken care of by somebody without being beholden to them. Suddenly you don't belong to yourself anymore. They've got a hook into you.

The worldwide trends toward human godhood and world government today will reach its climax under the restored Roman Empire in the reign of the last emperor, the antichrist, in the Great Tribulation. The consequence of this tribulation era will be disasters from God in nature, and total disintegration of civilization. And death will sweep the planet as the kingdom of man collapses worldwide.

**The Millennium**

The return of Jesus Christ then, at the end of that seven-year period, as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, will usher in the golden age of mankind, and a 1,000-year kingdom on this earth which we call the millennium. We have looked at this view of this 1,000 years by various groups of Christians.

**Premillennialism**

Basically, there is the premillennial view, which is the view of Berean Memorial church. This is a biblical viewpoint. It is produced by a literal interpretation of the Scriptures which states that Jesus Christ is going to come before the millennium in order to set up this 1,000-year kingdom as the result of total catastrophic destruction of society worldwide.

**Postmillennialism**

There is the postmillennial view, which is a non-biblical view, arrive at by non-literal methods of interpreting, stating that the world will be conquered by the gospel for 1,000 years, and then Christ will appear at the Second Coming.

**Amillennialism**

The third view is the amillennial view, which is also a non-literal view and a biblical view, and that is that there is no earthly kingdom to be ruled by Jesus Christ at all, because the Jews have forfeited their covenant promises to such a kingdom, and that Christ only rules in heaven. This is the majority view of denominations and religious groups today (amillennialism) – that there is no future for the Jews as a nation on this earth under the rule and authority of Jesus Christ.

The execution now of the first resurrection, we have in Revelation 20:4. We have the execution of the first resurrection, in various stages, and it follows the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. So, the way has been prepared for the millennium, and now the resurrection issue takes place. And we're all happy to know that someday we will live again. We're all happy to know that when this physical house collapses, that there is a future for us, because God is going to bring us back.

**Thrones**

John says, "And I saw thrones, and they set upon them." John is an eyewitness of this in his vision. He sees thrones. A throne is something that a royal authority sits upon, signifying his authority to rule; to reign; and, to govern. These sat upon these thrones. We are not told how many thrones. It is plural. It does tell us that there are 12 thrones as for the 12 apostles; and, there are 24 thrones as for the 24 elders who are in heaven representing the church. It's just says "thrones." That's because there's a multiplicity of thrones. Those seated on the thrones are not specifically identified here at this point. But it indicates, by the very fact that they do have a throne, that they do bear royal authority over some realm. You have a throne; you sit upon the throne; you're a king; and, you're a king over something. The occupants of the throne, by the context, would be the saints of God.

So, there are certain saints of God who are going to get thrones in eternity. I say "certain saints," because before we're through, over the next couple of sessions, you get one of the most dramatic pieces of information such that I can almost guarantee you, if you ever bring it up to any of your Christians friends, especially those in the biggest churches, they won't know a thing about it. And they'll wonder what you're talking about, and where you get this idea. I'm going to tell you right up front that there are thrones in eternity to be given to saints. But not every saint has a throne.

It is true that the 12 disciples, in Matthew 19:28, were promised royal authority over Israel in the Millennial Kingdom. They will have thrones from which they will reign. It is true that church, as the bride of Christ and the consort of Jesus Christ, will reign with Him. A little later, here, in Revelation 22:5, we are told, "And there shall no longer be any night. And they shall not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God shall illumine them." And then the final phrase: "They shall reign forever and ever." Here are church-age saints who are told that they will have thrones. It doesn't say that all of them will have thrones, but it says that church-age saints will qualify for a throne and a realm of authority.

This also includes the 24 elders spoken of in Revelation 5:10. They have thrones of authority. They are representative (they are symbolic) of the church in heaven. Tribulation martyrs are the ones who are particularly in mind, as we shall see in the latter part of verse 4. And some of these tribulation martyrs are going to be given thrones so that they are rulers in some realm. All of these exercise royal authority under the supreme reign of Jesus Christ.

Please note Revelation 2:26-27: "And he who overcomes, and who keeps my deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations. And he shall leave them with a rod of iron as the vessels of the potters are broken to pieces, as I also have received authority from My Father. Jesus says, "Those of you who are true to Me among the believers, you are going to be given a throne. And you will have a royal authority given you so that you will exercise great power over a segment (a jurisdiction) on this earth; as I have been given jurisdiction by My Father over all the earth."

Revelation 19:15, furthermore, says, "And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He will smite the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron. And He treads the winepress of the fierce wrath of God the Almighty." Jesus Christ will exercise royal power.

So, we have this picture evolving here. Christ, on the authority of God the Father, will be given the throne (and has been given the royal throne) of His father, David, over which He will throughout this whole earth. Under His authority, as the supreme King of Kings, will come a number of thrones. We've looked at some of the categories here of the 12 apostles; the 24 elders; the church-age believers; and, here the tribulation martyrs. Some of these are going to, for some reason, be given a throne. This royal authority will go to believers who prove themselves worthy.

Now, the Mormons love to use that phrase: "to prove yourself worthy." They use it in terms of who goes to the exalted heaven. You prove yourself worthy by what you do; how you live; how you think; and, how you act. That's why Mormons are so conscious about being morally correct, because that's how they make it into the exaltation of heaven. But in the Word of God, we do not work for salvation. It is free grace salvation. It is not make Christ Lord and Savior; rather, it is make Christ Savior and Lord. It's not Lordship salvation. It's Christ salvation. Then confessing knows sins is the way you constantly make him Lord.

The royal authority is going to go to certain believers who prove themselves worthy. How? Well, they prove themselves worthy by the fact that they have lived lives in temporal fellowship. Someone, by their good fortune, and the grace of God, explained 1 John 1:9 to them. The moment that happened, that person is now in a position to become a candidate for a throne. That's step number one. A person who has lived a long life muddling around churches as a Christian, as our friend Jack Smith in Kentucky did, and then he finally picked up in the prison chapel (as a prison guard) a Berean tape that explained 1 John 1:9, and he realized why he was not in touch with God, because he had not understood the principle of temporal fellowship. He knew that he was in touch with God in his eternal fellowship of salvation. Suddenly, the fireworks went off in his mind, and his soul cried out in joy to God. And I don't know how many times this man, with his voice obviously heavy with emotion, has thanked me for making that tape that has brought him out of the captivity of the sin nature.

A Christian should live with the care of admitting, "God, I know that this is my role in life. I know that this is how I should be conducting myself. I know that this is what I should be doing, but I don't want to do it. My circumstances don't allow me to do it. I can't do it, whatever the reason. I admit that I'm out of line." But confession also means to cease and desist. It's not enough just to say, "I'm wrong." I have to stop being wrong, or I haven't really admitted anything. So, the Christian who lives his life in temporal fellowship is the one who is really in subjection to the authority of God and His word.

The person who is a candidate for a throne is the one who has performed Christian service of divine good works. Because he's in temporal fellowship, God the Holy Spirit leads him, and he has decided not to do something else so that he can have Christian service. Christian service always means not doing something else. The reason that our list is not filled with candidates for Vacation Bible School teachers and summer camp workers in certain categories is because people have chosen to do something else.

Who owns you? Nobody. You're free to do that. The question is whether God has freed you to do that. But you are your own person. The candidate is the one who has a deep knowledge of doctrine. That makes it pretty hard for a lot of Christians to even get to first base. We are to have a systematic and authoritative understanding from the Word of God, based upon the languages of the original Scriptures. That gives us a knowledge of doctrine, and a literal understanding of what it says.

The candidate for a throne is a Christian with great personal integrity. That is not the one who says, "I subscribe to the moral laws of God, but I fudge them when I have to in order to make it, because I need this advantage for what I want to get." No, we are to have personal integrity. And when we step out of personal integrity, our temporal fellowship gets put back in line by our confession and our ceasing.

The candidate for the throne is the one who has great financial stewardship – genuine financial stewardship. What does the Bible say is the fundamental requirement of a steward? The word should leap to your mind. A steward must be faithful. That's what the Bible says. That's the one fundamental requirement of stewardship – faithfulness. You are to be faithful with your money, and faithful with your material possessions. For the Jew, that meant giving 10%.

Every now and then some Christian comes to me. I remember one man came to me, and he had quite a bit of financial wealth, and he was in agony that he was not giving at least as much as a Jew gives. He said, "I get this money, and don't give 10% every week. I can't even give 2%." I thought, "How refreshing." Most people tell me, "I do want to give more to God, but I just bought this big limousine, and it's costing me these payments. As soon as I'm through, I'm going to start giving. Then I have this house, and my wife doesn't like it. So, we've got to get a bigger one. Then I've got this, and I've got this." And people actually look me in the eye, and think that they have now justified themselves by saying, "I've got all these bills to pay, and that's why I can't give anything to God's work."

Well, maybe you should sell something. Get rid of something. Do what you need to do to maintain your integrity with your material possessions, and stop throwing bones to God. And rally with what you have to the needs of God's work. You have to have a worthy church. God knows that Berean Church is a worthy church in what it does. It has never done anybody anything but good over four decades and more. That's because its focus is to teach people, young and old, what the Bible says. When they have that, they have a basis for living. Oh, yes, a lot of people reject that. They don't go for it. Worse yet, some blossom out, and then in the parable of the sower and the seed, along comes that bird, that represents Satan, and it snatches it away, and down they go.

Financial stewardship is a very important element as to whether God is going to say, "I have a throne for you," or whether you're passed over.

Finally, there's obedience to the will of God in executing one's divine mission in life. Christ came, and said, "I have a mission." His mission was to the cross. And He said, "Any of you who are going to follow Me and qualify for a throne must take up your cross and follow Me in just that way." And your cross is your mission. That's what the term means. It is whatever your calling is. In the New Testament, we describe that as spiritual gifts. And your spiritual gift is what you should be exercising. Whatever spiritual gift, of those nine spiritual gifts you have, do it with all your heart. Do it as unto the Lord. Do it as if this is your last day on earth. Do not wait for a better day.

"I saw thrones, and they sat upon them." The "they" is referring to a variety of believers: "And judgment was given to them." The word "judgment" is the Greek word "krima." "Krima" is the word that refers to an area of jurisdiction here on this earth: "I am giving you a throne, and I'm putting you in charge over this area of the Millennial Kingdom. I'm putting you in charge of this city. I'm putting you in charge of this municipal entity." You have an area of jurisdiction over which you will exercise judgment. This is given to those who are on this throne. This is authority to those who are on throne, and this is anticipated. This giving of authority is anticipated in Revelation 5:10: "And You have made them to be a kingdom and priest to our God, and they will reign upon the earth."

This is what he is referring to – certain believers who have reigning authority on this earth. It is given to them. It is part of the general judgment at the end of the tribulation, which will include the judgment of all gentile nations in Matthew 25:31-46, where individual gentiles are divided as saved and unsaved. The saved are called sheep; and, the unsaved are called goats.

It is the judgment upon Israel which will be exercised in Ezekiel 20:33-38, where they will be divided into saved and unsaved. The saved go into the millennium in their physical bodies; and, the unsaved are put to death. Gentile sheep go into the millennium in their physical bodies; and, the goats are put to death. Saved gentiles and Jews thus enter the Millennial Kingdom.

Each nation, then, on this earth is going to have a small state population to rebuild the country with large families and long life spans. This is pointed out to us in Isaiah 65:20, speaking of the time of the millennium. It begins with a small number of people in every nation who are saved, who have survived. They are all born-again: "No longer will there be in it (in this kingdom) an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his days." There'll be no abortion. That murder will stop. And the horror of America can certainly be seen in the fact that our government now is pressing that the United Nations set up a regulation so that all nations on the face of the earth will have access to abortion, and will be *required* to have access to abortion, even nations who, by their religion, recoil from this – murder on a wholesale scale.

Christians hate me for telling them that. They are offended by our pointing this out. They think this is political talk when governmental authorities are participants in murder. No, it's not political talk. It is "Thou shalt not murder" talk, and it is representing the mind of God.

In those days, you're not going to have an infant who dies. Infant mortality will be practically non-existent. People who are old will live out their days, and their days are going to be hundreds of years: "For the youth will die at the age of 100." If you're dying at 100 years, people will think that you're just a kid: "And the one who does not reach the age of 100 shall be as thought accursed." If anybody dies early on, people are going to say, "Ah, that is the sin unto death. God has judged that person." In general, people don't die in the millennium. And the consequence is that these nations will rapidly rebuild their population over this period, and the nations will be restored in great strength from this small group of believers who begin.

Israel will lead the nations spiritually in honoring the reign of Jesus Christ from His throne in Jerusalem. In Micah 4:2, this role of Israel is pointed out to us: "And many nations will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob (the temple in Jerusalem), that He may teach us about His ways; that we may walk in His paths. For from Zion will go forth the law; from the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem today.'"

Today, there's an enormous amount of ignorance and character misrepresentation about what God thinks and says. People don't care. Here, all nations will care what God says. They will have this born-again condition, and they will be pursuing the feed upon the Word of God.

The book of Zachariah also adds to this – the role of Israel: the lighthouse of spiritual things. Zachariah 14:16-17: "Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year-to-year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to celebrate the feast of booths. And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of host, there will be no rain on them." If you don't come to worship the King, and you don't come to honor Jesus Christ, you will suffer economically for it.

The rewards for service to God are going to include, then, royal jurisdiction. We need to look into that in a little more detail, because the Bible has a lot to say about who gets a throne and who doesn't in this Millennial Kingdom. But we're dealing with the fact that Revelation 20:4 talks about thrones and people sitting upon them: "And it was given to them to exercise a jurisdiction on this earth." These are rewards for service to God in a form of royal authority.

This is confirmed for us in the parable of the pounds in Luke 19:11-27 and of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30. We'll get back to looking at those. But those, you may remember, are servants who are given the means with which to do business, and they did it in various degrees of devotion to their master. They returned 100%; 50%; or, nothing at all. Then God says, "I reward you accordingly. You brought 100%. You did good. I want you to go and rule over ten nations. Here is your throne. Your jurisdiction are these ten cities."

The next guy came along. He had five minas to return. The Lord didn't say, "Well done" to him, but He said, "I'm rewarding you with a throne. You didn't do as well as you should have. You fooled around. You could have done better, but you kept getting caught up with the burdens and the trivialities of life, because you didn't think that living forever was all that complex and demanding and significant. But I'm going to give you this throne, and here's your jurisdiction: five cities," and so on.

So, here we have an amazing confirmation again. There's a difference between being saved (being a member of the Kingdom of God), and being a ruler in that kingdom – having royal authority.

When King Edward VII decided that he wanted to marry an American divorcée, and that he could not marry her and continue to be king of England, he abdicated because he said he could not live without the woman he loved. The day that he abdicated, he was still a member of the royal family. The day that he died, he was still a member of the royal family. But the day that he advocated, because he broke a law of God, which the nation insisted he could not break, in marrying this divorcée woman who had this living husband under these conditions – the day he did that, he lost his throne. He was no longer a ruling authority. He no longer had the ... jurisdiction, but he was still royalty.

So, there is difference between being a member of the royal family of God, as Christians, and having a throne in the kingdom of the millennium from which you will reign. And we shall look at that in greater specificity in the future.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1993

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