***Glorification  
  
RV250-01***

This morning, we turn to Revelation 22:8-9. Our subject is the overwhelmed apostle. John's angel guide declares that the Book of the Revelation is inspired by God. God the Holy Spirit has been supervising the recording of what John saw and heard in his vision. The book is thus inerrant and has no mistakes in it and is a true preview of the end of human history. Once the time has arrived for the fulfillment of the prophetic things recorded in the Book of the Revelation, we're told that things will move with great speed to a climax. Jesus also promises that when the time arrives for His return in the Rapture and in the Second Coming, He will move with great rapidity from heaven to earth.

John announces a special blessing on those who heed and who keep the prophetic information given in this book. This promise, of course, presumes that pastor-teacher will be faithful to their primary calling of instructing God's sheep in the things which are revealed in Scripture and which are revealed in this book of the preview of the future. A moment by moment expectation of the return of the Lord will affect how believers live their lives. That is why we learn prophecy. That is why we are taken into God's confidence so that we know what is going on in the world about us. These promises of God, of resolving all the issues of human sin, should lead us and does lead us to live the lives of godly people.

**The Meaning of Glorification**

John himself is overwhelmed by the vision which he has received, which shows how God is going to keep His promise to glorify believers at the end of time and to terminate evil. That's what this is all about. It's summarizing for us our personal glorification. Our glorification refers to our future with a resurrected body in the pattern of the perfect body of Christ and an eternity of living with God in heaven. That's what glorification means, it means to be raised with a perfect human body, free of death, free of the sin nature, and to spend eternity living with God in His heaven.

**The Promise of Glorification and Its Results**

One of the places, the background for our thinking this morning, where this promise of our glorification is stressed is Romans 8. So, please turn to Romans 8:28-29. It is the background of this passage and what it teaches, that is what impelled John to be so awed, to be so overwhelmed by what he had seen because he knew where the vision was going to end up. It was a great encouragement to him to know that while he is there in exile on that island, God is going to glorify him and that the glorification that was promised him is certain. Now he has seen this Book of the Revelation, how God is going to bring about the things in this world that are ultimately going to lead to his personal glorification and to ours.

Notice Romans 8:28-29: "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. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren." The keywords are the beginning of verse 28 that says "And we know." The apostle Paul indicates that a believer who is well trained in doctrine knows for a certainty that he is going to be glorified. Such a knowledge brings great orientation and stability in the believer’s daily experience. Such a knowledgeable believer enjoys God's blessing and he is stable in good times or in bad times.

Those who are untaught or negative to Bible doctrine are insecure about their destiny of glorification, so, they try to take up the slack in various ways. What do they do? Well, they run off to retreats. They run off to these weekend retreats where some skilled speaker who knows how to titillate emotions can get them all jacked up and feel that they have some kind of powerful relationship with God. Or they're always running off to some kind of special seminar that is being conducted for their particular class of human beings. They're a single so they go to singles’ seminars. They're a double, so they go to double's seminars. They're a triple, they go to triple's seminars. Whatever they are, they're skinny, so they go to skinny's seminars. They're not-so-skinny; they go to not-so-skinny's seminars. It's just there all the time.

Every now and then we have a believer among us who gets captivated by the seminar that's being run off here, and they get the idea that that's where it's at. And they start passing out little brochures around; this great seminar that's going to be held someplace. That is the first time that a believer is on a downward path spiritually. That is the first sign that there's a weakness in the soul because that believer is demonstrating that they do not understand that being fed upon the doctrines of the Word of God and the pursuit of their own study of Scripture is where it is at! It's not off there in some special kicky seminar or retreat that is being conducted. But those who are untaught are insecure and they show it by the way they live, by the way they deal with things in their lives and people. They don't know where they're going.

So, point number one this morning is you're going to glorification and it is inevitable. For those of you who are good guys and for those of you who are bad guys, it's inevitable. That's what thrilled John. John says, 'It's really going to happen to me. I am really going to be glorified. I am really going to find myself with a perfect body resurrected and I am really going to find myself living with God in a perfect world forever.'

These people who ran off to the retreats and seminars to get jacked up emotionally get back into the real world of pressures and obnoxious people, and their emotional high blows off very quickly. So, they start looking around for the next weekend so they can dash off to another retreat. Without a foundation of the deep things of the Word of God in your human spirit, the believer is an emotional yo-yo, and he cannot say "and we know." All he can say is "and I don't know."

Now, God indeed allows various stresses in our lives from which He brings good. That's what the apostle Paul tells us: we know that God causes all kinds of things in our lives to work together for good. So, no matter how we may sin, God takes the confession of a repentant saint and makes a good thing eventually from a bad. Very important.

One of these days, you may find yourself in a sinful action that you never conceived that you would be capable of doing. But of course, you are capable of doing the worst of sins! As long as you have a sin nature, you're capable of doing the worst of them. So, don't be watching television and famous television trials and saying, oh, how terrible what that person did; how awful. What that person did, and what happened to the people to whom he did it, is a result of what they were. They performed up to what they were. This is what they are. People who are not stable in the Word of God and the orientation of God's viewpoint are people who are emotionally dominated in their souls and they have a sin nature that brings them to the depths of evil. All of us can find ourselves there.

And the point is that even if that were to happen, you're going to go to glorification as a believer. You'll be disciplined; the consequences will be great in that respect. But you're going to be glorified. You are going to have a resurrected body and you are going to spend eternity in the New Jerusalem.

Now, because the believer is permanently in Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit at the point of faith in Christ, he is always in the position of one who loves God and is called by Him to his personal mission. [back to Romans 8:28] "And we know [from the Word of God, from doctrine,] that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, [you are in Christ, you do love God.] to those who are called according to His purpose," You are in Christ. You have been called according to His purpose. You have fulfilled all of these things. Therefore, the ultimate good is all that's before you. The first of that ultimate good is, of course, your salvation. The end of the ultimate good is your presence with God in heaven. The inevitable end result is the believer’s glorification.

**The Result is Eternal Security**

Now notice Romans 8:29 and 30: "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren; and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified." One of the first things these five major acts through which God takes us, tells us is that there are no dropouts in glorification. Sometimes we call that the eternal security of a believer or the perseverance of the Saints. But what it's telling us is that there are no dropouts on the road to glorification.

Everyone who God foreknows (And the word foreknows means that God takes an intimate contact point with you. Foreknows doesn't mean that God discovers something about you. It means that he intimately takes you under His wing.) is also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son. The person He takes in to His intimate relationship is also predestined to eternal life and to be transformed into the image of Christ that he might be the first-born among many brethren. There'll be many people like Jesus Christ in Heaven. And whom He predestined, these 100% of those He predestined He also called, He extended to them the call to believe. And of 100% of those whom God calls for salvation, He also justified because they all respond. So, they're given absolute righteousness, which is what justification is. And 100% of those whom He justified, He will glorify someday.

That's the pattern. No drop outs. 100% from start to finish because it's all a work of God. That's why salvation is so great! Man's sinful hands and efforts do not interject into the plan of salvation at any point. So, here's 5 things that God does: He foreknows, He predestines, He calls, He justifies, and the inevitable end of that is glorification. No dropouts. 100%. So, you and I are as good as glorified right now. Positionally you are. Positionally in God's sight you're absolutely perfect, you're absolutely transformed. This is a process that goes on for every believer.

**The Result is Undiminished Grace**

Now Romans 8:31 and 32, Paul says, "What then shall we say to these things? [What things? Well, the things he's just told us, these five major acts of God,] If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?" God's grace to a believer is never diminished no matter how far you stray from Him, the grace is never diminished. At salvation, God did for us the maximum good, the maximum good that we needed, and that was to provide for our absolute righteousness. That was the hardest thing. Having done that for us, Paul says, 'Now that we are His children, is God going to deny to us all these lesser things that He can so easily do?' The hardest thing was to get you saved. That was accomplished. Is He going to deny these lesser things to His children any more than you would to your children? Of course, the answer is no. He's going to be pleased to give you your heart's desire. That's what the Bible says. He is pleased to give you all the things that you desire that will not injure you, that will not harm you.

And all you have to do is ask and wait upon Him. These five divine acts are the things that God has already done. Everything else is less. God is for the believer. From eternity past to eternity future, He is on our side; so, our glory is guaranteed. God spared not His Son Jesus when doing the most for us in salvation, so He keeps His grace flowing to us as His children in every lessor thing.

**The Result is His Intercession For Us**

Romans 8:33 and 34, "Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us." There is no accusation of sin which can be leveled against the believer which will cancel his destiny of glorification; so important! Most of the religious world thinks about hanging on to your salvation by your good behavior. That is a satanic notion; it is not found in the Word of God; because salvation is a work of God. It isn't how good we are that counts, it's how good Christ is. His absolute righteousness is what carries us through.

So, here the question is, who's going to bring a charge against God's elect? It certainly isn't going to be God who has justified us. He has nothing against us. You see, this is why we say sin is no longer the issue. All sin, the sin question, was settled at the cross. All sins have been covered by the death of Christ. People do not go to Hell because of their sins; they go there because of their refusal to accept what God has provided to give them absolute righteousness. They refuse to accept what has already been done for them. That's why it is wrong to tell unbelievers 'pray the prayer of the penitent, "God be merciful to me, a sinner" which the publican in the parable indeed did pray.' But all of you know that the word merciful means propitiation; 'God be propitiated to me, a sinner.' And you know that to say that to God is an outright insult. That means 'God please be satisfied concerning my sin.' But the sin issue is settled; He is satisfied! The death of Christ has taken care of that! Don't insult God by asking people to pray that prayer. It is wrong on this side of the cross. So, who is going to bring a charge against us that will deny us our glorification?

**The Result is Salvation and Glorification Settled**

Who is the one who condemns? It's not going to be Christ Jesus, He died. And then Paul says, 'Yeah, well, rather He was raised.' You catch that? What happens when you walk into a Roman Catholic Church and you look around for Christ? The only Christ you see is one hanging there dead on a crucifix. The apostle Paul says, 'He died. But we don't focus on that. We focus on the fact that He was raised because His resurrection tells us that salvation and glorification are a settled deal. It is the focus of our blessing.'

So, he [Paul] stresses He is raised, who is now at the right hand of God and who furthermore intercedes for us. Every now and then, this little simple fact that Jesus Christ is there, pleading your case in Heaven as Satan accuses you of your sins, comes as a bolt out of the blue. I've had people come to me in the past. We've touched on this and said that just blew my mind. I had no idea that Jesus is sitting up there interceding in my behalf so that no matter what I do, He's right there as my defense attorney. And He always wins the case because every sin has been covered. He cannot lose. That's right. That's why Satan is thrown out of Heaven eventually because he and his demons are up there accusing you and me every time we are guilty of a moral wrong.

Well, Satan accuses us to God and he delights in doing that. But God Himself has assigned to us our guardian angel. That angel protects us and preserves us from the evils and dangers in this world. He has given us the indwelling Holy Spirit to guide us through the trickery of Satan in his system. There is no accusation that can be leveled at us which will deny us our glorification.

The Lord Jesus Christ acts as our advocate in Heaven. He secures our verdict of not guilty by virtue of His payment for our evil. 1 John 2:1 and 2 tell us about that role. So no one can lay a charge against the believer which will stick in Heaven's court because Jesus is always there to defend us.

**The Believer's Response to That Promise**

What do we do? Our part is to confess our evil to God the Father to return to temporal fellowship, forget the breakdown, and go on confident to your eternal glorification. 1 John 1:9 is the guideline. You confess it, you forget it, and you go on rejoicing that you're on your way to glorification.

In Romans 8:35-37 Paul says, well in view of all this "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, 'FOR THY SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; [We were consigned.] WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED.' But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The Believer who knows the Word of God knows that he cannot be separated from the love of Christ; no matter what he does, whether it is mental and physical pressures, inner anguish, persecution, famine, exposure to the elements, personal dangers, threats of violent death, none of that can separate a saint from Christ. The Christian faces death in Satan's world, but nothing he suffers will negate his right to glorification. We Christians are conquering winners through Christ who loved us and who has guaranteed our glory. Romans 8:38 and 39 expresses Paul's conviction. He knows that the doctrine of salvation works. Anybody who has accepted the doctrine of salvation through faith in Christ does not have to sweat out whether he will get to the New Jerusalem glory land. I am persuaded,... and that is the point that we're trying to make. I am convinced that none of these things that can come to us, and Paul lists ten categories of things that people think can separate them from glorification. They think that death might do it, that something in living might do it, that some angel might do it, that some principality (which is a major officer in Satan's structure of authority), nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers (the ordinary demons), nor heights (Heights was directly overhead as far as things go, that was just over the horizon. So that carries us through both extremes.) nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Isn't that interesting, that the love of God is in Christ Jesus our Lord? God does not love you because you're such a sincere person or because you are so much a servant to Him. He loves you because He has placed a target for His love within you. That is your absolute righteousness, and it is your absolute righteousness that ensures that someday you cannot be any place else but in Heaven with a perfect body. And that's glorification!

**The Apostle John Overwhelmed**

Now, the apostle John knew all of that, and he knew that glorification was coming. But boy, things were really hard: the suffering he was going through at the hands of the empire, the terrible things that were being done to him by Emperor Domitian. John was probably famous enough among the circle of people that Domitian hesitated to kill him and create a problem for himself, so he just exiled him to Patmos, which was a penal colony. John sits there and it doesn't feel much like glorification. He must have wondered, is it ever going to come together the way the Lord promised? Now he has been shown what God is going to do historically.

Now, he is an informed believer, and so in Revelation 22:8, he says, "And I, John [identifies himself as the author of this book, I], am the one who heard and saw these things." John now adds his own testimony to that of the angel concerning the authenticity of the message of Revelation. John reaffirms that what he has written in Revelation is not some flight of his imagination. John also here identifies himself as the author of the book, and he was the person that Jesus was especially fond of, as you remember.

What John actually heard and saw fills him with a profound sense of adoration toward the Lord. So, John says, I "saw these things. And when I heard and saw [these things], I fell down to worship." When John was an eyewitness of the future tribulation events in his vision, he was as awed by them as we are when we read them. But he did hear these words and he did see these things that are going to come to pass. John has been shown how God will conquer evil. He will conquer Satan. He will restore creation to the perfect will of God. John is awed by what he has been shown of the final stage of the world's development under the work of Satan through the anti-Christ. John is seeing the full impact politically, economically, and religiously. John cannot believe that this is what's going to happen, especially when he sees the portrayal of the church becoming in God's sight a harlot creature. He is taken aback by the dramatic events. There he is at the start of it all in the pristine glory of the New Testament church. God is telling him, this thing is going to be so corrupted you won't recognize it. Politically, there will be nothing but the effort to impose controls by powerful men upon all the rest of humanity. Economically, there will be constantly the effort for socialism, to deny people their personal freedom with the fruits of their labors. He says it's going to get worse and worse. So, John is really impressed by this final stage of humanity. So much so, that we read that he falls "down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things." He falls down to his knees, bows his head. He is humbled by the picture given to him because he knows that the promise of his glorification is thereby ensured. If God does all of this, everything is going to get straight again. And he will find himself in that New Jerusalem.

He [John] is so staggered by the importance of the revelation given him by this angel that he proceeds to worship the angel who has shown him these things. This is a repeat performance on John's part of what he had done once before in Revelation 19:10, and he was cautioned then about worshiping an angel. John's response, of course, is understandable. His mind contemplates the grand design of God's final solution for sin in His creation. So, he's carried away by the magnificence of this revelation, and he impetuously prostrates himself before the angel in an act of worship. We must recognize that John may have connected the angel closely with Jesus Christ, who he knew was the source of the vision, so that he was treating the angel respectfully as an agent of Christ and was in fact bowing before this angel in that respect, so he was actually in his own mind honoring the Lord. He probably meant as an expression of reverence for the representative of God that he would humble himself before God's representative as an act of humbling himself before God. But the messenger who gives us doctrinal truth is never God. I don't care who the human being is that has been significant to opening up insight spiritually to you, that person is not God. You are not to treat him as God. You are not to look upon him as God. You are not to put him up on a pedestal. And here, even a holy angel of God is not God. So, consequently, John is immediately corrected.

**"Do Not Do That! Worship Only God!"**

It's an innocent mistake, perhaps, but it must be corrected so that it will not escalate into a worse heresy. And the angel guide properly does not accept the worship of John. Now, Satan and his demons angels would accept that kind of worship; they solicit it. They're always looking for people to worship them. But God's true angels do not do that. So in Revelation 22:9, the angel guide rebukes John. "And he said to me, "Do not do that." And the Greek language is very emphatic. The Greek language is very emphatic on what the angel is saying. Actually, what the angel is saying is just two words. To translate it properly, we have to say, "see you not." It doesn't have the verb in there; it just says, "see you not." That's how the Greek language speaks when it wants to make a great emphasis upon something. So, actually, it's the word "to see" that is here that is translated "do not." But that is the idea. 'See to it that you not do something.' We smooth it out by saying, do not do that, which is what it means. But it was very clear that the angel was emphatic about this thing. There was to be no compromise on this issue. The angel refused to accept John's worship and he orders him to cease and desist. Angels would not tolerate even the appearance of being worshiped, even though perhaps the angel understood that John may have had Christ in mind. Angels all worship God and so they would not tolerate being objects of worship. Hebrews 1:6 tells us the angels worship God. Worship, of course, belongs only to God. Otherwise, it's an act of blasphemy.

John of course, knew that you're not supposed to worship angels. I don't want you to think that he somehow did not understand that doctrine. Colossians 2:18, Paul expresses for us what the apostles understood. "Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind." Let no one rob you of your prize or your rewards by delighting in self-abasement, by delighting in the personal self crucifixion and the worship of angels, by the worship of angels, taking a stand on visions he has seen inflated without cause by his fleshly mind.

How many times have you heard Charismatics stand up and tell about the vision they had of this angel, this glow that appeared at the foot of their bed, and this angel who spoke to them? I heard one man being interviewed and one of the local talk shows, one of the religious shows. This pastor said, "I was sitting in my study and in came this angel." And the interviewer, who is pretty smart guy and does a lot of good things on radio, is sitting there interviewing him. "Seriously," he says, "You did? Well, how is he dressed?" "Well, he wore a turtleneck sweater. He had some deck shoes on and he had this little jacket over it." I mean, this got crazier as it went on describing what this angel looked like. Well, the idea is not entirely wrong. If an angel appears, he's going to be dressed in the dress of the day. But the point was that this man was imagining all of this thing in order that he might have an authority to speak to the congregation. 'I have spoken to an angel, so I have my fleshly mind, my Old Sin Nature mind has come up with a vision to transmit truth to you.'

John knew that this was not to be done. He also knew from Revelation 19:10, where he'd already been rebuked for doing this. Revelation 19:10: "I fell at his feet to worship him [the angel]. And he said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant," and so on. So, John knew that he's not to worship angels, and that's why we may strongly suspect he was doing this in respect to the angel as a representative of Christ.

However, angel worship was an early heresy in the New Testament church. It was called Gnosticism. Gnosticism means people who were in the know. And the Gnostics said that Jesus Christ was the supreme angel that God had created and that therefore they worshiped angels as Christ, the supreme creation of God as the supreme angel. [They said] He was not divine, just an angel. This again was commonplace early in the New Testament church, that heresy of angels being divine in some way.

John's inclination to worship the angel quite certainly indicates that he believed the revelation that he had given him, that it was true. That's what overwhelmed him. So, had he not taken the Book of the Revelation seriously, as many do not today, he would not have been so carried away to bow down before this angel. But he did take it seriously. Angels are very zealous about treating God as the creator of all. In any church service, such as this, the angelic host which is gathered in this room with us unseen to you, but very much in presence and real, listening to what is said, take great distress at anything that is not true or that is insulting to the person of Christ as the God whom we worship.

The angel points out to John the principal of the community of servants. He says, in Revelation 22:9, "Don't do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren, [the other believers, the brethren,] the prophets, [specifically with your brethren, the prophets, these men who have been writing the Scriptures] and those who heed the words." Your fellow believers of this book don't look upon me as God; look upon me as one of your fellow believers. He is referring here to Church Age saints. He's referring here to the writers of the Bible. He is stressing specifically that they should listen to the words, the literal meaning of the words, that God has written. All these categories of God's loyal creatures are servants of God. John was simply a fellow servant of holy angels and of redeemed saints. Servants do not worship each other. Angels may be esteemed as agents of God, but they are His creation. They are not divine. The most emanate prophet of God is but a sinner saved by grace. We have great respect and indebtedness to the prophets, but they are still sinners redeemed. So we do not worship the prophets. The angel was telling John to keep his focus on Christ, who is the true object of worship and the one who will bring about John's glorification.

So, the angel finishes up with two words: "worship God." That's it, to "worship God." Now the first two commandments of the Mosaic Moral Code dealt with the issue of idols and worshipping. Exodus 20:3-4, the first two commandments, "You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters under the earth. [Various animals as the pagans designed for worship, or human beings,] You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate me, but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments."

So, we are told that first of all, verse 3, the first commandment: you will not worship any other God. You'll have no other God before you except Jehovah Elohim, the true creator God. Secondly, you are not to make images of that God as aids for your worship. You're not to make any images of animals. See, this is what the Israelites did, the Exodus generation, while Moses was up on the mountain. They made an image of a golden calf, but that was an image of their God. They called it Jehovah. That was a god they were worshiping. It was Yehweh there. This calf represented their God. The very thing that Moses is up there getting, these commandments, and they're doing.

Interestingly enough, the Roman Catholics cut out verses 4-6. And I'm not sure on what basis, but in one way or another, that second commandment about making images before which you worship, or you create adoration, is not in the Roman Catholic catechism as the second commandment.

And yet the catechism has Ten Commandments. What they do is drop down to verse 17 and to cut this verse in half. Number 9 commandment is "You shall not covet your neighbor's house." Then the last commandments is "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor." I mean, this is really brazen. You get the Catholic catechism, you see Ten Commandments and suddenly realize that one of them is missing. Now, why would they want to do that? Because the Catholic system is filled with images of worship, with images of saints, with images of crucified Christ hanging on a dead cross. These are used as objects of adoration, they like to say, but in effect are objects of worship because they pray to these images and thereby praying to the dead people behind them, the Virgin Mary, or the Saint.

No one is to permit himself to be an object of worship as a god. If the Virgin Mary could speak, she would say "cease and desist this terrible heresy." If the saints in Heaven that are worship could speak, they would say "cease and desist this terrible act of blasphemy." We do not worship anything but God.

The very first thing that God said to these Jews after their freedom from Egypt was I'm the only god you deal with and you do not make any images of Me through which you approach Me. This was done in order to preserve the freedom that they had just secured from their release from Egypt. If you worship the true God, and you do not play around with intermediary images as the pagans do, you have taken a giant step toward preserving your freedom.

When Herod accepted worship as a god, he was struck dead by God. Acts 12:21-23, "And on an appointed day Herod, having put on his royal apparel, took his seat on the rostrum and began delivering an address to them. And the people kept crying out, 'The voice of a god and not of a man!' And immediately an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and died." I hope none of you will ever say as you listen to me preach, "the voice of God and not a man." I don't want to become wormy! So, forget it. Here is this guy with his royal gowns on and thinks he's really something, and he's really carried away with himself. And he's making a good speech. And people are impressed and they say, 'oh, this is the voice of God.' And he smiles and says 'Well.....' And boy, God says, 'No, I want to show you something. See that thing crawling on your hands.' And before very long, the worms are in and out like the song says. And he learned his lesson the hard way.

Now we come to our buddy Nebuchadnezzar in the Old Testament: the great king of the Babylonian Empire in Daniel 4. He also claimed a godhood. We have a very clear illustration here of what happens. This man was driven insane. Daniel 4:28-32, "And all this happened to Nebuchadnezzar the king. [All these wonderful things that characterized his kingdom.] Twelve months later he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon. The king reflected and said, "Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?' [He's terribly impressed with himself.] While the word was in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, "King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you, [Point number one, you ain't king anymore!] and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field. You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you, [that is, seven years,] until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whomever He wishes.'"

Now, there was nothing wrong with him standing up there on this house looking across the Euphrates Valley, and the river, and all that he had built, and say what a magnificent thing God has given me. It's OK to admire. But he should have given God the credit for it. All would have been well. There's nothing wrong when you have that beautiful new car for you to just stand there and admire it and be so pleased that you saved your money. But you better give God the credit for your capacity to have the money and to save it.

So, God says, 'I'm going to show you that I'm the one who's giving you these things. And I'll bestow it on whosoever I will. [Daniel 4:33-37] "Immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled; and he was driven away from mankind and began eating grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven, until his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws. But at the end of that period I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom endures from generation to generation. And all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will, in the host of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, 'What hast Thou done?' At that time my reason returned to me. And my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom, and my counselors and my nobles began seeking me out; so I was reestablished in my sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me. Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise, exalt, and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride."

You have just heard Nebuchadnezzar's confession of faith in Christ. And someday you can discuss this in heaven with 'Ol' Nebby' and see what it felt like to have your hair long, (He probably put it in a ponytail. That's a fashionable thing to do.) and to have long clawy nails, and to find himself so humiliated. But he learned his lesson.

Well, I needn't remind you, the Archangel Lucifer wanted to be worshiped as God, and he was sentenced forever to the lake of fire. Isaiah 14:12-15 tell us about that rebellion. Isaiah 14:12-15, "How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You've been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations! But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven. I will raise my throne above the stars [the angels] of God, and I will sit on the mount of the assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will make myself like the Most High." [He was going to be God.] Nevertheless, you will be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit." God says, "You are going to be cast out." Matthew 25:41 said that God then prepared a place called the Lake of Fire for Satan because of this. Revelation 20:10 tells us the historical moment when he is cast into that lake.

So, here you have three major examples of what happens when you are willing to accept worship as a god. Don't ever let people make over you as something special. Keep forcing them to focus their attention upon Christ. That is where their wellbeing lies, not because you have become even a good agent perhaps, of some blessing to them.

The angel's rebuke, I might point out, is also a condemnation of religion, which directs adoration and prayer to a category of dead saints. The Roman Catholics praying to the Virgin Mary or to sainted individuals. Worship and prayer are not to go to dead people, though that is the way Christ is generally portrayed in Roman Catholic churches. But the religion that mankind invents for itself always has to have some means of worship. So they have statues, they have crosses, they have crucifixes, they have candles, they have incense, they have rosaries, they have rituals, they have altars, they have priests, they have garments, and they have stained glass windows. All of those things are designed in order to enable you to approach God. Yet, what does John 4:24 tell us? The true way of approaching God, John 4:24 says is "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship [Him] in spirit and truth." Roman Catholicism focuses on Mary. Every place in Eastern Europe, in the capital cities and the great cathedrals, where Mrs. Danish and I visited a few years ago, over the altar there was always one image. It was always the image of Mary. That was the focus. You came to that altar to pray, you looked to her; and that was the one that you prayed to. Christ was always secondary in some other position beneath her.

Only when we visited John Huss' church in Prague was that changed, because Huss, 100 years before Martin Luther, already had caught the vision of the truth of the gospel of Grace Salvation through Christ. So, in his church when we walked in, there was Christ, the great mosaic, above the altar in front; and it wasn't Mary. It was a dramatic contrast to all the other churches. So, John 4:24 says God is a spirit. You worship Him as a spirit, not through material objects.

When I asked one of the guides at the Mormon temple in in Salt Lake City about this verse, I said your prophet Joseph Smith says that God is a human being who has ascended to Godhood just as we other human beings will essentially become gods if we follow the path of Mormonism to our exaltation. I said, "But here is this verse. Have you ever you read this?" And these were three ladies, real nice, cordial ladies, and they read this and one of them said, "Gee, that's a good question." She said, "But I'll get the answer for you and we'll mail it to you." So, I dutifully gave them all my name and address. I'm going to have to call them tomorrow to see what's holding things up. It's been years now and I've had no communication from Salt Lake City about this verse and how God can be a spirit but Joseph Smith said he's a transformed human being. And Joseph Smith is only one hairline below being worshiped by the Mormons.

Worship God believers. Anything else is a delusion. And it's an affront to our creator God.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1989

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