***The Great Divide  
  
RV251-02***

**Eternal Gain or Loss**

Revelation 22:13-15. Our subject is the Great Divide. God the Holy Spirit is the divine author of the Book of the Revelation. The Holy Spirit has guided the apostle John who is the human author in writing an epilogue at the end of this book, in chapter 22:6-21. The Book of the Revelation is an inspired book inspired by God the Holy Spirit, and therefore it is inerrant and it is part of the New Testament Scriptures. The Book of the Revelation, we have found, is not to be kept secret, but is to be proclaimed to the people of God by the expository preaching of pastor-teachers.

Jesus says, that He will come quickly when the time arrives for His return to this earth. Those who are negative to the gospel, and specifically negative to the Book of the Revelation, indicate their unsaved condition. They are told just to go on in their choice of being sinful and morally filthy because they have no hope at the Lake of Fire. On the other hand, those who are positive to the revelation of this book are thereby signaling their born again status, and they are told to continue in their lifestyle of righteousness and holiness. They have the blessed hope of Heaven. Jesus says, furthermore, that He is coming to reward Christians for their works of divine good service. That happens at the Judgment Seat of Christ and it will either be a time of gain or time of loss.

**"I am the Alpha and Omega"**

So, we begin a new section this morning at verse 13. Verse 13 has 3 phrases in it. The first is I am the Alpha and the Omega. This phrase indicates that Jesus Christ, who is speaking here, is the eternal one. In the Greek language, the word I is put in as a separate word rather than just being part of the end of the verb. When it is put in a separate word, it's a way of emphasizing something in the Greek language. Here, Christ wants us to understand that we are to focus upon Him personally. He is specifically the one who is being spoken of here.

**The Eternality of Jesus Christ**

He says that He is the Alpha, which is the first letter of the Greek alphabet and looks just like this, "a," because it's just like the first letter of English alphabet, "a," which stresses the fact that Jesus Christ had no point of beginning. So when He says, "I am the Alpha," it means 'I never started. I never had a beginning. I am the eternal one. I have always been.' This letter is used to refer to eternity past. And it has the word "the" in front of it to emphasize the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as God. 'I am the beginning which never began. I am from the beginning. I always have been.' Furthermore, He says, "I am the Omega." That's the last letter of the Greek alphabet. It looks like that, "O," and it's comparable to the "Z" in the English alphabet, which stresses the fact that Jesus Christ has no ending because He is deity. This letter is used to refer to eternity future. And this also has "the" Omega, I am the end of it all. This stresses, again, the uniqueness of Christ as the God-man. He is the Alpha and the Omega. He exists from everlasting to everlasting, and as such, He is the creator God.

Psalm 90:2 speaks of it in this way, Psalm 90:2, "Before the mountains were born, Or Thou didst give birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God." Here it is speaking about the one who is the creator. We know from the New Testament that Jesus Christ was the one who did the work of creation. So, He is from everlasting to everlasting. And because of that, that is evidence that He is God. He is identified as the eternal God.

**The Essence of God**

God the Father also identifies Himself in this book as being the Alpha and the Omega, and thus is the Eternal One. We have this in Revelation 1:8 and Revelation 21:6 where God the Father says, 'I am the Eternal One; thus I am divine.' The Jews of the Old Testament were clearly taught that God was without beginning and without end; He had what is called eternal life, and He is the unique person. In Deuteronomy 6:4, we have the summation of what Jews believe. This is called the "Shema." The Jews are told to repeat this when they wake up in the morning and repeat this when they go to bed at night. It's called the "Shema" because that's the Hebrew word for "hear," which is the first word of this phrase. [Deuteronomy 6:4] "Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!" Literally what this says in Hebrew is "Hear O Israel! Yehweh our Gods!" It's "Elohim" in the Hebrew, which is a plural word! 'Our Gods are a unity!' 'Hear O Israel, Yahweh, our Gods, is Yahweh, are unity.' What it means is that God is a Trinity. So, here in the very language of the Hebrew Bible, which always gave a problem and does give a problem to the Jews, who do not believe that there is a Holy Spirit and that there is Jesus as the Son in the deity, they have a problem with why he uses the word for God in the plural. It is because he is telling us that the Godhead is made up of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three persons who are a Trinity. Yet it says, "Our God is one. He is the unity, which means He is one in essence, the three persons are one God because they all have the same essence. The members of the Trinity are coequal, co-eternal, but they have different offices in the Godhead. They have different positions that they serve in the Godhead. But they think alike, they act alike, they feel alike, they are a total unity. And Jesus Christ is included in this plurality of the Godhead. Therefore, He is 'very God of very God' as the theologians like to put it.

So, when Jesus says here, "I am, the Alpha and the Omega," He is indicating to us that He is the Eternal One. And therefore we have another one of those clear evidences in the Bible that Jesus Christ claims to be God. No matter what the liberals like to say, He does claim to be God, and He has proven Himself to be that.

**"The First and the Last"**

The second phrase is "the first and the last." When it says, "Christ is the first," it means that He is the preeminent one of the universe. As the God-man, Jesus Christ is the only celebrity in mankind. He is the origin of creation. And He is the origin of salvation. He is the first great ultimate cause.

Secondly, He says, 'I am also the last.' Jesus Christ will, at the end of human history, still be the preeminent one of all mankind around whom everything will revolve. Jesus will, in the end, be the judge of all mankind in order to tie up all that is evil in the universe. Christ's position as the final judge again stresses to us His deity. He is the one who started it all. He is the one who is going to tie it all up and get it all straightened up again.

**"The Beginning and the End"**

The third phrase is that He is "the beginning and the end." The beginning indicates that Jesus Christ is the originator, the creator of the world. Christ created all that exists and He now holds it together by His divine power. Colossians 1:15-17 tell us that. So Jesus is the first great cause of everything. Before Christ, there was nothing. Then He stepped in and out of nothing, by His spoken word, He brought into existence all the universe and all life forms as we know them. Jesus Christ is also the beginning of salvation for believers. Without Him, we have nothing in the way of hope for eternal life; with Him, we have everything.

Then He says, that He is "the end." That is, He brings His creation to its destined divine purpose. It got all fouled up with Satan. Adam and Eve contributed to it. It became a terrible mess and it's a terrible mess today. But Christ says, 'I began it. I'm going to end it; and I will get it all straightened out at the end.' He is in control of His creation from start to finish, no matter the disruptions of evil along the way from people and from angels. All things are now under the sovereign control of Jesus because He is God. Hebrews 1:2 tells us that He is the heir of all things.

**Jesus Christ Claims Deity!**

These 3 statements could not be claimed by anybody except somebody who is God. There's nobody here in this room who can say "I am the Alpha and the Omega." No one here could say "I am the first and the last." No one here could say "I am the beginning and the end."

**Man's Blasphemous Claims**

So you see how blasphemous and ludicrous the New Age concept is today of man being a potential deity. How satanic is the religion of Hinduism, which says, "That man is god and he is evolving through various reincarnations into returning to the nothingness of perfection that he once was. You can see how grossly satanic is the Mormon system, which teaches people that they may progress through the Mormon system of theology and rituals to the point where they will be elevated to godhood. It is something to sit and look into the eyes of someone who is sitting across from you and saying that I'm on my way to godhood, and if I live a proper and good life and prove myself worthy, [that's the key word with Mormons, to prove yourself worthy,] then you will become a god. But you see, that is totally blasphemous. None of those people are "Alpha and Omega"s; they are not eternal, they all had a beginning. None of us is the "first and the last;" we are not the ultimate cause of everything. And none of us cause the beginning of everything at the end of everything; we are not creators. So Jesus Christ can rightfully describe Himself in this way. He does here at the end of the book to stress once more that what we have heard from Him and this vision is the Word of God.

**The Blessing of Salvation**

In verse 14, we come to the blessing of salvation. First of all, the qualified: the word blessed. This is a word that is used to introduce what we call a benediction. It looks like this in the Greek Bible: makarios, m a k a r i o s. In Matthew 5 we have what we call the Beatitudes. Jesus said, blessed, blessed, blessed is this. He goes through a series of blessings. What this means is that the word is introducing a promise of a certain divine blessings, and this happens to be the seventh one, and the last of which is to be found in the Book of the Revelation. We have looked at these before. I'll just mention them to you once more. Seven times the book stops and uses this word, "makarios," to say blessed. That's a signal that something very, very stupendous is being promised. You have this in Revelation 1:3, 14:13, 16:15, 19:9, 20:6, 22:7, and 21:14. And 21:14 is where we are now. This is the seventh, the last of the beatitudes in this book. These beatitudes are among what we list as the 7,000 promises that are given in the Bible for believers to use in this life.

You must remember, however, one thing about these 7,000 promises, which are very important, that you keep picking up and learning as you see them in the Scriptures. Here's one of them right here in this 14th verse. This is one of those promises. You can only use these promises in this life. You can't take them to Heaven. Once you die, the 7,000 promises are wiped out of any benefit. They're only a benefit to you here in this life, on this earth. So, therefore, the promises of God are one of the things that carry us through the week. They're the things that carry us through our lives. They are the things that enable us to keep our orientation and our head screwed on straight. Promises of the Word of God are extremely important.

So, here is one of the promises, a blessed special recognition of divine care and blessing "are those who wash their robes." The word "wash" here refers to an act of cleansing from some kind of defilement, and it is stated in such a way that it is a personal act. Blessed are those who have taken responsibility to wash their robes. The word for robe looks like this in the Greek Bible: stole, s t o l e. This refers to the outer garment as people wore in those days, just what we think of as a robe. The robes worn here signify one's spiritual status with God and one's qualification for Heaven.

This robe is viewed as a garment of God's absolute righteousness, which He gives us at the point of salvation. And it pictures us as taking off the old garment of our sin and having it washed and having the stains and the filthy sins that are on that washed by the blood of Jesus Christ so that we ourselves now have been cleansed from all the evil that once characterized us. And it is viewed as taking off that old garment of the dead sin nature and putting on a new garment of the nature of God. We do this, of course, by believing in Christ the Savior. This is what we refer to as the gospel of free grace salvation. You cannot earn this. You cannot merit this. You cannot deserve this. You can only receive it as a gift from God. But this is what God says, 'I will give you a bright, brand new clean garment to put on representing your spiritual status with me. You can take off that filthy garment that you were born with and that you have added to all your life and discarded it.' And it's swapping the garment of God's righteousness for the garment of our unrighteousness. When we observe that, "blessed are those who wash their robes," that tells us immediately that mankind is divided into two categories: the saved, and the lost.

Some people don't like to hear that kind of talk; but the truth of the matter is that some are going to Heaven, and some are not. Those who pass through death without believing the gospel of Jesus Christ will stand before Him in a life garment that is stained with unforgiven sin and they will be doomed to the Lake of Fire. There is no second chance once you stand before Him clothed in what the Bible describes as your own filthy rags. Those filthy rags are your best human righteousness. Filthy rags referred to in Isaiah 64:6 refers to your best human effort: not your terrible sins, not your ugliness, not the awful things that people do, this is the best that you can do. The Bible says it's a filthy rag. It's very strong language incidentally, in the Hebrew language.

**Every Human Being's Supreme Concerns**

Along with the final emphasis on earning rewards for service that we had in verse 12, isn't it interesting that the second thing stressed as this letter closes is personal salvation? That's the two things God the Holy Spirit says, 'now let's close this book. I'm putting this epilogue to the thing. And there's two things I want you to be aware of. There are two things that are the supreme concern of every human being: and that is a right relationship to Christ the Savior, so you have on a garment of perfect purity; and secondly, that your life has been invested in divine good works, so that you may receive rewards in Heaven. That's the name of the game. This is your life. Your life is to be saved and to serve.'

If your life is only peripherally attuned to that and engaged in that, you're losing your life. That's what the Bible means by gaining the whole world and losing your own life. Here at the very end of this book, that important point is once more stressed: get saved, recognize your spiritual gift, and then start spending time serving with that ability. And all those natural gifts you were born with, you didn't get that as a spiritual gift. You just happened to be born genetically with a certain ability to do certain things.

There is the spiritual gift of ministering. And I'm inclined to believe that every Christian, whatever other gift he may have of those nine gifts, he has this one, the gift of ministering, that gift of service. And there God takes your natural abilities and sanctifies them under the gift of service. So, it comes under that gift of ministering: that natural ability as a craftsman, that natural ability as a skilled technician in one way or another, that natural ability to be a performer, a musician, or an artist. All of the things that we may be born with, when we take them and say this is for God's service, He sanctifies that by the gift of ministry. So, you see, there is no limit to what you and I are capable of doing, both by the spiritual gifts we get at salvation and those natural abilities that we sanctify under the gift of ministering.

All of mankind, however, is divided into the saved and lost conditions. Of all the important doctrines of God, these two are what the Holy Spirit stresses at the very end: salvation and service for rewards. God the Holy Spirits' final word for all mankind is get saved and earn rewards as treasures in Heaven by your service to God.

**God's Washings of Us**

The Bible uses this idea of washing for cleansing in a variety of ways here in the Bible. I'll just mention them. In Ephesians 5:26, he speaks about the washing of the Word of God. When you read the Bible and you have positive volition for it, it cleanses your soul, it cleanses your mind. It cleanses your whole being just reading the Bible. That's why it's important to read the Bible. It's the same thing as you getting up in the morning and brushing your teeth and washing your face and periodically taking a bath. That's important for your personal hygiene. So, the spiritual hygiene has to do with reading the Word of God. Every time you read the Scripture, you're washing yourself. You're getting rid of all the world systems viewpoint. It's very hard for us not to start acting like the rest of humanity, but to stand alone on the basis of what is right in the eyes of God. So there is the washing that comes by the Word of God.

Titus 3:5 speaks about the washing of regeneration. When we are regenerated, as we are made spiritually alive, that is an act of divine washing.

There's also the washing from sin by the blood of Christ. 1 John 1:7 and Revelation 7:13-14 speak about our being washed in the blood of the lamb.

And fourth, there is a washing unto sanctification and justification spoken of in 1 Corinthians 6:11. God washes us so that we are set apart, that's what sanctified means, and we are justified, we have absolute righteousness imputed to us.

**The Privileges of Being Washed**

Now the rest of this verse tells us the privileges that belong to those who have washed their robes from the filthiness of sin to the purity of Christ. He tells us we do this, [continuing in Revelation 22:14] "that they may have the right." This word "right" looks like this in the Greek Bible, it is the Greek word "exousia". What it means is authority: you may have the authority to do something. We translate this "in order that the authority of them will be." What is the authority that it will be? The full authority for all of you who are saved. When you have the purity of your garments on you of God's righteousness, then you have the right to eat of the tree of life. This tree of life we have looked at in the garden of the New Jerusalem: it has 12 different monthly sustaining fruits, and its leaves create a well-being in the physical structure and spiritual life of the saints. So, we have, first of all, the right to the Tree of Life with all its herbal healing therapeutic qualities, and all the fruit for its physical sustaining and spiritually sustaining qualities.

Furthermore, when you have those cleansed robes on, you have the authority to "enter by the gates into the city." This refers to the 12 gates of the New Jerusalem, which is the eternal home of the redeemed. And the saved have the blessed right of entry into God's Heaven, the New Jerusalem. Somebody said 'you mean we'll come out of the New Jerusalem. I said, 'yes.' This person said, 'Where will we go?' And I said, 'well, this thing is probably going to be hovering above the earth, but it is huge. It's 1,500 miles in all directions. The new earth is going to be there. And it's going to be functioning. It's going to be a terrific place. The whole earth is going to be one huge Garden of Eden.' So, you can go there, you can roam around the earth, and furthermore, you can go out to outer space. Those of you who are Trekkie fans, you're going to be out there with all those wonderful programs you watch on TV. You're going to be right out there floating around with the people who are able to move out into outer space. So, you're going to have plenty of places to go, plenty of things to see in the New Jerusalem. But in the era of eternity, the New Jerusalem will always be your home base. That is where you will come back to.

These two rights, to eat of the Tree of Life, and to live in the New Jerusalem, are irrevocable once a person is born again spiritually. Remember what we said your glorification is? Glorification is you're getting a resurrected body and you can live with God forever. That's exactly what this is telling you again. And I want to stress to you, that the point at the end of this book is to tell you, Christian, you're going to be glorified. We need to be reminded of that. We get all kinds of problems in our lives. So, we wonder where we are going and what's happening. Well, what's happening is you're getting closer and closer to your glorification. So, we come in and out of this New Jerusalem and we wear our pure robes of white and we are enjoying our total sanctification.

**Those Excluded From the New Jerusalem**

Then in verse 15, we have a list of those who are excluded from the New Jerusalem. "Outside" - this refers to outside the city of the New Jerusalem. Some human beings are inside the New Jerusalem with full authority by virtue of their regeneration to eat of the Tree of Life and to go in and out of the city. Some human beings are restricted from the New Jerusalem by virtue of their lack of regeneration. So, here again, we have that distinction that there are saved people and unsaved people. The majority of the human race from the time of Adam will be left outside the New Jerusalem.

This word "outside" in verse 15 does not apply to you and me. It does apply to most human beings from the time of Adam onward. We are told this by Jesus Himself in Matthew 7:13-14. It is true. And when you think of a city that is in the shape of a cube and it's 1,500 miles in each direction, that's an enormous amount of space with plenty of wide gracious lots and mansions for people to have on their on their property to live in. So, you might say 'that seems like an awful lot of people are going to make it.' It will, but not compared to all who have ever lived. Multiplied billions more will be in the Lake of Fire. I can assure you that the Lake of Fire is infinitely larger than the New Jerusalem. The majority of the human race will not make it. Their names will not be found written in the Lamb's Book of Life of Revelation 21:27.

But again, when it says "outside," you must not think that the unsaved are hanging around outside the New Jerusalem wall, wishing they could get in, and trying to figure out how to climb over. They're not there. They're outside because they're in the Lake of Fire. That's what Revelation 20:15 tells us, that these people now have been sent to a lake of fire and in that sense, they're outside of the New Jerusalem.

John's angel guide makes it clear thus, that some people enter the New Jerusalem, others cannot. The determining factor is whether one has trusted in Christ for salvation by believing the gospels.

And keep your cotton picking hands off of it [the Gospel] by trying to improve it with your works or your human good offerings. You just believe the gospel. You don't look to some church to spray its holy water on you and go through some ritual and say special prayers. You just trust in Christ and you accept the fact that He has covered your sins. You may be very sincere in adding something to your salvation, but that does not go with God. Your sincerity, and your religion will not qualify you for the New Jerusalem. There are a lot of people who do not like the idea that most people will not be in Heaven. They feel that if you are sincere, even in the wrong religion, God will recognize that and He will take you into His Heaven. There is no regeneration for those people who are in false religions; and if you are not spiritually alive, you cannot live in the New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem is not a place for dead people.

**Characteristics of Those Excluded**

Those who are not going to be in this New Jerusalem, but who are going to be in the Lake of Fire, have seven basic characteristics. That's what we have in verse 15.

**Unbelievers Characterized as "Dogs"**

They are, first of all, called dogs: the Greek word is "kuon," k u o n. In the ancient world, dogs were held in contempt as scavengers. They were not looked upon as house pets, but they were viewed as dirty little creatures. In Deuteronomy 23:17-18, the word dog is applied to the male prostitutes at the temple worship of the Pagans. Deuteronomy 23:17-18, "None of the daughters of Israel shall be a cult prostitute, nor shall any of the sons of Israel be a cult prostitute." The Jews were forbidden to worship God by sexual acts. This is the way the pagans, including the Greeks and the Romans, worshipped their gods, by temple prostitution, male and female. Verse 18 says, "You shall not bring the hire of a harlot [that is a female prostitute] or the wages of a dog [a male prostitute], into the house of the LORD your God for any votive offering, for both of these are an abomination to the LORD your God." You will not come to your temple and pay a female prostitute for her services and say, 'This is my worship offering to God.' You will not come and pay a male prostitute, which is called a dog here, and say 'the money I give him is my offering to God.' You see how perverted that is?

A male prostitute included 3 things. It was not only the fact that it was fornication, it was also perversion. It was homosexuality and it was bestiality, so that in the ancient world, homosexuals were called dogs. Those who practice bestiality were called dogs. These were perversions of God's order for use of sex. The Jews wisely and properly associated the gentiles with this temple prostitute system of worship. So, they just applied the word "dogs" to gentiles as a whole. Isaiah himself warns against introducing this abominable practice of worship through prostitution into the Temple of God. The Jews just couldn't wait to do that. In time, they did, actually having the same practice that they did at the heathen temple.

So, the term dog here in Revelation 22:15 refers to those who are unsaved. They are malicious persons. Calling someone a dog is an expression of great contempt even today. Gentiles, as a group, were viewed as dogs by the Jews; and dogs in the Bible are a symbol of the contemptible, impure, and shameless. Notice Proverbs 26:11: "Like a dog that returns to its vomit is a fool who repeats his folly." Obviously, here's a description of a dog, which is not complimentary. Here a dog is something that is shameless, it is contemptible, it is disgusting. Here, this dog had a good meal, he throws it up, and he goes back to check it, and eat it again, to see if he missed anything good the first time. And the Bible says, that's what a fool is: he repeats his folly, he keeps eating the same things, the folly that he's regurgitated before; and therefore he is compared to being a dog. Matthew 7:6 also compares spiritual foolishness to being a dog. In the New Testament, people of low moral quality under the domination of the Old Sin Nature were in general viewed as being dogs. Philippians 3:2 says, "Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware the false circumcision." What is Paul referring to; he's referring to these gentiles, unbelievers with their temple prostitution, he says 'you know who I'm talking about, beware of those dogs.' It's a contemptible term and unbelievers are characterized by that. So, they are outside the city.

**Unbelievers Characterized as "Sorcerers"**

Another group outside the city are called "sorcerers." The Greek word for sorcerer looks like this: "pharmakos," p h a r m a k o s. You can see that's the word for drugs. We get our word "pharmacy" from that.

These are people who use drugs in the worship and contact with demon spirits. They perform ceremonies with drugs in the process of worshiping Satan and the demons. They do that today. Primitive societies have regularly taken certain drugs that they have found in nature in order to have an extra sensory perception experience and in the process of which they are out of themselves worshiping their gods.

**Unbelievers Characterized as "Immoral"**

The next group is the immoral persons. The Greek word for that looks like this: "pornos," p o r n o s. As you can see, we get our English word pornography from this word, immoral people. It means fornication and other sexual sins.

So, violators of God's moral laws regulating sexual activity are not going to be in the New Jerusalem. The homosexual is an abomination to God. Prostitution is an abomination to God. Bestiality, sex with animals, is an abomination to God. It's one of the most disgusting things to the mind of the Almighty.

This is not to say that a Christian cannot be these things. So, don't go beyond what Scripture says. Scripture says that this is a characteristic of unbelievers; this is a general lifestyle. A person might be a believer and be struggling with these sins, like any believer may struggle with the temptation to be sexually impure. It's not going to affect your salvation, but it is sure going to affect your walking with God, your blessing. It will bring discipline upon you from God Himself.

But generally, those who receive this willingly as a lifestyle, the pornos strain, are characterized by the fact that they are unbelievers; they are out of the circuit of salvation.

**Unbelievers Characterized as "Murderers"**

The next group are murderers: this is the "phoneus," p h o n e u s. This is willful, premeditated taking of an innocent life. A widespread example of this in our society today is abortion, which, as you know, we have shown you, the Bible declares to be an act of murder.

**Abortion is Murder**

You have one of your handouts today that deals with that subject. By all means, read it carefully. The liberals are trying to jump on the Christian because some anti-abortionists have decided to take the law into their own hands and kill abortionists as retaliation for killing the babies. Well, both acts are murder! They are both acts of murder and they are both unlawful. The fact that the abortionist is committing murders hundreds of times a year does not justify you performing the same act of murder. It is unlawful for you.

God gives life and only God can tell you when to end a life. You cannot end it by suicide and you cannot end it because you decide to do it, for any other reason, for any other person. So, this business of being a murderer is a very serious thing. It characterizes those who are unbelievers.

We have shown you from the incident in Exodus 21:22-23, where the woman was struck and it brought about a premature birth, and the Bible makes it clear that if all that happens, the man who did it would pay a fine. He would receive a certain punishment in that way. But it indicated that if the child was born dead as a result of that blow, or if the wife, the mother, died as a result of that blow, then it would be life for life. That's what the Bible says, life for life. You cannot read that passage in Exodus 21:22-23 and come up with any other conclusion than that abortion is pure, unadulterated murder.

Psalm 139:13-16 also stresses that every conception is an act of God and the forming of a child is the creative work of God. And you cannot escape that abortion is interrupting the creative work of God by an act of murder.

So, God gives life and God takes life by natural means or by execution with constituted laws, but not by suicide or abortion.

**Unbelievers Characterized by "Idolatry"**

The next group that has a certain characteristic as unbelievers, is the idolaters: it's a long Greek word: "eidololatres," e i d o l o l a t r e s, those who worship idols. They make some image or they take something out of nature, the sun, moon and stars, and they proceed to worship that as their god. This is always an act of blasphemy and it is a characteristic of any religion that Satan invents. The greatest insult of all, of course, is in Hinduism, for man himself to claim to be God. That is the height of blasphemy. People who are New Agers, which is the western form of Hinduism, all believe that they're becoming gods and they are not. To claim that is an act of great, great blasphemy.

**Unbelievers Characterized by One "Who Loves and Practices Lying"**

Then: "everyone who loves and practices lying." Everyone, every single one, who "loves." The word is "phileo," p h i l e o. "phileo" is the word for love in the Greek Bible for an emotional attachment. The Greek word indicates this is their constant practice. It is active: it is their own personal emotional attachment. The principle stated here is what they do is with great emotion. They practice something and they do it constantly. What they practice is "pseudos," p s e u d o s. It means "a lie." It follows the pattern of deceit, which is characteristic of Satan, which is found in John 8:44. Satan has deceived all mankind about God from Adam onwards. Revelation 12:9 tells us that; he has deceived all nations. How does he do that? By not telling them the truth. That is a way of life for unbelievers, the primary quality of those who are unfit for Heaven. Some unbelievers are just innately liars. If they're going down to Eckerd's [drug store] or to Minyard’s [grocery store], and you say, where are you going? They'll give you a different answer because they don't really care if you know, but they just have to lie. They are just inherent liars.

This is a terrible characteristic for Christians to have. We are specifically warned to stop this Old Sin Nature unsaved condition practice. You see, all of these things are characteristic of unbelievers. Lying is one of them that is characteristic of unbelievers; they just do it naturally. These six evil qualities are characteristic of those who are unsaved and thus they are not qualified to enter the New Jerusalem.

**The Eternality of Salvation**

In view of this, since we're not all that hot as human beings, is it possible that we can have some question of uncertainty? Some people mistakenly believe that a born again Christian can remove himself from God's grasp so that he can be lost again? Some believe that a carnal Christian in reversionism who denies his previous faith in Christ is lost again or never was saved. I had a man one time who said 'I used to be a very staunch, firm fundamentalist.' He is married to a lady who attended our church and she told me what a zealous Bible reading Christian he was. And she said 'and now he doesn't believe it anymore.' When I talked to him, he says, 'Yes, after talking with my father and my brother and logically thinking this through, I decided that they were right and I was wrong. The Bible was not true about this.' How are we going to explain that man? Well, you have two ways. He is a true believer who is now out of fellowship with God, or he never was a Christian in the first place. It so happens that in the case of this man, he was a true believer, but he was now denying Christ.

**A Believer's Glorification is Based on God's Faithfulness**

Does a believer's glorification, as in the case of this man, depend upon his human faithfulness, or does it depend on God's faithfulness? This business of our being raised with a resurrected, glorified body and spending eternity with God in the New Jerusalem, how dependent is that upon us? How shaky is the ground upon which we stand? Well, the answer is to be found in three verses of a hymn that was sung in the New Testament church, which we have recorded in 2 Timothy 2:11-13. I'd like to tie up our thinking this morning with that hymn.

2 Timothy 2:11-13 is a hymn expressing gratitude to God, expressing God's faithfulness, first of all, for our salvation. Verse 11 says it is a trustworthy statement! This phrase is literally in the Greek "faithful is the word." That's what it says. Faithful is the word. The word is the written Bible. The Bible is God's viewpoint and His purposes are transmitted to us in that Bible without any error. So, the Bible is trustworthy in what it says because it is inspired by God. The believer has died with Christ positionally. So, he has, in fact, in Christ, paid for his death penalty. The believer does not feel anything when he is saved, generally. If he does, it has nothing to do with his salvation. Positional death with Jesus Christ can be neutralized by the absolute power of the Old Sin Nature. Romans 6:17 tells us that we are by nature enslaved in the Old Sin Nature. All the evil that we're guilty of in the way of sins and human good, comes from the Old Sin Nature. But the believer is released from this domination and that is the promise of this word. [2 Timothy 2:11] "If we died with Him;" and this "if" is a first class condition in the Greek, which can be translated "since." 'Since we did die with Him,' with Christ. When did you die with Christ? When you trusted Him as Savior. Suddenly, God sees you on the cross, in Christ. So, the believer is dead with Christ and therefore he now has the capacity to be dead to all the evil appeals of the Old Sin Nature within him. The Old Sin Nature is still present after salvation, but it can be overpowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit, Romans 6:14. It is the filling of the Holy Spirit and the application of doctrine that overrides the lust pattern of the Old Sin Nature. This is why, you will discover, that if you die with Christ, you really lose your taste for the things of the world. And the promise is if you die with Him, you will also live with Him. Having trusted in Him, you are on the cross, you're going to have glorification; but you will lose your taste for the world.

I have a hard time understanding Christians who go to movies on a weekly basis. I'm one of the last good time boys around the world. But there's nothing entertaining in the movie world that I can see from the papers. And anything that I ever did have occasion to see is on TV. There has to be something filthy about one's soul when you attend movies on a regular basis. You can't do it; because it's not out there. That's just one little example.

There are all kinds of things of the world system. You can't be immersed in it and say, "Hey, I'm walking with the Lord. I'm tuned in to temporal fellowship. I am associated with Christ. I'm showing you that I have died with Him.' You haven't died to anything! Positionally you have died, but are you living with Him? Some day you will live with Him and all that will be put behind. Why would anybody say I can do something with God's people or I can do something with the world and immerse myself in filth? It's done all the time by Christians; and some of them can't handle it. They begin acting more and more like the world. They become more and more self-centered. They become more and more self-oriented. Selfishness is the name of the game in everything they do, and then they try to hide it.

Since believers have died with Christ, they will most certainly be raised to live with Him. They will share His eternal life. Dying and living with Christ forever are two of the fantastic things which are done for the believer.

**"Super Grace" Spiritual Maturity**

We know that we have these blessed conditions on the basis of Scripture, not on the basis of our feelings. Because the Word of God, the Bible, is always trustworthy, we know that we have death with Christ and we will have life with Him. The death/life occurrence opens a whole new horizon to the believer's life. Life for that Christian has new priorities, new purposes, new prospects. Everything is new. It has new purposes, new realities, new priorities, new prospects. You don't keep moving along with the same old life. It is possible to serve God on an awesome plane of fellowship in reality. Just because you have died with Him, you can really live with Him. That's what Paul meant: 'For me to live is Christ. For me to die is Christ. Either way, I'm united with Him.' It is possible to live on an awesome plane. We call this life the "super grace level." Not too many Christians ever get there. A lot of arrogant types think they have, but not too many get there.

Whatever lack, or purpose, or significance our lives have had before, once we enter this death/life relationship, everything changes for time and eternity. So, the Christian can avoid trivializing his life span with the things of the world.

**Believers Rewarded for Divine Good Done**

2 Timothy 2:12, "If we endure, we shall also reign with Him." This word "If," this first class condition, 'since we endure, we shall also reign with Him.' This verse deals with God's faithfulness in rewarding believers for divine good works done. "If we endure, we shall also reign with Him;" this has to do with rewards for Christian service. It does not refer to the means for faithful service; that is the filling of the Holy Spirit, Ephesians 5:18. It is living by the principles of doctrine. This verse indicates that there are two returns on a Christian's life resulting from two kinds of service. One kind brings rewards; the other kind brings lots of rewards. This verse does not refer to salvation, which is not earned by works but is received as a gift. So, a Christian has the assurance of ultimate glorification, but he does not have the assurance of ultimate rewards. If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. The "reign" here is, of course, a Christian being given a throne and a realm of authority in the millennial temple.

This word endures, "hupomeno," h u p o m e n o, in the Greek, means to endure in spite of one's circumstances, very interesting word. If we gut it out, we shall reign with Him in spite of our circumstances. This is more than just suffering for Christ. This is the pressure that people bring on you, the pressure your family brings on you, the pressure that other believers will bring on you, the pressure that comes from Christian service, the pressure from finances so you can pay the church bills and the school bills, the pressure that comes from society who refers to you as the contemptible Christian right. The Christian is not to be the discouraged or sidetracked from his mission of using his spiritual gifts and his means, just because of this. Since we endure, we are going to reign with Him. We keep on with our daily intake of the word. Our eyes are on the Lord, we stay in temporal fellowship. Let nothing become a barrier to your effective service for God.

God Himself supplies the power and the determination to endure. So relax by using his 7,000 promises. God does not remove the pressure of service, but He gives us the poise and stability to cope and to keep serving. You got it? He doesn't take the fight off of you, but He gives you the means to handle it. Philippians 4:19: "And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." That's a trustworthy saying too!

**Endurance Insures Reward**

So a positive volition Christian, to God's purpose, brings great glory to God because it enables God to manifest His grace in our struggles. God is aware of the believer who waits upon Him to supply and to enable. We do not resort to seeing the psychiatrist witchdoctors, or any other human gimmicks in order to make it. We endure by the Word and our eyes on the Lord. Enduring insures our being rewarded with a throne and a realm of authority in the Millennial Kingdom. None of us deserve such future authority. God's grace makes us potential rulers, and for that He gets the credit.

Not every believer capitalizes on what God has provided for an enriched eternity. The rest of the verse says, "If we deny Him," and it's that first class condition, 'since we deny Him, some of us, He also will deny us.' Those who believe in losing salvation, like to grab this verse and say, 'See, you never were saved.' [But he's talking to believers here.] Some Christians deny Christ by serving their own interests; a lot of us do. And they lose their life potential for rewards. God's justice then, denies rewards for those who neglect their mission. They know ignore the Word and that's what He says. If you don't stand by me, Christ says, 'I will deny rewards to you.' All have an equal chance to be winners, but you can choose to be a loser.

Both lines in verse 12, you have a condition and a result. The denial is not related to salvation, and a Christian under no condition can lose his glorification. That's what I want to stress to you. Even when you say no, 'I don't believe in Him anymore,' then what? If we deny him, He will not deny us!

Verse 13, another first class condition, "If" 'since we are faithless.' Now, that's the man that I described to you. Some believers may become faithless toward Jesus Christ, a result of being out of temporal fellowship but not out of eternal fellowship. You can be terribly faithless. So stop talking about people not being saved because they act like dogs. They're still saved, they're just out of temporal fellowship.

The man I referred to earlier, sometime later he came to me and said, 'I changed my mind. I was right in the first place. The Bible is true.' He swung all the way back to being faithful to Christ again. But he spent time out in the desert. He finally came back to his senses. He never was out of destiny of glorification. But out of fellowship will bring discipline. Hebrews 12:5-11, God will beat you and He will deny you the things of your heart.

**God is Faithful**

Denying faith in Christ is a slap in the face of God. But Jesus Christ must remain faithful to His own saving work, which He has done.

The last part of verse 13 says, "He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself." He has given you grace salvation. He has promised you that all depends upon Him. You accepted it in genuine, bonafide faith. You may turn your back upon Him, but He cannot deny what He has done in you through His grace salvation. So, stop insulting God by telling Him that some people are just so bad, they obviously were never saved in the first place. Christ cannot deny what He is. When He gives grace salvation, He stands by it.

So, that is our assurance of glorification for the worst of us. It doesn't depend on our conduct, but only on the Lord. Jesus is always faithful to His promise to save; that's because He's immutable. Confession of our known sin brings us back into temporal fellowship. Eternal Fellowship was never a question. God never reneges on His saving work. He never throws a believing sinner overboard. The one who trusts in Christ at some point in time gets eternal life. It cannot be terminated by our unfaithfulness. So, even if a Christian stops believing the gospel, rejects God, denounces the Bible, attacks the Christians, God remains faithful to His own character and to His rebellious child. He cannot deny the salvation He has given him.

So, the Christian in the worst of conditions has a basis for peace, happiness and stability, because we're always on solid ground, heading for our glorification. Divine good production and effective service for God with consequence rewards is what's at stake. Stay with us.

**Benediction**

Father, we thank You for this admonition of Thy Word. We pray that we shall rise to be able to understand it. We thank Thee that Thou cannot deny what Thou has done in us. We pray that we shall not deny it either.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1989

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