***The Sea of Glass  
  
RV80-01***

We are studying Revelation 4. We now move to a new section as we look at the subject of worship in the throne room. This is segment number one.

The apostle John was shown in a vision world conditions in the seven years which will precede the return of Jesus Christ to this earth. The conditions which are revealed in a major part of the revelation indicate that it is going to be a world under the control of human viewpoint. The world, centuries after John, was to be a world which was completely perverted by Satan politically, socially, economically, and religiously under a one-world government authority. That, apparently, would be brought about in large measure because the world would come to a point where a powerful figure would control the source of energy, the source of money, and the source of food. Anyone in the world who controls energy, money, and food can do anything he wants with the rest of humanity. There are, of course, powerful forces in our world today which are zeroing in on precisely those three factors. But John sees the consequence of a world with that kind of united control. Above it all is Satan motivating and moving those who are in charge.

Before such tragedy strikes mankind, the body of Christ (the church), of which you and I are a part, is removed in mass from the earth. John experiences a preview of that removal, which we call the rapture. He experiences a preview in his vision of that very thing, and finds himself, as we shall find ourselves, in God's heavenly throne room. So he has been describing for us, in Revelation 4, what he sees when he enters that throne room.

**The Seven Flaming Torches**

We have just completed the section on the ministry of the Holy Spirit, where John has seen God the Holy Spirit under the symbol of seven flaming torches. We have identified these torches from Isaiah 11:2, which gives us the description of the sevenfold Ministry of God the Holy Spirit, to the humanity of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, which same ministry is applied to our humanity by the Holy Spirit today.

1. **Jehovah ("YHWH")**

These seven torches represented, first of all, the torch of Jehovah. That is the torch of the indwelling deity that the Spirit of God, who indwells us, is "very God."

1. **Wisdom**

The torch of wisdom meant that we have been supplied by the Spirit of God with a divine viewpoint set of values, and this set of values has been recorded in such books as the book of Proverbs (these sections that are called the wisdom literature). The set of values that you find in Proverbs is a set of values which is not shared by the world in general, and which is not understood. But only Christians can really enter into them. They touch on all kinds of human relationships, all of which bring personal prosperity. That is the invaluable torch of wisdom.

1. **Understanding**

Then there was the torch of understanding, which means that God the Holy Spirit gives us discernment. He gives us spiritual discernment so that we can distinguish what is going on. We can distinguish what is going on in people, and what is going on in circumstances about us. We can divide that which is of God, and that which is of Satan.

1. **Counsel**

Then there was the torch of counsel – the divine viewpoint advice in life. All of us come to the point where we need advice. We need somebody to give us guidance. We do need a counselor. The best counselor in all the world, if you're capable of receiving His counsel, is the counsel of the indwelling Holy Spirit through the Word of God. If you are not able to function in the spiritual status, and you do not have a grasp of the principles of doctrine, then you have to go to human counselors, and you will have to seek the counsel of men. But if you have the working of the torch of the counsel of the Spirit of God, you will find that you come up with most of the answers that anybody else could lead you to or help you to find. The human counselor fades into the background as a very minimal factor in the life of the believer.

1. **Might**

Then there is the torch of might. This is divine power in living God's plan for one's life. It is the ability to execute God's plan.

1. **Knowledge**

Then there's the torch of knowledge. That is Bible doctrine information in the human spirit. He is our teacher, and He teaches us the information of knowledge.

1. **The Fear of the Lord**

Then the seventh torch is the torch of the fear of the Lord, which represents a reverential awe of God's holiness and of God's power.

**The Sea of Glass**

Now, beginning at verse 6, John's attention is drawn to something which is spread out before the Father's throne. Verse 6 says, "And before the throne, there was a sea of glass like crystal." The word "before" is the Greek word "enopios." This is an adjective, and it means "face-to-face – in the presence of." Here the word connotes "directly in front of God the Father's throne in heaven." We've seen God the Father's throne in heaven. Now here is something that John spots directly in front of the throne, spreading out from before the throne. And he does say specifically, "Before the throne," and we have the same word we had before: "thronos." This refers to the throne which has been spoken of here in the context of Revelation 4:1-5. It is referring to the seat of God's sovereign authority. This is where we get the phrase that we delight to repeat, that: "God is still on the throne." This is the throne that we are referring to – this specific throne here in God's heaven from which He exercises full sovereign authority.

Before this particular throne, John observed something which catches his attention at this point. The words "there was" do not appear in the Greek text. But you do have a word in the Greek text. It's this word "hos" that is important to observe. This is what we call a relative adverb. It indicates the idea of manner. We would translate it as "like as." This indicates that John is going to explain something he sees, not in actual terms, but he's going to explain it by comparing it to something.

There is a great deal that takes place in the Revelation that is so absolutely staggering, that it is hard for someone who lived 2,000 years ago to be describing it in terms that would be intelligible centuries later, or that he could convey within the capacities that they had in those days of scientific understanding, and so on.

So, the idea of this word "hos" is important because it clues us in that John is saying that, "It looked like this to me when I looked at it. He's telling us what this looked like. What he saw was something that struck him that he describes as a sea. It's the normal word for "sea" in the Greek Bible: a "thalassa," This is a word that particularly emphasizes the sea area (the water area) as opposed to the land area. The contrast is not just that here is a vast expanse of open water, but it is one with the characteristics of ocean, in contrast to land. So, what John says is that he sees, before the throne of God, something that strikes him as a vast ocean of water, in contrast to an area of solid land. But it's a peculiar kind of ocean, because he calls it: "An ocean (a sea) of glass."

The word "glass" is the Greek word "hualinos." "Hualinos" is an adjective. It means "made of glass." We would translate it as "glassy." The word really describes anything that is transparent. So, what John sees before the Father's throne is something that appears to him to be like an ocean of glass. He uses the word "like" here to give further amplification. The word "like" is the Greek word "homoios." This, again, is an adjective, and it means "resembling." So, this stresses the idea again of appearance rather than actuality. John is not saying to us that there was a glass ocean before God's throne. He said, "But when you looked at it, it looked like it was a huge ocean of glass."

We sometimes experience this when we have been at the lake, for example, on an absolutely quiet still day, and the water is just perfectly still. That make for beautiful water skiing conditions. We refer to it as "a glassy surface" – that the lake looks like glass. That's what John was seeing. But there was something more in what he saw. He says, "This thing is also "like crystal." The word for "crystal" in the Greek looks like this: "krustallos." "Krustallos" describes a crystalline brightness. The word connotes clarity in appearance. This was a vast, smooth ocean that looked like glass, and it was clear as crystal. So, what John is saying is that it is diamond-like in appearance.

After all is said and done, this is going to be something staggering to see. I do want to remind you that we are talking about something that you, too, will someday behold, just as John did. When John looked at this thing, it had the clarity of a diamond; it was smooth like glass; and, it just was awesome for him to behold.

Here we come up again, as we do in the book of the Revelation, to interpret the meaning. What is the significance of this sea of glass – this crystalline sea before the throne of God? This thing looks like it is a sea of glass. First of all, we ought to observe that, in the Bible, the sea is a symbol of restlessness; turmoil; and, an unceasing motion. We have that indicated for us in Isaiah 57:20: "But the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. 'There is no peace,' says my God, 'to the wicked.'" So, when you talk about the sea in the Bible, there are a couple of things that you will observe. One is that when the Bible talks about the sea, it is often a symbol of vast numbers of humanity. Secondly, we observe that the sea, in terms of the vast mass of humanity, is a place of great turmoil. It is not a place where there is calm. It is just the opposite of what John saw at the foot of the throne of God.

Those who first read the book of the Revelation were, by and large, acquainted with the Old Testament Scriptures, so the symbols which are used in the Revelation are drawn from Old Testament usage. Because they were so well-acquainted with the Old Testament, when they read the book of the Revelation, it was really easier for them to grasp the significance of the symbols, because they were already in their mind from other Scriptures. So, they could bring the connection. They could say, "Oh, I see what the Holy Spirit is doing. He's talking about this thing," and they would go back to the Old Testament and pick up that same symbol. That's what we mean by interpreting Scripture by Scripture. That's the way you have to go. If you do not do it that way, you can get way out and wild, because you can see that right here on something like this, a sea of crystalline glass, that there would be hardly any limit to what people could come up with as to how to interpret the meaning of that particular symbol. But if you go back to the Old Testament, we do have some guidelines for this. The Old Testament is the best source for interpreting this particular symbol.

We do have, indeed, a reference to a sea in the Old Testament. We have it in 1 Kings 7:23. Those who read the book of the Revelation, their mind would, in all likelihood, have gone back to this passage. Here we're reading about one of the elements of the construction of Solomon's temple. It says, "And he (Solomon) made a melted sea, ten cubits from one brim to the other. It was round all about, and its height was five cubits, and a line of 30 cubits did encompass it round about." A sea of brass, or a melted sea, is referred to here. This was an item of furniture which Solomon included in the temple, which was based upon an item which was in the original tabernacle.

You remember that, first of all, the Jews worshiped in a tent-like structure that they moved with them during the wilderness wanderings. Later on, when Solomon came to build the temple, he built it, of course, on the pattern of that tabernacle. The pattern for this melted sea is in Exodus 30:18, where Moses was instructed: "You shall also make a laver of bronze, and its foot also bronze with which to wash. And you shall put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar. You also put water therein."

So, here in Exodus 30, we have the original sea of brass, or the melted sea, which was a large basin for the purpose of ceremonial washing on the part of the priests. This thing was set up relative to the entrance to the tabernacle itself and the altar upon which the sacrifices were performed. Past the altar, there was this first part which was the holy place, then the other part was the holy of holies. As the priest finished his work on sacrifice, and was proceeding (sometimes with the blood, or for other reasons) into the holy place, he always had to stop at this particular laver. And that's what is being described here in Solomon's construction, as well as the original construction with the tabernacle. It was a huge basin of water.

The thing to observe, first of all, about this is that any item that you have in the tabernacle, and later in the temple, had a symbolic meaning relative to heaven. These were all symbols of something that was true about heaven. In Hebrews 9:23, we have this pointed out: "It was, therefore, necessary that the pattern of things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves, with better sacrifices than these (that is, the sacrifices of animals). For Christ is not entered into the holy place made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." So, this passage in Hebrews indicates to us that what you had in the tabernacle, and later in the temple, were elements that reflected something that was true about heaven.

This large basin (this sea of brass) is, therefore, something which we may connect with something that it symbolized that is true about heaven itself. The temple symbolized God's heavenly throne room, and this large basin of water had some counterpart in heaven itself.

This thing is quite large. It was 15 feet in diameter. It was something like seven feet in depth. It was a cup-like shape, and it had decorative features around the rim of the large pool. It was supported on the back of 12 oxen of brass facing the cardinal points of the compass: north; east; west; and, south. The Mormons (if you're ever been in Salt Lake City) have reproduced this concept as their baptismal fount. This is what they baptize in. They baptized by immersion, and they have this huge baptizing tank on top of these 12 oxen. It makes a quite impressive figure. If you're ever in Salt Lake City, be sure you stop by and see that.

This thing was filled with well over 16,000 gallons of water, and it stood here in some proximity. The one in Solomon's temple was in a little different position, but it was associated with what took place on the altar of sacrifice, and then this sea of water.

The use, specifically, is described for us in Exodus 30:9. It tells us why God had them place this laver in that position: "For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat. When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not, or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offerings made by fire onto the Lord." That is an impressive statement. They cannot go from the altar or sacrifice to the holy place to minister without stopping at this lever (at the sea of brass). To do so would be to die. It was a very serious matter.

Verse 21 says, "So, they shall wash their hands and their feet that they die not. And it shall be a statute forever to them, even to them, and to his seed throughout their generations." The priests were not allowed to go from the brazen altar of animal sacrifices into the holy place without the cleansing ritual at the sea basin on their hands and their feet.

**The Word of God Cleanses**

What was this symbolizing? This was symbolizing what we call experiential sanctification. It was symbolizing the fact that, as we go through our lives day-by-day as Christians, we become contaminated by evil of one kind and another. That evil does not take us out of salvation, but it does put us out of temporal fellowship, and we need a cleansing to deal with that. The sea of glass in heaven is thus a symbol of the cleansing effect of the Word of God, which cleanses the human soul from evil in his experience. Christians, we are told, are sanctified in their daily experience by the washing of the water by the Word. We have that taught in Ephesians 5:26, which says, "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word." Here it is describing what Christ is going to do for the church – to cleanse it completely from all contamination. How is he going to do that? With the washing of the water of the Word. So, the Word of God has a cleansing effect.

It is not uncommon for Christians to observe that, as they move through their day, they have picked up a lot of contamination spiritually from the world that they had to move through. They go home; they sit down; they take out the Word of God; they begin reading; and, they begin studying the Word of God. They literally experience an awareness of cleansing. They become aware of the sense of spiritual refreshment. They become aware of the sense that the contamination of the world has been cleansed from them. What does it? It's the fact that the Word of God has that cleansing effect upon us.

**Positional Sanctification**

The Lord indicated this in John 17:17 in His high priestly prayer, where He was praying for those of us who would make up His body. He said to the Father on the night before He was crucified: "Sanctify them through Your truth, and Your Word is truth." The Lord Jesus Christ called upon the Father to sanctify (that means "to set apart") to God's use His people through the cleansing effect of the Word of God. It was the Lord Jesus who told His disciples that the Word, relative to the Bible doctrine of salvation, had cleansed them from evil, and had given them positional sanctification.

Remember that in the realm of sanctification, we begin with positional sanctification. That is in terms of our internal relationship with God. At the moment of salvation, you enter into Christ. You enter into a position of eternally be set apart to heaven. Positional sanctification is an area that many people do not understand.

We had a lady visiting recently who just had never connected the fact of positional sanctification with her eternal security. She was off into some areas of doctrinal confusion relative to the Holy Spirit because she did not understand what God the Holy Spirit does at the point of salvation. Well, one of the great things He does is provide you with a position in Christ which determines your eternal destiny in terms of heaven.

Notice John 15:3. The Lord says, "Now you are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you." He's talking about the Word of the doctrine of salvation. They had accepted the doctrine of salvation that He had spoken to them, and now they were clean. He's talking about their positional sanctification. They are set apart for eternal life.

In 1 Corinthians 12:13, we're told: "For by one spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Greeks, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink of the one Spirit." When I mentioned to a person recently that at the point of salvation, you receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the person was shocked. First, I saw that look of surprise, and then the puzzlement, because the individual was involved in the charismatic movement, where she was regularly being brought under the influence of the idea that people could receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit after they had become Christians. She had never realized that when you become a Christian, you are baptized into Christ. As a matter of fact, if you are not baptized into Christ, you cannot be a Christian. That's what being a Christian is all about.

Notice Romans 6:3: "Don't you know that as many of us that were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?" This is not water baptism here. This is Holy Spirit baptism: "Therefore, we were buried with Him by baptism into death, that as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so, we also should walk in newness of life." This is the wonderful reality of being baptized into the body of Christ and having positional sanctification. Paul liked to remind the New Testament Christians again and again of this. When he wrote to the Corinthians church in 1 Corinthians 1:2, this was a church that was terribly carnal that had some very serious sins that he was going to deal with. He began by reminding them that whatever he had to say in this letter, they should never forget that they possess positional sanctification: "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints, with all and in every place, call upon the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, both theirs and ours." They are called saints because they have called in faith upon the name of Jesus Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 6:11, Paul adds: "And such were some of you, but you are washed (but you are sanctified, but you are justified) in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." In the verses preceding verse 11, he describes terrible sins. He says, "Once that was true of you, but now you have a sanctification in position," and he's calling upon them, in their experience, to act according to their position.

In 1 Peter 1:2, Peter says, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit." It is God the Holy Spirit who places us into Christ: "The sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied."

Then Hebrews 10:10: "By which will we are sanctified through the offerings of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

All of these verses are impacting upon this point of positional sanctification: "Once for all:" at the point of believing the doctrine of salvation, a sinner is justified. He is given absolute righteousness. That's what it means to be justified.

Romans 5:1 says, "Therefore, being justified by faith (by something we believe), we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." And having received that justification, we are eternally in positional sanctification. I must remind you again that justification is entirely the work of God, apart from any human additions. For that reason, it is given to us as a free gift.

In Romans 3:24, Paul says, "Being justified freely (that is, without a cause in ourselves) by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

In Romans 4, Paul turns to Abraham and says, "How was Abraham justified?" The Jews were saying, "By your works." Paul says, "Well, let's review." Romans 4: "What shall we say then that Abraham, our father, as pertaining to the flesh, has found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he has something of which to glory, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that works, the reward is not work reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that does not work, but believes on Him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also described the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputes righteousness apart from works, saying, 'Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.'"

Indeed, that was a great, great thing to know, particularly for David, a man who was born again, and then who slipped into some very terrible sins in terms of murder, and in terms of sexual misconduct, and who yet could say, "It is a relief to know that my justification is something that God has given me, that He alone produced, and, therefore, no matter what I do, I can never lose it again. My positional sanctification is secure."

Then we should add to this, justification entirely as a work of God, apart from human additions, Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God (again), not of works, lest any man should boast." It is entirely a grace product, apart from any human efforts.

Then the clincher is Romans 11:6: "And if by grace, then it is no more of works. Otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace. Otherwise work is no more work." So, what are we talking about? We're talking about, first of all, this question of positional sanctification, which a person receives as the result of believing in Jesus Christ as personal Savior, without trying to add any human doing. If Romans 11:6 tells us anything, it tells us the vast numbers of human beings who are associated with certain religious organizations will never go to heaven, even though they think that's exactly where they are going. These groups are saying, "It is what Christ has done on the cross, but it is also what we add to it. We must go through the ritual of circumcision." That was what they said in the New Testament church. Paul said, "Wrong. If you add circumcision to trust in Christ, you do not have grace. You have works, and you cannot be saved." Today, they say, "It's water baptism." Today they say, "It's living a good moral life." Today they say, "It's having a social consciousness." Today they say any number of other things that one adds to trust in Christ as personal Savior.

Justification (positional sanctification) is apart from any human doing. So, the cleansing from evil that you and I need is something apart from salvation. That's what I'm getting at. These priests were priests of God when they ministered here at this altar. They were bonafide priests. They had a legitimate right to minister before God. But something needed to be done to qualify them to minister before God in a way that what they did was acceptable and was divine good production. And that has something to do with something apart from positional sanctification. For you and me, that is the issue. There is no question about our permanent positional sanctification. There is no question about the fact that we are the priests of God. But there is this factor that we, as justified believers, need daily cleansing from evil for our experiential sanctification, which is a second type; that is, our sanctification in our daily living.

**Experiential Sanctification**

The Bible is very clear that we need that kind of sanctification. 1 Thessalonians 4:3 refers to this: "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that you should abstain from fornication." One of the ways of maintaining your experiential sanctification is to avoid violating God's code of sexual conduct. In Romans 6:11, this experiential sanctification is also referred to: "Likewise, reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. Neither yield you your members as instruments of unrighteousness of sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." What's he talking about? "Instruments of righteousness unto God" means to maintain daily moment-by-moment experiential sanctification.

The Lord Jesus taught this fact to His disciples in the upper room the night before He was crucified. That has to be really important. The Lord knows that the next day, He's going to be crucified. He's going to die. This is the last really climactic pre-crucifixion meeting with His disciples at that Passover meal in the upper room. And one of the things that He feels it is necessary to clarify to them is the issue of experience sanctification.

In John 13:1, He does this in this way: "Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour was come, that He should be part of this world unto the Father, having loved His own, which were in the world, He loved them unto the end. And supper being ended, the devil, having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and that He went to God, He arose from supper, laid aside His garments, took a towel, and girded himself. After that, He poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded. Then He came to Simon Peter. Peter said unto Him, 'Lord, do you wash my feet?' Jesus answered and said unto him, 'You do not now know what I do, but you shall know hereafter.' Peter said to Him, 'You shall never wash my feet.' Jesus answered him, 'If I don't wash you, you have no part with Me.' Simon Peter said unto Him, 'Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.' And Jesus said to him, 'He that is washed needs not except to wash his feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, but not all of you,' for He knew who should betray him. Therefore, He said, 'You are not all clean.'"

Now what the Lord Jesus did here was to demonstrate, again, what the priest had to do in the Old Testament every time they ministered in the tabernacle. It was necessary to maintain experiential sanctification through a process of cleansing at this laver. They did it ceremonially through the washing of their hands and their feet, at this laver, before they went in to minister before God. It was death to do otherwise. So, I hope you are impressed with that. Christians who seek to minister to God with contaminated hands, who are out of experiential sanctification, are playing a dangerous game. If you are living under some kind of violation of God's principles; if you're in some kind of a certain situation; and, you're still walking around trying to carry on some kind of Christian service, then you are acting for an enormous divine discipline. What the Lord indicated to these disciples was that they needed daily cleansing.

When He got to Peter, Peter says, "No, you won't wash me." Jesus says, "If I don't wash you, you'll have no part with Me." Then Peter says, " Well, then I want you to give me a whole bath," and Peter goes switching words here. Then the Lord says to him, "Peter, the one who has had a bath (the cleansing of salvation, and possesses positional sanctification) does not need to be cleansed again. You only need to be saved once. You only can be saved once. But what you need, Peter, and what I'm trying to demonstrate to you, is partial cleansing from the filth of the world; the filth of the devil; and, the filth of the sin nature within you, that you will accumulate, which contaminates your walk daily with God and your experiential sanctification. That's what needs to be cleansed. Therefore, Peter says, "Well, in that case, I want it all." Jesus says, "You only need partial. That will maintain your fellowship with Me in time."

That's what you and I need as Christians. We need to maintain temporal fellowship through the cleansing of the Word of God. We don't need to maintain eternal fellowship. We like to think of it with two concentric circles (one circle inside another circle). We have the cross. When we believe in Christ as Savior, we enter first the eternal fellowship circle (the outer circle). That is salvation. We also enter the temporal fellowship circle (the inner circle). That's our daily walk. The outer circle is our positional sanctification. The inner circle is our experiential sanctification. When we contaminate ourselves from the world; the sin nature; or, the devil, we step out of the status of spirituality (which is the inner circle), to the status of carnality (which is in the outer circle), but yet, within the confines of eternal life. We have not lost salvation, but we have lost our walk with the Lord. We have not become contaminated in our positional sanctification, but we have become tremendously contaminated in our experience sanctification. That is the issue that Jesus was trying to clarify to His disciples.

Our contacts, through the world in which we move, contaminate us. The Christian priest moves back out of carnality, and comes back into spirituality by the cleansing process, which is enunciated in 1 John 1:9. That's why we constantly stress the importance of that verse. This verse is so neglected by so many Christians. To neglect this verse is the same thing as to neglect stepping up to this laver before trying to administer as a priest in the Old Testament. God said to them, "I'll take your life if you dare to do that – if you do not go through the ceremony of indicating your need to maintain experiential salvation." Most Christians are ignorant of 1 John 1:9. They never meet that requirement. If you don't meet that requirement, you do not maintain experiential sanctification. And without experiential sanctification, you are not in temporal fellowship where you can be earning rewards. That is the great tragedy that even biblical Christians are going to find when they get to heaven – no rewards, because they did not understand what the sea of cleansing was for.

We have it in 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins (admit and name those sins), He (God the Father) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." God the Father is faithful to forgive us. He'll do it every time you confess. He is just to forgive us. He forgives on the basis of the fact that Christ has died and paid for that sin. He's not just ignoring it: "And he will cleanse us from all righteousness," which covers those things that you are not aware of; that you have forgotten; that you have been guilty of; and, which have fractured your fellowship. You come back into temporal fellowship. You come back into spirituality.

**Ultimate Sanctification**

The Word of God is used by the spiritual Christian to maintain this walk with the Lord every day, symbolizing the sea of brass of the Old Testament. And this is what the sea of glass is before the Father's throne. The sea of glass before the Father's throne, however, is not made of water. At this point, you might want to say, "Hallelujah and glory to God," or whatever is your expression for telling the Lord that you are exhilarated over that fact. The sea of glass (the sea before the Father's throne) is not one of water. That is very important, because it tells us that the crystalline sea is there because the cleansing from evil is no longer needed. In heaven, the believer enters his third sanctification. And that is ultimate sanctification. Ultimate sanctification is the sanctification where we are completely free from the desire to sin, and the capacity to sin. The laver in heaven is no longer needed. In heaven, our ultimate sanctification completely preserves us from any further need of cleansing in time.

We have this, for example, in 1 Corinthians 15:51: "Behold, we show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep (we are not all going to die before the rapture), but we shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption. This mortal must put on immortality (our bodies are going to be changed). So, then this corruptible shall have put on incorruption. This mortal shall have put on immortality. Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory. O, death, where is your sting? O, grave, where is your victory?' The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

That passage is telling us that sin, which produced death, has been removed, and with it, death forever reversed. The sea of glass means that there is no more sin to be dealt with. In Philippians 3:21, we read, "Who shall change our lowly body, that it may be fashioned like His glorious body according to the working by which He is able to subdue all things unto Himself."

So, what a joy to be reminded that, in heaven, the laver of water has turned to crystal because it is no longer needed for us to be cleansed from our daily sin. Then we'll stand before the Father on the consequences of Bible doctrine truth. That crystalline sea represents the Word of God, which Matthew 24:35 says, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but that Word will never pass away." That is when you and I are going to experience the full impact of the Bible doctrine that we have learned. When we stand before the throne on that crystalline sea, that's when we will fully grasp what we have done in storing the Word of God in our human spirits. Never again will we have to go to our Heavenly Father, like Peter after he denied Christ, to confess our personal evils. There will be no more humiliation; no more shame; and, no more tears. It's not a sea of water in heaven. It's a crystalline sea because the cleansing is no longer needed. That is forever past. The laver is a solid sea, because we have been transformed into the image of Jesus Christ.

1 John 3:2 lays that destiny out for us first: "Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God. Therefore, the world does not know us not because it didn't know Him. Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be. But we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as he is." Now that, friends, is ultimate sanctification. That is standing on the crystalline sea before the Father's throne.

The Christian who does not now use the laver of the word of Bible doctrine in cleansing his soul is self-deceived about his spiritual status. In 1 John 1:8, we read, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Verse 10 says, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us." And I'm sure that there's always someone who will stand up and say, "Well, I'm certainly not going to deny that I'm a sinner. I'm certainly not going to deny that I do evil." But the fact that we so rarely go in confession of sin indicates that we are denying it.

I'll guarantee you that if you understand sin as a wound to your soul, and to your relationship to God, you will act the same way as you do when you've cut yourself with a knife on your physical body. You do not cut yourself on your physical body and not do something about it, unless you're some kind of nut. You do not do injury to yourself, and just ignore it and let it go. You take care of it, and you take care of it every time it happens. That's what the Word of God says. Now we do not stand on the crystalline sea. Now we need the cleansing of the water of the Word of God. We have to function according to that. In time, that's going to be behind us.

This must have been a great comfort to John as he recognized the significance of that symbol, and as he viewed it, particularly as he looked back later, after he had been shown the turmoil that's going to take place on the earth. So, whatever happens to mankind; whatever happens to political power; and, whatever happens to society here on earth for the Christian, there's going to be permanent and eternal calm. The sea will no longer be raging. It will be a sea of crystalline glass. It will be complete.

The sea appears once more in Revelation 15:2-3. We read of people who have died during the tribulation: "And I saw, as it were, a sea of glass mingled with fire, and them that had gotten a victory over the beast; over his image; over his mark; and, over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sang the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the lamb, saying, 'Great and marvelous are Your works. Lord God Almighty, just and true are Your ways, King of Saints.'"

Here you have the picture of victory. When we stand on that crystalline sea, it will mark the highest point of our personal entering into our ultimate sanctification in complete victory over the evil that now confronts us. Never again will the world be a problem to us. Never again will Satan be a problem to us. Never again will the sin nature be a problem to us. All of that will be removed. That is the significance of the crystalline sea. It was something in the distant past. Now, it is in our immediate future.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1982

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