***The Lion of the Tribe of Judah

RV95-01***

We are looking at Revelation 5:5 in our study of the seven-sealed scroll. This is segment number three. The apostle John, in the heavenly throne room of God the Father hears a call for someone who is qualified to unroll the seven-sealed scroll which he sees in the hand of God the Father. It is a strong angel who makes this proclamation. As we've indicated, perhaps this is Gabriel. He sounds the call to all rational creatures who are in heaven; who are on earth; and, who are in Hades. The opening of the scroll will reveal the divine plan which was once revealed to Daniel for restoring the earth to the dominion of man under Jesus Christ as the supreme ruler. When this information was given to Daniel, Daniel was told to seal it up, and not to make it known. Now, that information is in this scroll, and John has been told to come up into heaven to see what's in it. It has the divine plan for the final days of this earth before the return of Jesus Christ.

The scroll is, in effect, the title deed to the earth, and it can only be claimed and opened by one who has the right to rule the world now in place of Satan – one who can fulfill the role of the kinsman redeemer. John, therefore, eagerly awaits a response to the angel's call, but no qualified person is found. John's disappointment is so great that he begins to cry profusely. Without a legitimate heir to open the title deed, the details of its execution will remain a secret, and will remain unfulfilled. John will not learn what God has revealed to Daniel concerning the worldwide events during the tribulation era of the last seven years on earth before Christ returns, leading to the millennial reign of Jesus Christ. So, John's hopes are suddenly dashed, and he is so overwhelmed with grief that his body literally shakes with the sobbing.

So, we come to Revelation 5:5, and we read, "And one of the elders said unto me, 'Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll, and to loose its seven seals." The apostle John suddenly finds someone comforting him there in his vision in heaven: one of the elders (one of the "presbuteros") – referring to the rank of these 24 elders who represent the church which has been raptured (taken off of this earth) and is now in heaven. And one of these 24 elders representing the church walks up to him; puts his arm around him; and says, "Look, stop your crying."

The word "says" looks like this in the Greek language: "lego." This is the word that stresses the meaning of the words, or the content, or the message, as over against the individual words. He comes to John and he gives him a command. He tells him to stop crying. The word for "weep" looks like this in the Greek Bible: "klaio." This is the word simply for physical tears. However, in the Greek, it has this negative: "me." ... Therefore, John is told to stop his continual crying. It is active. He has been doing the crying. But it's imperative mood. It's a command. In the Greek language, when you have the particular combination of the present tense and the imperative mood, that tells us that the crying is in progress.

The Greek language is so distinctive that it is telling John to stop doing what he's already doing. The Greek language is like that to this day. If you were in Greece and somebody's dog was barking, they would tell the dog to stop barking in such a way that they wanted him to stop what he's already doing. However, this is different than if we were to tell you not to start crying at all. If you are telling your child not to start crying, you'd say that in a different way altogether. That means don't even begin to cry. If you were going to leave your dog and say, I want you to be a good dog, and don't bark when I'm gone, you would tell it to him in a different way than you would tell it to him when he's already barking, and you yell out there, "Stop that barking."

So, this is very clear that John is just overwhelmed with tears. He is crushed. He is frustrated. He is disappointed. He's just sitting there sobbing. The elder comes up to him, and he tells him, "Stop the crying that you're doing. Stop it right now." Then he says, "Behold," and here is that word that we have so many times in the Greek New Testament which is sort of a technical word, indicating that a very important announcement (a very important piece of information) is about to be given. It's from this Greek word "horao," which refers to something which can be seen, or heard, or mentally apprehended in some way. This is a vivid introduction of the person of Jesus Christ in this case. This word "horao" means "to take an overall look." Therefore, it's not just looking at one thing specifically, but take an overall look here at something that is very important. It's in the aorist tense, which means that John is to start paying attention. It's in the middle voice because it's going to be for his benefit to do so. Again, it's imperative mood. It's a command. John is told, "Stop your crying and take a look." The idea is to pay attention. It indicates he's to pay attention to something important. The elder is saying, "Notice."

John is told, in effect, to take his eyes off his personal disappointment, and to turn his eyes upon Jesus. Of course, that's always good advice in the times of our personal crises; the times of our personal uncertainties about what we should do; and, the times when we feel bruised and wounded and full of self-pity. This is the principle. Get your eyes off yourself, and get it on the Lord. Get your eyes off yourself and people, and get it on the Lord who can solve all the problems relative to yourself and relative to other people. So, an important spiritual principle is incorporated here by the elder to John: "Stop your crying and pay attention. Look." And John looks.

**The Lion**

What he is told to look at is a lion. The Greek word for "lion" is "leon." And the Greek language has the word "the" before it. That indicates to us that it isn't just any old lion roaming around there, but it is a very specific lion that he wants him to look at. He says. "The lion of." The word "of" in the Greek language is actually this preposition "ek," which means "out of," and it's out of a "fule" (a tribe). It is a particular "fule." This word describes one of the 12 divisions of the Jewish nation which were descended from the sons of Jacob. The patriarch Jacob had 12 sons. From that time on, each of those sons became the head of a segment of the Jewish nation. It was like being the head of 12 different provinces, or 12 different states. This word "tribe" refers to one of those specific segments of the Jewish nation, and it is specifically identified here as the tribe of "ioudas" (the tribe of Judah). This is the lion of the tribe of Judah.

Again, the book of the Revelation is a mysterious book and a meaningless book unless you've got enough background in the Scriptures to come up against a symbol and to know where, in the rest of the Bible, that symbol is used, so that you know what it means. You don't invent your own meanings for the book of the Revelation. So, immediately John is told: "Stop crying. You don't need to be crying. Instead, turn your eyes upon the Lion of the tribe of Judah."

We find that expression back in Genesis 49:8. This verse, incidentally, is one of the most dramatically important verses in all of the Bible, particularly in terms of where history is going today, and particularly in terms of human events today. All through this heavenly scene, identifying words (dramatic words) are being used to clarify major doctrinal concepts, and this is one of them – the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Understanding this is going to give you an understanding of what is taking place in our world today, and what is immediately on the horizon ahead of us.

In Genesis 49:8, Jacob the patriarch is on his deathbed. He calls his sons before him, and one-by-one, through the instrumentality of God the Holy Spirit, he is given a prophetic vision of what the destiny will be of every one of these tribes – what their future role will be in the Jewish kingdom.

**Judah**

He now comes down to His Son, Judah. He's already spoken about three of the sons, and what he had to say about them was not particularly good. But when he gets to Judah, he has something very dramatic to say. Genesis 49:8: "Judah, you are the one whom your brethren shall praise. Your hand shall be in the neck of your enemies. Your father's children shall bow down before you." So, immediately, Judah is told that the people who will descend from him will form a tribe which in the nation will be a leader, and a tribe which will be looked up to, and will be served, in effect, by the other 11 tribes.

Then verse 9: "Judah is a lion' whelp (a lion's cub): from the prey, my son, you are gone up: he stooped down, he crouched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?" Judah is presented under the symbol of a lion who has had a kill; who has fed; who has crouched; who has killed his prey; and, who is now asleep. Who would dare rouse him up? Who is going to go and poke a sleeping lion?

Then, verse 10 says, "The scepter." This is a sign of a king's ruling authority: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be."

It goes on to describe how prosperous they will be in their agricultural society, and so on. The significance here is that Jacob, in pronouncing blessing upon Judah and his descendants, indicates that they will play the role of ruling authority in the nation. That's the significance of the lion. The lion is the king of the beasts in the animal world. The lion is the symbol of a king. And the very word "scepter" makes it very clear that he's talking about the ruling authority of a king. He is talking about regal royalty.

So, Judah is the tribe which is going to produce, sometime in the future, the Jews' royal line of kings. This did not happen for hundreds and hundreds of years in the future. It happened, finally, when King David came on the scene. David, who is of the tribe of Judah, was the first of the line of kings from that tribe. With David, this prediction was fulfilled.

**The Messiah**

Furthermore, Jacob predicted that the royal scepter (the ruling authority) would not depart from Judah until Shiloh comes. "Until Shiloh comes" means "Until He comes to whom it belongs." Shiloh means "to whom it belongs." What he is talking about here is the scepter. Until Shiloh comes, the ruling authority will not depart from the tribe of Judah. Until Shiloh comes, the Jews are going to have a king, and He will be ruling, and He will be in authority over the nation. The word, of course, refers to the Messiah who was promised to the Jews, whom the prophets repeatedly declared would rule the world. That's the significance at the end of Genesis 49:10 of that expression: "Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." That expression refers to gentile nations gathered together under the ruling authority of this king descended from the line of Judah. It refers to the time that the Jewish Messiah will overturn the nations of the world, and will rule the whole world from His throne (from Jerusalem).

One prediction expressing that truth is in the book of Ezekiel. The prophet Ezekiel, in Ezekiel 21:25-28 says, "And you, profane, wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end. Thus says the Lord God, 'Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more, until He comes whose right it is; and I will give it to Him. And you, son of man, prophesy and say, 'Thus says the Lord God concerning the Ammonites, and concerning their reproach;' even say, 'The sword, the sword is drawn: for the slaughter it is furbished, to consume because of the glittering,''" and so on.

What this passage is referring to here in Ezekiel 21 is that God is going to overthrow the false authority ruling the people of Israel, at some time in the future, and it's going to be given to Him whose right it is. And there you have Shiloh again. It's going to be given to Him whose right it is to rule. This is exactly what Jacob was predicting concerning his son Judah.

In the New Testament, we have it put in so many words that the descendant of the tribe of Judah, and the one whose right it is to rule over the nation of Israel as its royal king (as the Lion of the tribe of Judah) is the person of Jesus Christ. Hebrews 7:14 says, "For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood." It is very clear that Jesus was of the tribe of Judah, and he was not of the Levi tribe, the priesthood tribe. It is interesting that it is a fact that the scepter today is indeed gone from the Jews. The Jews do not have a ruling king. That in itself is an indication that the Messiah has come.

As you know, the Jews are still waiting for the Messiah. The Jews know exactly what the Old Testament prophets have predicted. They are well-versed in the fact that there is a king coming who is going to rule the world; who is going to be a Jew; and, who will rule upon the throne of King David. He will be in that line of descent. They're still looking for Him, but they have forgotten the prophecy of Jacob, which was to the effect that when the ruling scepter is gone, you can know that the Messiah has arrived. Until the Messiah arrives, that ruling scepter is going to be there, and a nation to rule it. When you see that there's no more nation to rule, then you know that the Messiah has come, and if you haven't recognized Him, you've missed him. And of course, that happened the Jews. When finally they were scattered in 70 A.D., that was the end of everything they had as nation and kingdom and throne and people. What they have today is in unbelief, and is only the preparatory groundwork for the restoration of the nation. But the nation has not yet been restored.

So, that's a very important statement that John hears when this angel is pointing to someone who's standing there now in heaven – someone other than the Father on the throne. He says, "That is the Lion of the tribe of Judah." The significance of that is that this is the ruling King.

Furthermore, he identifies Him even more specifically by saying that: "He is of the root of David." The "root" is "hriza." "Hriza" refers to a sprout that comes from the main stem. The word here refers to the source of origin; that is, to a family tree. Furthermore, in the Greek language, it is *the* root, indicating a specific root. And that specific root he also identifies immediately as from the family of David. He is one who is in this line. Well, he's referring, of course, here to King David, who was descended from his father Jesse.

Again, you have to go back to the Bible to get these things identified. In 1 Samuel 17:58, after the young David had killed Goliath, King Saul is very impressed. He calls the boy, and he wants to know: "'Whose son are you, young man?' David answered, 'I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlemite.'" He says, "My father's name is Jesse. We're from the city of Bethlehem." The promised Jewish Messiah who would rule the world was to be a descendant of King David. That's what's so important about what the elder is saying to John in heaven. Not only is this person (that the elder points to) of the tribe of Judah, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, but He is also the root of David.

In Jeremiah 23:5, we see that descendant of King David. Jeremiah says, "'Behold, the day is come,' says the Lord, 'that I will raise unto David a righteous branch (a root), and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the earth.'" Jeremiah says, "The time is going to come when I am going to raise up a man from the family line of David who will execute justice and righteousness in the earth." There has never been a time in the history of the human race when justice and righteousness has been executed throughout this world.

Now we have got a problem. Here's a God who doesn't lie, who says that He is going to raise up a man through the line of David who will be a king who will reign and prosper and execute justice and righteousness in the earth. That means the whole ball of wax. That has never happened. Is God telling the truth, or is He not? Can we really take these words and say that the "earth" means this planet? Can we really take these words and say that "David" means King David of the tribe of Judah, son of Jesse? Can we look at these words and say that the "branch" really means a descendant from David? Or do we have to say, "No, all of these are spiritual words (these are symbols), and they don't mean what they say?" Well, the minute that you do that, the Bible is a meaningless book. These words do mean what they say, and that is exactly what they are saying – that there is going to be a time on the face of this globe when there will be a government which rules this whole world under one beneficent ruler, executing absolute justice and absolute righteousness.

If there's anything that staggers the human imagination, that does. Can you imagine a world with no mafia? Can you imagine a world with no IRS? Can you imagine a world without all these tyrannies that surround us now in every way? Can you imagine a world where everything is absolutely fair, where you've got millions upon millions of angels floating around seeing that justice and righteousness is executed, and where you can't get away with anything? Some of you aren't sure you're going to like that. I can see that already. But that's the kind of a world that is coming. That's the world of tomorrow. There's never been a world like that. Now, either the Bible is kidding us (the prophet didn't know what he was talking about), or else this is literally going to be fulfilled in the future.

We may add to this 1 Samuel 17:58 – that the Messiah is a descendant of this King David: "And Saul said to him, 'Whose son are you?' And David answered, 'I'm the son of your servant Jesse.'" He's a descendant of this David who actually physically existed in time.

Notice also Isaiah 11:1, which says, "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." This is describing the future King of Israel, to be descended from the line of David. Isaiah 11:10 says, "In that day, there shall be a root of Jesse who shall stand for an ensign of the people; to Him shall the nation's seek, and His rest shall be glorious." This is quoted in Romans 15:12.

So, here you have a very dramatic statement. It is very clear in the Old Testament that the king, which is going to rule the world, will be descended from the line of David. He will be like a stem from the main branch of the tree. This is made very clear in the New Testament in Revelation 22:16, which says, "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify unto these things in the churches. I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." That makes it very clear that what the elder was referring to when he pointed to this person in heaven, that John now sees, and identifies Him as the one who is of the root of David, he is referring specifically to the one who is destined to become the King of Kings over the whole earth.

So, in Revelation 5:5, John is told to stop weeping. He is told to pay very close attention. He has pointed to a person who is standing there who is identified as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, which means that He is in the royal line of the Kings of Judah. He is of the root of David. He is specifically of the line of David.

**He Can Open the Scroll**

Then it says, "He has prevailed to open the scroll." The word "prevailed" is the Greek word "nikao." "Nikao" means "to conquer" or "to triumph" or "to overcome." In the Greek sentence here, this word is near the front of the sentence. It comes right after "Behold." When a word is put up first in a sentence in the Greek, it is to emphasize that word. This is stressing the great historical fact of the victory of Jesus Christ over Satan. This is the basis of His right to open the scroll. As kinsman redeemer, He has paid the price of redemption so that the scroll may now be opened, because he is the one to whom the title deed to the earth belongs. As Adam lost dominion over the earth to Satan, so Jesus Christ has restored dominion to mankind.

So, this word is indicating the conquering of Satan upon the cross. We would translate this as, "Behold a victory was won by Him who is," and then describing that He is the lion of the tribe of Judah and the root of David. This is in the aorist tense because it's indicating a point of once-for-all victory over Satan in the past. It's active, indicating that Jesus Christ Himself achieved this triumph. It's indicative. It's a statement of fact. The victory of Jesus Christ on the cross over Satan is what is in view here.

This same principle is referred to in other Scriptures. For example, Hebrews 2:14-15 says, "For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death, He might destroy him that had the power of death (that is, the devil), and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." The victory of Jesus Christ over Satan included the dramatic fact that now the power of death has been removed from Satan. Someday Jesus Christ will reverse death. Whether you're a born-again person going to heaven, or whether you're a lost person going to hell, your death is going to be reversed, and someday you will have your physical body once more alive.

The victory of Jesus on the Cross is referred to in the gospel of John 12:31: "Now is the judgment of this world. Now shall the prince of this world be cast out," referring to Satan, who is the prince of this world. The judgment upon him on the cross – Satan cast out.

John 16:11 also refers to this victory of judgment: "Because the prince of this world is judged;" that is, he has been finished off in his combat with Christ on the cross.

1 Corinthians 15:25-26: "For he must reign (that is, Jesus Christ) till He has put all enemies under his feet." The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. One of the great and wonderful things about the cross is that the fearful quality of death has forever been terminated. It has been taken away from Satan.

So, John is told that this one, who is of the tribe of Judah, and who is of the family line of David, has overcome to do something specific. Why did He do that on the cross? Why did He go through that suffering and that agony? It was in order specifically to open something? The word is "anoigo." "Anoigo" refers, of course, to the unrolling of the scroll. That's why He did that on the cross. It is aorist tense – the point that He unrolls the scroll. It is active. Jesus Christ, the line of Judah and of the family of David, does the unrolling. Here it is in the infinitive mood, which in the Greek tells us that we are being told that this is the purpose of the conquest of Christ over Satan. This is why He went to the cross – so that he could open that scroll. The idea is that Jesus Christ conquered Satan so as to be able to open the scroll as the executor, and to put in motion the restoration of the control of the earth to man once more in the reign of Jesus Christ.

This is the same idea in Colossians 2:14-15. Paul says about Christ: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross, and having spoiled principalities and powers (demonic forces), he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." One facet of the exaltation of Jesus Christ by the Father is the glorious honor of opening up these secrets that Daniel has recorded. That's one of the honors for what He has done. He is the One to make it known.

In Philippians 2:9, Paul says, "Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him (Jesus Christ), giving Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that everyone should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." The angel says, "Is there anybody in heaven, anybody on earth, anybody in Hades that can open this scroll?" Paul says, "All those are going to follow their knee to Jesus Christ. All the people in the agonies of Hades are going to bow their knee to Him. All those in heaven are going to bow their knee to Him. All those on earth are going to bow their knee to Him. It is because He was victorious over Satan that it is His honor to open that scroll. There is nobody else that can open that scroll, because there was nobody else who qualified by means of the cross to do so.

So, John is told that this person has overcome for the specific purpose of opening (that is, unrolling) this particular scroll that's in the Father's hands. The words "to loose" are not in the Greek Bible. Christ will open the scroll, and open its seven seals.

**Judgment Day**

This brings us to a very important bit of information that we will begin now. There are, as you know, within the Christian community today, two views concerning the future of the world. The vast majority (and I mean the overwhelming vast majority) of Christians believe that someday Jesus Christ is going to come back to this earth, and there is going to be a huge judgment day. Many of those religious groups make an enormous mistake in thinking that that judgment day means that God is going to line people up and say, "You: heaven. You: hell. You, you, and you: heaven. You, you, and you: hell." They think that you're going to find out then whether you're going to heaven or hell – that it's all going to be taken care of in one grand, dramatic moment, and then eternity will begin.

There is a minority of Christians who, because they are experts in the study of the Bible, and who have the capacity to bring all the pieces of the Scriptures together and to relate them so that the jigsaw of Scripture fits together in a consistent pattern, who say, "No, that's not the way it's going to be. There is not one great blast-out big judgment day. What is going to happen is that Jesus Christ is going to return indeed, and He is going to set up a kingdom upon this earth. And what is next is 1,000 years of human existence under the authority of Jesus Christ as the descendant of David through the tribe of Judah: ruling over a nation; ruling from a throne; and, ruling over the Jewish people, centered in Jerusalem, as the worldwide King and the authority, bringing in an era of justice and peace. That's going to last for 1,000 years. The book of the Revelation tells us that one of the things that will make it glorious is that at that time, Satan and all of his demons will be put into a holding tank. They will be placed into the pit of the abyss, and they will be out of operation.

So, suddenly you will have a world where there will be no temptation from Satan and his demons. You will have a world where the temptation from the world about you will be enormously reduced. All of the filth; all of the garbage; and, all of the degenerative effects that are upon us today, from our society, will be stopped. You will see television programs during the millennium that will be ennobling. You will go to entertainment, which will be consistently ennobling. Everything in life will be ennobling. It will not be turning you in the direction of being an animal. It will instead be moving you toward the fulfillment of your role of being in the image and likeness of God. It will be a totally different world. Only one thing will really be a major problem. This will not be a problem for those of us of the church who have received a glorified body. But for those who are still in their plain human bodies, they'll have the problem of the genetic defects of the sin nature. The sin nature will function, and it will be the major instigator of evil among them. But when that sin nature expresses itself, it will be dealt with immediately.

At the end of that 1,000 years, Satan and his agents, the demons, will be loosed once more. There will be one more rebellion against God, by people born during that millennium. The millennium starts with everybody born-again. Children born during that time who have never accepted the ruling authority of the line of the tribe of Judah will turn against Him. Then there will be a final judgment. And then there will be the Great White Throne judgment, when all the unsaved dead will be raised from the graves, and they will face their judgment. Then comes the end. Then comes the beginning of eternity, with all of the joy and all the bliss of those who spend their eternity in God's presence in heaven.

These are two totally different pictures. Most religious people will laugh in your face if you were to tell them that Jesus Christ is going to come back and rule on this earth; that He is going to rule this world for a 1,000 years; and, that He is going to be in complete charge. And these are not people who are ignorant of the Bible. These are often people who are very well-versed in the Scriptures, but they have missed a very important line of truth. I want you to be sure that you have it straight in your mind, because it makes a big difference if you understand what John understood when he saw this person identified as the Lion of the tribe of Judah and the root of David. Those are extremely important words. There are denominational groups today that are forever running around talking about bringing in the kingdom. They're doing the Lord's work to bring in the kingdom. And the last thing on earth that the church has anything to do with is the kingdom.

**What is the Kingdom?**

That's the other problem. Is the kingdom and the church the same thing? Is Israel and the church the same thing? What happened to all of these promises to Israel? Has God double-crossed them? Is God backing off and saying, "I didn't really mean those words. When I talked about Israel, and all of these great blessings, and all of this marvelous rule that Israel is going to have, I was really talking about the church, and the rule of God in heaven." Is the throne of Jesus Christ His ruling throne in heaven? What is the kingdom? You have ignorant Christians running around talking about bringing in the kingdom, and the devil says, "That's it, fella. Keep doing that." And the devil sits they're clapping away, because as long as you're running around chasing rabbits, you're no problem to him. But when you understand the difference between Israel and the church; when you understand the distinctive relationship of the church to Jesus Christ; and, when you understand the role which is yet ahead for the Jewish people (the future of Israel on this earth), then you will be putting your effort in the right direction, and you will not be wasting your life.

It all began in Genesis 17:6 with a man named Abraham. There, we have recorded a promise which Almighty God made to this man Abraham, that He brought out of a pagan culture, in Ur of the Chaldees, and brought him around the Fertile Crescent down into this land that he promised to Abraham and to his descendants. Abraham is told by God: "I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come out of you." Abraham was told that, among the blessings that would come to him, would be that from his posterity would come a royal line of kings. In Genesis 17:16, God says, "And I will bless her, and give you a son also of her; yea, I will bless her (speaking about Sarai, Abraham's wife), and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her." So, again, royalty was promised to Abraham through his line.

This promise of a royal king is later narrowed to the tribe of Judah, as we've already seen, in Genesis 49:10. Then we come to the dramatic full details of the execution of that promise to Abraham in 2 Samuel 7. You have recorded a concern that was on the heart of King David. A time of peace has come to Israel. David has their enemies pretty well under control. And David begins to look at his lifestyle, and he looks out his window of his luxurious apartment, and he sees that the worship of Israel is still being conducted in that little tent – that tent that they built way out there in the wilderness under Moses, and which they carried around with them in all their travels. All of the dramatic worship of God is still in that tent. And David thinks to himself, "This is wrong. It's terrible. I live in this kind of luxurious surroundings of my palace, and we go out there and worship God in an old tent." And he decides that he wants to build a temple – a dramatic, beautiful, fitting structure in which to worship God.

He checks it out with Nathan the prophet. Nathan says, "That is a good idea, David. Go with it. That night, God comes to Nathan the prophet, and says to Nathan, "Nathan, you spoke too quickly. I don't want David to do that. I didn't ask David to build a temple for Me. You go back to him, and reverse the advice you gave him. Tell him that the answer is. 'No.'"

**The Davidic Covenant**

OK, David wants to build a house for God. 2 Samuel 7:2: "And the king said unto Nathan the prophet, 'See, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the Ark of God dwells within curtains." And David is informed by Nathan, after God speaks to Nathan, that God does not want David to build a house for Him. Instead, in 2 Samuel 7:11, God says, "I'll tell you what I am going to do, David. I'm going to build a house for you: "And as since the time that I commanded the judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused you to rest from all your enemies, also the Lord tells you that He will make you a house." This we call the Davidic Covenant, fulfilling one segment of the Abrahamic covenant, which was that related to a kingdom. Abraham was promised that he would have a line of kings. The Davidic covenant is the details as to how God is going to fulfill that promise.

The promise from God included certain provisions. One was that David is promised a son who would succeed him on the throne. 2 Samuel 7:12: "And when your days be fulfilled, and you shall sleep with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you which will proceed out of your own body, and I will establish his kingdom." That was fulfilled in the son that David and Bathsheba had: Solomon. Furthermore, the temple that David wanted to build would be built, but by this son Solomon. 2 Samuel 7:13: "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." There you've got words that mean what they say, folks: "I will build this kingdom of your son forever." And "forever" means that there will never be a time in the history of the human race that the Jewish people will not have a kingdom and a king to rule over it.

There will be times when they will be in discipline; when that kingdom will be torn from them; and, when they'll be at the fifth stage of the cycle of discipline, where they are scattered among other nations in captivity. God says, "But sooner or later, I'm going to bring you together again, and that kingdom is going to be reestablished, and it will last forever. The throne of David would continue forever, and would not be taken from his son Solomon, no matter what he did.

Notice 2 Samuel 7:14-15: "I will be his Father (speaking of the coming son, Solomon). He shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the children of men, but My mercy shall not depart away from Me, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before you." Unfortunately, Solomon, who started off in a wonderful way, asking God to make him the man who had the greatest amount of divine viewpoint wisdom of any person who had ever lived, and was granted that request, but then became careless and sloppy about his personal life. He became sloppy about indulging the lifestyle that he had about him, and to moving among the style of life that was characteristic of the heathen. One of the things that characterized them was multiplicity of wives. Before he was through, he had 700 wives and 300 concubines in his harem. And the Bible tells us that those women led his heart away from the Lord; directed him into evil; and, took him away from his God. They wound him around their finger to such a degree that he actually built heathen places of worship for them within the kingdom of Israel. That was a great tragedy.

Of course, God knew what was coming. He knew what Solomon was going to do, and he was making it clear to David that: "Even when Solomon does that, I'm not going to go back on my promise. You are going to have an earthly kingdom forever." Do you know any time in the history of the human race when the Jews have had an earthly kingdom going forever – a kingdom in which they were the rulers of the whole world? Never. Here is an enormously important piece of information that God is revealing to David, and which John makes reference to in heaven when this person, Jesus Christ, the greater Son, the final King of the divine line, is pointed out to him.

Furthermore, David's house dynasty; the kingdom over Israel; and, the royal throne would be established forever. 2 Samuel 7:16 says, "And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever." In this verse, we have important terms that are brought up: throne; house; and, kingdom. Therein lies the problem with people today. They miss the point on the meaning of throne; house; and, kingdom, and they come up with a totally balled-up picture of where the world is going and what the future holds for us. Next time, we'll pick up those dramatic words and then we're going to look in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament, and see exactly what happened subsequently in history relative to fulfillment of these things that God said are going to be eternal in their implication.

**The Gospel**

None of this is something in which you and I can rejoice unless you are in the family of God. Every human being, when he faces death, if he has read anything at all in the Bible, knows that the Bible says there are two places that people go: One is heaven; and, the other is hell. There are no alternatives to that. The Bible tells us that to go to heaven, you must be as good as Jesus Christ. That is, you must be credited with absolute righteousness. You must be as good as God Himself. Isaiah 64 also tells us that all of our righteousnesses (all of our human good works in the sight of God) are as filthy rags, meaning that there is nothing that we can do in good works which are acceptable to God to cover our sins.

So, if you're in what the Bible describes as being without hope (without Christ) in this world, and thus doomed to the lake of fire, John 3:16, says that: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Believing in Jesus Christ brings everlasting life. John 3:36 says, "He that believes on the Son has everlasting life:" now; period; over and out. "Believing" means to trust in Him for your eternal life, and to separate yourself from human doing. "He that believes on the Son has everlasting life. He that doesn't believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God is upon him." The issue is whether you receive Jesus Christ as personal Savior. That and that alone is the issue.

How you go about doing that is very important. In Ephesians 2:8-9, the apostle Paul says, "By grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." Salvation is by grace, which means that you must accept it as a gift. You cannot work for it in any way. In Romans 4:4-5, Paul says, "Now to him that works is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of death." If you work for it, you get paid for it: "But to him that does not work, but believes on Him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." But you must come to God without human doing; without the Lord's supper; without church membership; without water baptism; without living a good life; and, without trying to do anything at all – as Paul says here in Romans 4:5: "To him that does not work, but who believes on Him that justifies the ungodly." "Justify" means that God declares you as good as Jesus Christ: "His faith is counted for righteousness."

Then Romans 11:6 says, "But if by grace, then it is no more works; otherwise, grace is no more grace. But if it is of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work." That verse tells us that grace and works are mutually exclusive. You cannot go to heaven trusting in Christ as Savior and adding your good works to it. God says, "The minute you do that, you doom yourself to the lake of fire." Millions of people think they're going to somehow make it with God because they believe that Jesus Christ is God's Son; they believe in Him as Savior; and, they believe that He paid the price for sin, but somewhere along the line, somebody confused them and told them that they had to do something to add to what Christ has done in order to "merit his merit." And the result of that terrible piece of information, if they believe it, that will take them to the lake of fire.

So, in 2 Corinthians 5:21, Paul makes this very happy statement: "For He has made Him (God the Father has made God the Son) who knew no sin (the sinless Son), to be sin for us (to take our sin upon Himself), that we might be made the righteousness (the absolute righteousness) of God in Him." That's how you can be as good as Jesus Christ and enter heaven – by receiving it as a free gift from the hand of God. If you accept it by trusting Christ as your Savior, you've got it. If you add one thing to it, you've doomed yourself forever to the lake of fire. You cannot mix the two.

"He that believes on the Son (he who trusts for salvation in the Son) has everlasting life (right now), and he that does not believe the Son shall never see everlasting life, but the wrath of God abides upon him forever."

If you have never actually accepted Christ as your personal Savior, apart from something that you have tried to add to it, consider yourself chosen and fortunate of God to have heard this information today, and flee to Him, and accept what He has provided, apart from anything that you can bring, and recognize that all of your good works are just filthy rags which count for nothing. But what His Son has done is all that you need.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1982

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