***Stand Up for Jesus Christ

RV97-02***

Please open your Bibles to Revelation 5:6-10 which deal with the executor of the scroll. This is segment number four. We have found that the Lord Jesus Christ, from eternity past, is true deity with the same divine essence as God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. He is, in fact, God. The Bible tells us that, in time, the divine Son of God took on humanity and became the sinless God-man. Jesus Christ came as the God-man to execute two missions on the earth. It is very important that we keep in mind that fact – two missions. First He came to pay for the sins of the world as the Lamb of God to satisfy the justice of God. Secondly, He came into this world to keep a promise that God had made in centuries past to the Jewish people, and which was expressed in the Davidic covenant – this promise of an eternal king to rule over the Jewish nation. That is the role of the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

As John views this heavenly scene at the Father's throne, He sees the person of Jesus Christ presented in exactly these two facets: one, as the Lion of the tribe of Judah; and, secondly, as the Lamb of God, and thus signifying that the stress to Him, at that point, is on the twofold mission of Jesus Christ. If you get this in mind, then the Bible fits together; then the various things that Christ did make sense in an orderly fashion; and, then where history is moving in our day makes sense. The reason we have a lot of discouraged Christians is because they've been given some idea by pastors and Bible teachers that the world is moving toward some dramatic happy ending, when it's moving in the opposite direction. So, people get the idea that the Bible teaches a glorious future for mankind, and then they begin to have a sense of questioning about the Word of God, and the Bible is discredited in their eyes. The Bible makes no such promise. The indication is that mankind is going downhill; that things are going to get worse; and, that that is the ultimate end.

That doesn't mean that we are to lie down and be doormats, and give up all hope, and make no effort. For the Lord Jesus Christ also said, before He left his disciples, that He expected them to occupy until He returns. The word "occupy" means "to go about doing business" – doing His business until He returns. His business, in part, is for us to influence our society with the orientation of the Word of God.

**The Lion of the Tribe of Judah**

So, the mission of Jesus Christ as Lamb has been executed, but the mission as Lion of the tribe of Judah, when He's going to straighten out the whole world scene and the whole orientation of this world to righteousness, has not yet been executed. It is yet in the future. The fulfillment of the Lamb mission, however, qualifies Jesus Christ to claim the title to rule over the earth as its universal claim. That claim as King of Kings is recorded in the scroll which is on the upturned palm of the Father's hand as He sits upon His throne. We have seen now that Jesus Christ moves forward to that throne, and takes the scroll from the Father's hand.

**The Heavenly Throne Room**

The vision of the heavenly throne room, of course, is a future scene. It's a scene which comes after the rapture, and just at the threshold of the seven-year tribulation period on the earth. The church in heaven is symbolized by the 24 elders who sit on those thrones surrounding the Father's throne. They have crowns on their head, indicating that they have been rewarded for their service. There's a sea that looks like glass before the Father's throne, which recalls the daily cleansing of the tabernacle priests in the laver (the water) in the Old Testament before he went into service. Now the church is in heaven, so the sea is like glass. It's not actually water because cleansing is no longer needed for temporal fellowship.

We have seen that Jesus Christ is no longer sitting upon the Father's throne at the Father's right hand. When He is there, He is acting as advocate and intercessor for the church saints. But that's only necessary when we are here on earth. The church is in heaven, the Son has moved off the Father's throne; has taken the scroll; and, is ready to act as executor of this title deed to the restoration of the earth to Adam's descendants, and to restore it once more to mankind's control, and to wrest it away from the serpent Satan.

So, all eyes in heaven are upon the Son of God at this point. The throne room is hushed in anticipation. The sound of John's weeping has ceased, and all eyes are upon the Lamb.

**Jesus Takes the Scroll**

So, we come to Revelation 5:8 which says, "And when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and 24 elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden bowls full of incense which are the prayers of saints. The word "and" is the Greek word "kai," and it indicates a continuation of the sequence of events. It says, "Next in order, this is what happened." Then it has the word "when." It looks like this in the Greek Bible: "hote." This introduces a time clause in the sentence; that is, it marks a definite point in time when something happens, because that point in time is a very important moment. It hasn't happened yet. It's still in the future as of now, but it is a dramatic point in human history. So, it's marked by that word "hote." It is a point in time described as one in which the Son of God takes something.

The word for "had taken" is this Greek word "lambano." This is the word for taking possession of something. It is in the aorist tense, which is that Greek tense that means a certain point time of action. Here, it's the point when Jesus takes the scroll from the Father's hand. It is active, indicating that Jesus Christ does the taking because He is the only one qualified to take it. It is indicative – a statement of fact. What He takes, of course, is that thing we've been seeing called a "biblion." The "biblion" is the scroll. This has the word "the" in front of it, indicating that it's talking about the scroll that has been in the context. This scroll, as we shall see as the seals are broken, contains the steps leading to the placing of the earth under the authority of Jesus Christ.

So, we've described the scroll as a title deed to the earth. The one who has it, and the one who's qualified to execute it, is the one who is entitled to the earth. We would translate this: "And when He took the scroll." Then, suddenly, something happens. We read that the living creatures do something – these "zoon." The living creatures are the four cherub-type cherub type angels which are surrounding the Father's throne as an honor guard to His Holiness. Along with them are the 24 "presbuteros." These are the 24 elders. This is the group which is now in heaven (human beings) representing the total body of Christ which has been raptured. The living creature angels and the elders representing the church, at the moment that Jesus Christ picks up that scroll, fall down in worship before the Son of God.

**Worship**

The word "fall" is the Greek word "pipto." It means "to prostrate oneself" on the ground as an act of homage or worship. The living creatures and the elders do this when Jesus Christ takes the scroll. This is a preview of something that's going to take place in heaven, and it is presented in symbolic form, but it will be executed in real terms, and you and I are actually going to be part of this scene someday. It's in the aorist tense – the particular point when He takes the scroll. The creatures of elders do the homage. Its active voice. It's indicative mood – a statement of fact. What they do is "fall before" ("enopion"). "Enopion" is an adjective. It means "face-to-face," and it indicates that they do this before the one who is described as "the Lamb" (the "arnion"). This is the Greek word for "Lamb" that deals with the Lamb as one who is in a position of honor. It is "*the* Lamb" because it is referring to the one of the context, which is the Lord Jesus Christ.

The obeisance (the homage or the worship) before Jesus Christ follows the same pattern as the one which has previously been described in Revelation 4:10 as that which was done before God the Father. Revelation 4:10 says, "The 24 elders fall down before Him that is seated on the throne (God the Father), and worship Him that lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne." They are casting their crowns in recognition of His supreme position, and in honor of Him.

So, we see that where God the Father is treated as deity in Revelation 4:10, God the Son is treated in the identical same fashion of homage and worship in Revelation 5:8, stressing to us again that the Jehovah's Witnesses are completely wrong when they teach that Jesus Christ is a mere man. They're wrong. The truth of the matter is that He is a God-man. He is 100% deity, as well as 100% humanity. You will also notice that when the living creature cherub angels fall down to worship Him, and the 24 human being elders fall down to worship Him in behalf of the church, that there is no rebuke to them for worshiping the Lamb.

**Jesus Christ is Deity**

In contrast, in Revelation 19:10, John is so carried away at this point that he proceeds to worship one of God's creatures: "And I fell at his feet to worship him, and he (the guiding angel) said unto me, "See that you don't do it. I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren that have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God, for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." So, there is very clearly only one qualified object of worship in the Bible, and that is deity. So, when we see this picture here of the living creatures and the elders falling down in worship before Jesus Christ, it makes it very clear that He is God. He is deity.

**Christ's Earthly Kingdom**

This is a long-awaited moment in human history. To really get into perspective what we are seeing here, we have to back off down the centuries, and look at this through the frame of reference of all the things that have taken place relative to people who have accepted the living God, and what He has taught, and those who have rejected the living God and refuse what He has taught. The outburst of worship takes place very pointedly at the point in time when Jesus Christ takes up His claim to His earthly kingdom, and thus imposes a divine viewpoint government on all mankind. That will be glory – when on this earth there is a divine viewpoint government imposed from above on all mankind. We cannot begin to imagine what God is going to do: when God is in charge; when God is directing; when the Son of God is passing the laws and making the rules; and, when He is enforcing morality.

I can imagine that the Son of God will come up with a very simple solution for such an evil as drug use. With one blow; with one administrative decision; and, with one supernatural act, the whole human structure could so be changed such that people become violently ill every time they take drugs. Can you imagine what would happen to the liquor industry if God just suddenly change everybody's human structure so they throw up every time they took a drink? Boy, would that change the world. That would sober things up considerably, I think. You can pass that on down the line for every evil that you can imagine. When you have a King up there who has control over the very physical mechanism, you can see that His enforcements are going to be tremendous, and why the millennium is going to be the golden age of mankind, with all of the nonsense removed that we suffer under today in every way imaginable.

From that perspective, taking this scroll suddenly tells these people in heaven that the time has come for getting everything straightened out. The taking of the scroll indicates that, at long last, the endless lists of insults against God are going to be punished. All of the world's spiritually ignorant intellectuals are finally going to pay for their rejection and their contempt of the Bible. The sophisticated, ignorant intellectuals are going to have all eternity to regret their smug pretense that the Bible did not mean what it said, and that nobody could know what it meant.

**Role Reversals**

There are going to be role-reversals in the millions – the role reversals that Lazarus and the rich man experienced, and which was expressed by the Lord in Luke 16:25 in describing the reversal of their roles in life and in death: "But Abraham said (that is, to the rich man who wanted a little water to cool his misery), 'Son, remember that you, in your lifetime, received good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things. But now he is comforted, and you are tormented.'" That verse tells you the significance of the taking of the scroll. All of creation will realize that, in that moment, the time has finally come for the execution of these reversed roles – that those who have had it so good, and have been riding so high are going to be put into the torment and the punishment they deserve. Those of God's people who have been the garbage and the off-scouring of the earth, and who have borne the miseries and the contempt and the indifference, and the smug, sophisticated abuse of the ignorant intellectuals of the world, are going to be elevated to become kings of the mountain.

Just imagine the shock when that happens – when the world's elite opinion-makers discover that simple, unpretentious, Bible doctrine-oriented Joe Schmoe is king of the mountain, and they're the horse's tail. That's the rejoicing that's taking place at this point. When the Lord takes that scroll, all the horses tails are going to discover what they are, and what they have been all along. What an intellectual humiliation for all those times that human reason was the guideline to determine what was acceptable conduct, and what were acceptable demands by God.

How many times have we heard rebellion prefaced by the words, "I can't believe that God would," and then we tell what we can't believe that God would do; what God would require; and, what God would preoccupy Himself with? How many times have I heard people say, "Oh, that's not important. I can't believe that God would even preoccupy Himself with that." Well, all of these ignorant, sophisticated intellectuals are going to discover just exactly what this God does preoccupy Himself with, and that He gave them full notice and full warning that He does preoccupy Himself with all of these things that He has recorded in the Word of God.

In thinking about this recently, I was impressed with the fact that Christians today simply recoil from being rejected by the world, and being denied some favor from a human viewpoint society. That's our problem as Christians. We recoil from being alienated and from being ostracized by the world. We recoil from putting ourselves in a position of aligning ourselves with the truth, and then finding that the world says, "OK, if you're going to do that, I'm going to deny you this favor. I'm going to deny you this thing that you want. This thing that you want that we can give you – you're not going to have it." Christians are very conscious of that. Yet, the Word of God clearly calls upon us to stand apart from Satan's system, and to stand apart from any pretense that Satan's world is acceptable to God.

Notice 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, which couldn't say it in plainer language: "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship does righteousness have with unrighteousness, and what communion does light have with darkness? Or what concord does Christ have with Belial (that is, Satan), or what part does a believer have with an infidel? And what agreement does the temple of God have with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said, 'I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Wherefore, come out from among them and be separate,' says the Lord, 'and touch not the unclean thing. And I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,' says the Lord Almighty."

Either those verses (and the principle enunciated there) are the guiding factor in your life, or they are not. Don't pretend that it's both ways. You may want something from the world bad enough to align yourself with the world, and to compromise with the world, and to soft pedal the issues that are to confront our world. In other words, you know there's an evil that the Bible declares, but you know that it's an accepted evil in society. You know that if you strike out against it, society is going to recoil and strike back at you. So, you say, "No, I don't want that. I want a favor from the world of some kind, so I'm going to avoid discussing this issue."

I don't know how many times I've been in social groups where people have come up to me and said, "There's a Catholic here present tonight." Why are they telling me that? I've had them come sometimes and say, "Somebody is attending church who's a certain denomination?" Why are they telling me that? They're telling me that because they want to be sure that I don't hurt this person's feelings, and that I don't confront them with the truth. And I have been in those groups. And when I know that they're there, I have guided the conversation over to something that I thought might be significant to them in their eternal well-being, and I've seen them get up and walk out. And I've been crushed, but not nearly as crushed as they're going to be when they discover that the taking of that scroll is going to straighten it all out, and you're going to find out who is the king of the mountain and who is the horse's tail. It's all going to be very clear, but too late for anybody to make any changes.

So, the Bible says, "Come out. Step out. Don't be part of the world system. Be a light to it." It is easy for us as believers to forget one thing that the Lord Jesus tried to prepare us for on one occasion recorded in Luke 12:51. That is that it is in the nature of Bible doctrine truth to create human divisions. It divides people into positive and negative volition types. I don't care how close those people are to you, it is in the nature of doctrinal truth to divide people into positive and negative volition types.

**Jesus Brought Division**

Jesus says: "Do you suppose that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, 'No, but rather division.' For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided: three against two; and, two against three. The Father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; and, the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." What do you think that means? They're not talking about arguing over what kind of diapers to put on the baby. They're talking about spiritual basic life principles.

And Jesus Christ says, "You are very seriously mistaken if you think that when you tell people what I have taught you, they're going to embrace you, and you're going to find a oneness within the family unit. You are going to find a division at the very closest levels of human relationships – between parents and their children, and they'll go their separate ways. Whoever wants to be negative is going to have to separate from those who are positive. It will come down to those who are your in-laws. You will separate yourself from them on the basis of your response to the Word of God. While you may keep a certain cordiality of dealing with your relatives, there will be an underlying fundamental division between you and them. That's sad, but the ultimate tragedy is that when Jesus Christ takes this scroll in hand, the significance of that division is going to become known to all of you. You will then know how expensive it was for the negative volition crowd to follow that road of separating themselves from the positive volition segment of their family.

The Bible tells us, in fact, that a godly, doctrinally-oriented believer's family will not stand by him if it means that they are going to be branded as some kind of religious fanatics. In Luke 21:16-17, this principle is enunciated by the Lord Jesus, where the Lord said, "And you shall be betrayed both by parents and brethren and kinfolk and friends, and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And you shall be hated of all men for My name's sake." What do you think that He's talking about. Is He talking about something that's going to happen in Lower Slobbovia someplace where they have a low class type of human being? No, He's talking about those who are not oriented to the Word of God, and those who have a reservation about positive response to what the Bible teaches, who want to have an out because they know it is going to cost them with a society whose favors they desire in some respect. So, they will not openly stand against that society.

This sort of thing is very clear in a communist country. To be associated with a believer in a communist country is going to cost you dearly, even if you are not a believer. So, in countries of that nature, parents will detach themselves from their children, and children from their parents, because they don't want to suffer the consequences of even being associated with someone who stands for the living God and for His truth.

**The Desire to be Accepted**

Those who function on negative volition to Bible doctrine will have little love for the spiritual light of positive believers. That's one of the things that tends to hurt us, because by our natural psychological bent, we want people to like us. That is one of the greatest problems that a Christian has to bring under control: the desire to be liked; and, the desire to be accepted. The Word of God warns us that if you are true to the Lord, you must be prepared to be rejected. That is the problem with Christians being loyal to Jesus Christ. It's tough to be rejected.

Notice John 15:18-20. The Lord, in trying to prepare His disciples for the problem of being rejected, said, "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. But because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore, the world hates you. Remember the word that I said unto you: 'The servant is not greater than his Lord.' If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also."

Well, you may say, "I'm not having any persecution? There are not any people saying any ugly things to me. I don't get any dirty looks." Well, that ought to be a little bit of a clue to you that you're playing ball with Satan's system. You're non-offensive to the system, and therefore you are not upsetting anybody's self-smug orientation in their spiritual delusions. In Luke 6:22-23, the Lord says, "Blessed are you when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you and cast out your name as evil for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for, behold, your reward is great in heaven, for in like manner did their fathers unto the prophets."

How many of us really are ready to have our names spit upon; to have our names spoken of despitefully and in contempt; and, to be treated like a piece of garbage for the sake that we have stood up and enunciated God's viewpoint in some respect? Now, you're smart. If you want the world's system to give you something, you better keep your mouth closed. You better shut up about the Word of God. You better not stand up and say, "This is wrong; the Word of God is the authority here; it speaks to us; and, it speaks to us in language we can understand." At least most people who want the world's favors are smart enough to say, "The Bible does speak about these things, but we're not clear on what it means." They can't quite get themselves to throw the Bible out, but because they love the world more than they love in personal integrity before God, they are willing to pretend that the Bible is not clear. So, the moral issues of our day are being spoken of as if they were not settled issues in the Word of God.

Those who are negative to doctrine are going to have very little love for those of you who are spiritual light in the world. The world of cultured, good-humored unbelievers is ready to kill the spiritual Christian for the light that he shines on their evil pretenses. That is what the Word of God tells us. They are ready to take your very life.

1 John 3:12-13 points that out: "Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one and killed his brother. Why did he kill him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you."

So, I told you about the preacher up north who engages in his ministry in analyzing what local political leaders stand for. And worst of all, I'll tell you the worst thing that angers them. The thing that angers them was the thing that angered Senator Bentsen here in the state of Texas in the last election, because the opposition was listing how he had voted in Congress, and he called that negative low kind of campaigning. It was negative campaigning to say, "This is what a person has done." In the Bible, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Creator of all the world, says, "By their fruits, you shall know them." But here comes a Texas senator and says, "You don't know me by the way I vote." This is why they had to put a bodyguard on the pastor I told you about, because the political entities are indignant because he is printing where people can sit and think and look and see: "This bozo voted this way on this issue, and this issue, and this issue." And he gave you the impression that he stood for something else. So, he gets these threatening notes upon his life. Don't you kid yourself that in Satan's world (in Satan's political system), they will not take your life if it's necessary to establish their authority in their evil ways?

Negative volition types have always yearned to be part of the world's lifestyle, and that's the problem. If you want to be part of the world's lifestyle, then you're going to have to compromise with standing for the truth of the Word of God. 2 Timothy 4:10 lists one of the classic examples of that, where Paul says, "For Demas has forsaken me." Demas was once a highly valued member of Paul's evangelistic team: "For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is now departed into Thessalonica." Demas went to the good time life in Thessalonica. He just got tired of not being able to enjoy the world's lifestyle. In other words, the negative volition types prefer temporal luxuries to eternal rewards.

We have previously pointed out that Luke 18:22-23 say this very thing to the rich young ruler: "Now when Jesus heard these things, He said unto him, 'Yet, you lack one thing. Sell all that you have. Distribute it unto the poor. You shall have treasures in heaven. Come follow me.' When he heard this, he was very sorrowful, for he was very rich." Here was a coveting young man who preferred his temporal possessions and luxuries to eternal reward. Jesus Christ gave him the greatest proposition in the world. He said, "Get rid of what you have. Unload your possessions. Get rid of all those business problems that you have upon yourself. Follow me. Enter the ministry with Me, and I'm going to make you rich beyond your fondest dreams in heaven." And the rich young ruler said, "I'll keep my cash now. I don't care about what's in heaven now." That is the negative volition type. That is the type of person that has been in prominence in our society, and has made Christians look like fools for their sacrifice, and their doing without, and all the things they do.

Well, I'm here to tell you folks, when Jesus Christ takes that scroll, and the anthem of joy and praise and adoration and exhilaration breaks out, that is the moment of truth. That's what we're going to put in perspective who is king of the mountains and who really is the horse's tail?

The true followers of Jesus Christ placed no material possession above serving Him and His cause. There is nothing that is so dear as His service.

Luke 5:11 puts it this way, concerning the sons of Zebedee, when Jesus appealed to them: "And when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all, and followed Him." That's the way to go – forsaking it all, and following Him. When God gives you prosperity, great. You take it in stride. When God gives you poverty, you take it in equal stride. As Paul says, "Whether you are in a state of want or a state of luxury, it makes no difference to him, but to know Christ, and to know Him in His resurrection – that's the thing that counts, and to be able to function with Him in storing those treasures in heaven.

You can add to that Luke 14:33, which says, "So likewise, whoever he is of you that does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple." That is a shocking verse. Whoever doesn't forsake every other thing that you possess and say, "Jesus is everything – the Lord is all," you can't be His disciple. That's the problem we have with Christians – this sitting on both sides of the line. They're out there in the world: this getting along; this compromising; this not offending the world; and, this not telling the world what it really is, in order that we have its favors and its goodwill. Jesus Christ says, "When you do that, you're playing for personal gain, and don't kid yourself – you're not My disciple." Now, you might as well find that out here, because when He takes that scroll, and everything is put into perspective, you're going to find it out then.

Those who sacrifice for the Lord's work, however, are not going to go unrewarded. Matthew 19:29-30: "And everyone that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for My namesake shall receive 100-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first." Many who are the donkey's tales are going to be the kings of the mountain; and, many kings of the mountain now are going to be the horse's tail.

That's the difference. Yet how many of us have ever been called upon to do verse 29, let alone are willing to do it? How many have ever been called upon to forsake a home to live in, and to abandon our brothers and our sisters within a family for the Lord's sake? How many of us have had to stand against a mother or a father in order to stand for holiness and integrity? How many of you have ever had to separate yourself from a negative volition husband or wife, and take your stand with the Lord, and suffer the misery of a marriage of a goat with a sheep? How many of you have had to face separation from your own children when they take a stand for evil? Then you say, "Here is the line," and you draw it in the dirt, and you say, "This is God's side, and that Satan's side. And if you're on that side, then you're not on my side." That's tough to say to your children. It's easy to say to somebody else's children. How many of us ever had to give away any valued possession like our lands, which in this context was money in the bank?

It's easy to talk about what we would do, but when Jesus Christ straightens it all out in heaven, you're going to find that it was nothing to have abandoned those human relationships and those human possessions, because God will not let it go unrewarded. Positive volition believers will experience the hurt, indeed, of being deserted by negative volition believers, and being left to carry on. That's probably one of the toughest things for us to take and still say, "I'm standing for what is right:" Somebody you counted on; somebody close; and, somebody among the believers may say, "I've had it with you. I don't like it. I'm shoving off, I'm deserting. I'm abandoning."

Acts 15:36-38 tell us about that: "And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, 'Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.'" Paul says to his evangelistic partner, Barnabas, "Let's have a second missionary tour, and see what has happened to the churches that we have established:" "And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark (John Mark – you all know him well). But Paul thought it not good to take him with them who departed from them from Pamphylia, and did not go with them to the work."

Someplace along the line, John Mark, part of the team, left them. Here they are on foreign soil, struggling against all the opposition of the gentile authorities, and of the religious Jewish world. They're trying to proclaim salvation by the grace of God. And they have this joker on the team who says, "Man, this is too hard. I want to go back home to my mother." That's probably exactly what he did, because we have strong reason to believe that John's Mark's mother was a pretty wealthy lady, and her home became a center in Jerusalem for the gathering of believers. And John Mark was not above deserting the party in the middle of ministries.

How many of you have ever had that experience? I've had it many times. I've had people in the middle of summer camp who decide they are going home for one reason or another. They are the contemptuous, lowest-kind of characters imaginable, but they present themselves as something dignified. They desert a ministry because it is not exactly the way they think it should be, but they never go out and make one that's just quite right, like they know it could be.

We need the gutsy type of believer who stands by his post; who keeps on the firing line; who stays in the angelic conflict; and, who seeks to improve the battle to win the victory, and to improve the tactics, or whatever it takes. But he doesn't abandon the team in the midst of battle.

However, if you're going to be a positive volition believer, I guarantee you that that negative crowd is going to shove off. Expect it, and never try to stop them. Christians are going to pay a big price for negative volition to God's Word and for negligence in their service to Him.

**Accountability**

Luke 12:47-48 make that very clear: "And that servant who knew his Lord's will and did not prepare himself, neither did according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes. But unto whomever much is given, of him shall be required much. And to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." This is a spiritual principle, and that's why we have cause to believe that, out in eternity, there will be less punishment for those who have had less instruction in the Word of God, and have found themselves in the position of judgment. There will be greater punishment and greater loss on the part of Christians who have had instruction, and who have been negative to it. You're going to be held accountable for the fact of what you've been taught.

That's why people who attend the Bible doctrine-preaching churches are the ones who put themselves in the greatest hazard in their relationship to God in eternity. At least the clods who go down to the churches that are ritual and legalistic and liturgical, and go through forms and ceremonies, and give you a little emotional kick and make you feel good, are not putting you in jeopardy (in personal loss and judgment) of God as those who have taught you the Word of God.

So, the church-age believer is to possess the stability as God's witness in a time of rejection; in a time of ridicule; and, in a time of rebuke, and to do that at the hands of those who are destined for the humiliation of the lake of fire. Human viewpoint judges the reliability of a Christian witness on the basis of how important he is in social circles, and how much of a stranger he is.

This is another problem that can weigh heavily upon a believer. The Lord presented this problem in Matthew 13:53-57. Who are you? Are you a person important in the community? Do you have social standing? Therefore, people think that you can speak on a subject. Have you noticed that when these great evangelists, when they have great campaigns, they want to prove that Christianity is true by getting somebody who is big in the entertainment world; somebody who's big in the athletic world; or, somebody who's big in the business world? And you listen to these people talking, and what do you hear? Well, you get the impression that if this person says Christianity is real, it must be real. But the Word of God says that you, who are the humble Joe Schmoes, and who really know the truth, are going to be held in contempt, and you will be rejected. But don't let it put you down.

Matthew 13:53: "And it came to pass that when Jesus had finished these parables, He departed from there, and when He was coming to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, 'From where has this man received this wisdom and these mighty works? Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother called Mary, and his brethren James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And His sisters – aren't they with us all? From where then has this man received all these things?' And they were offended in Him. But Jesus said unto them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, and in his own house. And He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief."

That's right, folks. The people who are your relatives are going to say, "Who do you think you are? I've known you," especially if they knew you as a baby: "I used to change your diapers, and you're telling me about God and spiritual things and about heaven? Who do you think you?" They're not going to listen to you. And somebody else says, "Oh, I've known you all my life. How can you know anything more than I know?" Somebody says, "You're not important. I know your mother. Your mother's got a common name – Mary. Everybody is called 'Mary.' If it isn't Mary, it's Paul. If it isn't Paul, it's John. All the mothers are called that. Who are you? And I know your brothers. I know them. They're just like any other kid. You're no superior family. In fact, I know you're sisters." Jesus had several half-sisters: "Who are you?"

Jesus said, "That's the way it is. Be prepared to have them turn their noses up at you because, in your own country, you're going to be without honor." But when Jesus Christ takes that scroll, all of those relatives are going to have their eyeteeth fall out; their mouths are going to fall open; and, they're going to regret that they did not listen to you. They had a golden opportunity for their eternity to have been improved had they listened to you.

The believer with divine viewpoint truth (and it can be known) is the only kind of person who enjoys genuine freedom from Satan's delusions in every area of life. John 8:32 says, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

So, while the Christian's witnessing is used as a reason to mistreat him, and he knows what the lost are in for, he takes the abuse in order to try to save them from what Satan has in store for them.

So, I say to you today, be sure that you know the Word of God, and then act accordingly, because when that scroll is unrolled, you are going to be vindicated. You will not be discredited when you stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. You will be vindicated. That is the great thing which He has placed before you. It's a burden, and it's a responsibility. And if you're not prepared to take the gaff, and you're not prepared to take the flack, then you don't know what the Christian life is all about. But the time is going to come when you will be vindicated.

That is why, when Jesus Christ takes that scroll, that scene in heaven, as we shall see, explodes into one rolling thunder of praise and song after another, because the moment has come – that point in time when we're going to find out who's right and who's wrong. Then the consequences are going to be enormous.

So, I would urge you to be ready to stand up for the Lord; to expect to get the kind of reaction you're going to get; and, to be treated as the horse's tail. But I can assure you on the Word of God that you are going to end up as king of the mountain.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1982

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