

Sermon to the Saints which are at Topeka, Kansas -- Sunday, April 23, 2023

“[T]o him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” (Revelation 1:6b)

We have been working through the introductory words of the Apostle John regarding the Revelation of Jesus Christ. This will be the ninth installment for the sermon series that can be found on our website, www.godhatesfags.com that is titled *Revelation – A Passage By Passage Analysis*. Once I have worked through this first chapter, it in fairness means that over the past decade plus I have – or another elder in this body has – presented a solid exposition of nearly the whole book of The Revelation. A whole array of sermons have been done on chapters 2-3 and the churches discussed there. Chapters 4-5, introducing the scene that prepares the creation for the removal of the seven seals, have had some good work. Distinct series have covered the opening of the seals and the blowing of the trumpets – which takes you to Revelation chapter 11. A separate engagement just about the two witnesses and the explosive rise of the Antichrist has covered a number of sermons, so chapter 11’s text has been quite thoroughly vetted. At least three sermons have been done on chapter 12. Chapters 13 – 19 have been examined through discussions of the Antichrist, the False Prophet, false religious systems (the Great Whore named Babylon), the seven vials, and the battle at Armageddon. That also has led to a thorough look at chapter 19’s wedding of the Bride (the Church) and Groom (Christ) and the supper that follows. Chapter 20, with the imprisonment and then loosing of Satan and the great white throne, has had a good bit of attention – though perhaps not specifically as a work to itself. And the final two chapters have been referenced plenty, but remain as a specialized work to be expounded. So, if we stacked all of those sermons into this series, we would have a decent structure for a student to consume regarding most of the book. It has been a very wonderful time. Now back to chapter one, and some thoughts on these closing words of verse six.

Last time I spoke, I took up the latter part of verse five and then verse six, just preceding these words about which I want to give exposition today. To place your hearts and minds back into the context, I think these efficient thoughts from Matthew Henry might be helpful: *“[Christ] has loved them, and, in pursuance of that everlasting love, he has, First, Washed them from their sins in his own blood. Sins leave a stain upon the soul, a stain of guilt and of pollution. Nothing can fetch out this stain but the blood of Christ; and, rather than it should not be washed out, Christ was willing to shed his own blood, to purchase pardon and purity for them. Secondly, He has made them kings and priests to God and his Father. Having justified and sanctified them, he makes them kings to his Father; that is, in his Father’s account, with his approbation, and for his glory. As kings, they overcome the world, mortify sin, govern their own spirits, conquer Satan, have power and prevalence with God in prayer, and shall judge the world. He hath made them priests, given them access to God, enabled them to enter into the holiest and to offer spiritual and acceptable sacrifices, and has given them an unction suitable to this character”*.

So we will now examine the closing words of verse six where John reminds the perfected church that the underpinning of all the blessings and graces he is preparing to lay out lies in two truths about our Christ – eternal glory and dominion. The word **“glory”** comes from the Greek word *“doxa”* (*“dox’-ah”*), where we get the term *“doxology”* – translated: words that give dignity,

honor, worship, and praise. It is, when properly understood in relationship to the duty of the human creature, an act of celebration and giving of thanks. That is to say, what is there for a human to do in response to receiving any proper view of the work of election – through providence, to the outcome of redemption – except to instantly go into a celebratory outburst of energy? Charles Spurgeon offers these more general thoughts about the sensitive soul in praise: *“Brethren, the very best work which we ever do on earth is to adore. You are blessed in prayer, but you are seven times blessed in praise. When you get to the doxology, it is the benediction made more sublime. The benediction takes wings and mounts into a celestial atmosphere, when you begin to adore and magnify him that loved you, and washed you from your sins. There is one thing that adoration does: it helps us to see: and when you close your eyes in adoration, you see more than when you have them open in any other way.”*

In his work called *The Glory of Christ*, expositor John Owen puts a much greater emphasis on the duty we have to be in constant thought and praise in the face of this knowledge about Christ’s role in our salvation and ... looking at the context of today’s sermon ... the time of the redemption of our bodies: *“No creature could conceive how omnipotent wisdom, power, and goodness, could actuate themselves unto the production of this effect [i.e., election]. The mystery hereof is the object of the admiration of angels, and will be so of the whole church, unto all eternity. ... What mind can conceive, what tongue can express, who can sufficiently admire, the wisdom, goodness, and condescension of God herein? And whereas he has proposed unto us this glorious object of our faith and meditation, how vile and foolish are we, if we spend our thoughts about other things in a neglect of it!”* Wonderful, though rather daunting, words for our ears to take in and our hearts to ponder. Why would a soul impressed with his salvation seek to spend any moment of our short lives – when not pressed into the work of sustaining life – that is not in contemplation and praise and celebration of our Christ; in giving of glory to His blessed name?

“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” (John 17:24)

This passage was given some attention by Ben in December 2022. It was the last of his sermons on Christ’s Farewell Address. He takes a good look at it in that context, to wit:

“His will is that those people would ‘be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.’ And of course, that is into eternity future – ‘so shall we ever be with the Lord.’ (1 Thess. 4:17). ... He wants us to be with him where He is – He’s preparing a place for us so He can receive us to Himself (John 14:2-3) - this is His greatest desire! ... He tells us that He wants us to be there so ‘that they may behold my glory.’ ... the idea here is that we are not just going to look at it, but we are going to experience and participate in it.”

These are all really good thoughts about Christ’s words, and I recommend the entire 19-sermon series to return your hearts to the goodness and graciousness of God and Christ articulated by our Savior in His address. For purposes of this sermon, however, we’re going to take a bit of a deeper dive into this expression ***“that they may behold my glory”***, because the expression brings

us to the end ... the conclusion ... of what was begun in His first advent; to the place where John closes the loop with ***“to him be glory”*** in his introduction of the Revelation.

“And Aaron [the High Priest] shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself: And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail: And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not:” (Leviticus 16:11-13)

This passage, part of the establishment of the types in the worship of God by Jews in the wilderness, gives us a good vantage point to examine Christ’s words. This practice of the High Priest was to present unto God on behalf of the people a sweet-smelling savor surrounding the sacrifice of atonement. The incense burning would fill up the holy of holies with a cloud – crowding out every smell except the smell of obedience and submission in the presentation of that propitious sacrifice. In answer to this type, our great High Priest – Jesus the Christ – being entered into the ***“more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands”*** (Hebrews 9:11), filled the heavens above, the glorious place of God’s residence, with a cloud of incense, or the sweet perfume of His blessed intercession. This intercession expresses Christ’s desires to the Father for the application of all the benefits flowing from His sacrifice ... to the elect souls given Him in the Covenant of Grace. Among those purchased benefits is Christ’s desire that His people may behold His glory. That His elect saints might receive the advantage ... the benefit ... the satisfaction ... indeed the blessedness of beholding it.

Joseph, when he was engaged with his brothers, whose vile and cowardly acts had worked in God’s providence to bring a thing to pass, he said: ***“ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt”*** (Genesis 45:13). This was not said in pageantry. He was not seeking to boast of his personal honor or accomplishments. It was because he knew the satisfaction that would come to his earthly father in the knowledge of his having been spared and put into a position to effectuate the promise of God to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob. Likewise, Christ here knows the satisfaction that will fill the hearts and spirits of His people to see His glory!

“Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.” (Hebrews 6:20)

If our Forerunner has entered ... what more do we need for confidence that we will likewise have an entrance ministered abundantly into that everlasting kingdom (2 Peter 1:11), into the very presence of God? Nothing will satisfy the saints like a full understanding of the glory of Christ, as John Owen helpfully articulates: *“The hearts of believers are like the needle touched by the loadstoneⁱ, which cannot rest until it comes to the point whereunto, by the secret virtue of it, it is directed. For being once touched by the love of Christ, receiving therein an impression of secret ineffable virtue, they will ever be in motion, and restless, until they come unto him, and behold*

his glory.” Once having tasted of the **“powers of the world to come”** (Hebrews 6:5), we spend our remaining days trained on that lodestone to see the blessed outcome.

Amazingly, the unwashed inhabitants of this world are not allowed to see the glory of Christ. They look upon him and declare **“ICHABOD! Where is the glory?”** **“he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men”** (Isaiah 53:4). Like that faithless simpleton Michal, despising the sight of David dancing before the Ark of the Covenant, the reprobates cannot form a notion of that glory. They have never been **“once enlightened, [or] tasted of the heavenly gift”** (Hebrews 6:4), so there is no attraction to the majesty that is Christ. They only have vain and banal substitutes that are dry ... dead ... milquetoast ... facile ... lukewarm. Ben recently spoke of Paul’s chastisements against that altar to the unknown god, whom the Athenians ignorantly worshipped. They simply cannot know Him because they are not allowed.

But Christ did not only seek that His people would see His glory while in this life – howsoever heartening and strengthening it is to those souls to be given such sight. He also intends those saints to experience – or see – the perfection of that glory in heaven. Paul, when contemplating for the Corinthians the sorrowful notion that the saints would be limited to this life in the sight of Christ’s glory, he declares: **“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.”** (1 Corinthians 15:19) If we have nothing more than this life – even with all it has to offer in satisfaction of the **“lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life”** (1 John 2:16) – then we would indeed have forfeited all the best for the human creature in the vain hope of something more. So it is a valid question to ask a soul why they would even utter the words that they desire to be with Christ, and to behold His glory. In most instances, the best you would receive in response is something that reflects a desire to avoid a vague sense of the alternative – an evil outcome ... a punitive outcome ... an eternity in hell. The question is, what is the root of a sincere desire to see the eternal glory of Christ ... the perfection of His glory in heaven? Saving faith.

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.” (1 Peter 1:18-21)

It is faith – a gift of grace from the father – that allows us both the sincere desire and the ability to see the glory of the Christ. The faith to see it in this life and the hope – anchored in the very throne of God (Hebrews 6:19) – that our faith will be translated to sight at the appointed hour of our change, then perfected at the second coming of Christ. In general terms, I believe this is at the core of the language in John’s closing words of verse six with respect to the glory of Christ ... though there is a more directly relevant application of this core truth in the passage, and we will get to that. But first, some consideration of the notion of **“dominion”**.

In the simple form of the Greek word “kratos” (“krat’-os”), it means “force, strength, power, might”. But in application throughout scripture it has more to do with the expression of that force, strength, power, or might. So, for example, we have these two passages that appear to be referencing the rank and file of angels:

“Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:” (Ephesians 1:21)

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“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:” (Colossians 1:16)

Similar to these are the expressions in Jude and 2 Peter, identifying the “**filthy dreamers**” that are renowned for how they “**despise dominion**” (Jude 1:8), or as Peter puts it “**despise government**” (2 Peter 2:10). The notion is that the reprobate despises not just God Himself, but all those who receive His affection both in the human and angelic races. The term “**dominion**” is an expression of that grander race of creatures that are endowed with a strength and power in action much greater than the human race. Of course, if there is such grandeur in any creature, it is nothing more than a weak reflection of the perfection of that power in the Creator.

Christ is identified throughout the Bible with special marks of His divinity, with reference to His dominion or government over the creation. Isaiah’s oft-repeated expression is a wonderful example of expressing the eternal nature of that government connected with his first and second advents:

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.” (Isaiah 9:6-7)

Similarly, in the prophecy of Zechariah, after describing Christ in the lowly state of His first advent, he speaks of this universal power and rule of the Christ in His second declaring “**his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.” (Zechariah 9:10)**. We know that the recorders of the synoptic gospels declared Christ’s dominion over nature in many of His miraculous works; the “**winds and sea**” (Matthew 8:27), the “**unclean spirits**” (Mark 1:27), indeed “**all things**” in heaven and earth (John 3:35). Christ is plainly declared to have dominion over the church in Ephesians 1:21-22, and all “**angels and authorities and powers**” are made subject to Him who has “**gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God**” (1 Peter 3:22). So in the absolute sense, we can certainly understand that the “**King of kings and Lord of lords**”

will have dominion ***“in his time”*** (1 Timothy 6:15). It is a settled doctrine ... a beautiful doctrine ... a comforting doctrine.

To bring these truths – that unto Christ will be glory and dominion – down to an effectual understanding of the words of John in opening the Apocalypse, it is time to consider the specific sense in which John is making reference to it. That will require us to look at the use of this coupling – glory and dominion – in a companion passage.

“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. ... Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. ... But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away [Antichrist’s] dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.”
(Daniel 7:13-14, 22, 26-27)

I’ve previously done a fuller look at the vision of Daniel chapter sevenⁱⁱ, so this is not designed to be a full examination of the entire vision that Daniel was given there. The context of the words above is that Daniel sees the rise of Antichrist (small horn), his taking of the world kingdom, and the great wickedness that is carried out against the Lord’s people – ***“the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them”*** (Daniel 7:21). So the Antichrist has the glory and dominion from and over the whole earth’s population. He is overseeing the governance of the earth through the ten kingdoms that has taken to himself (i.e., ***“ten horns that were in his head”*** (Daniel 7:20). After the period of time that is appointed to the Antichrist tyrant – ***“a time and times and the dividing of time”*** (Daniel 7:25) ... or 3 ½ years – there is a change in the kingdom. There is a change in the entity that will receive dominion and glory – on the earth! I set out the three places in the discussion of the vision where this is articulated. The way the vision is reported, the important components – i.e., the engagement between Antichrist, Christ, and the saints – are repeated three times. In each round of discussion, the outcome is the same.

Christ is given glory and dominion as he unseats Antichrist, takes His earthly throne, and the promise made to those of His conquering saints in His letter to Thyatira will be fulfilled, to wit:

“And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.” (Revelation 2:26-27)

Close to 600 years later, John is exiled to the island prison called Patmos and he is given a clear vision that sets forth in detail what is shown cryptically and metaphorically in the vision Daniel received. The incredible specifics in the detailed outline of events. The timeline is clearer, the

players are more defined, the rise and the fall of Antichrist and those who engage for and with him are better articulated. The positioning and engagement of the saints – both Jew and Gentile – is more comprehensively known. The shaking of the natural creation and those non-human combatants that join the fray are defined. John is still nearly 2,000 years away from the events he's witnessing, but even remotely, he receives such an exhilarating sight that twice his trembling spirit was brought to the point where he mistakenly started to worship the instructing angel (Revelation 19:10, 22:8).

Now he comes to record it – one of those ***“holy men of God [who] spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:21)*** appointed to instruct the righteous. He has seen the amazing sights, heard the amazing sounds, wept and rejoiced and worshipped. Pregnant with the things he will soon pour out, he provides an introduction to set the proverbial stage for his subject. He knows what Daniel saw and wrote. He gets the reality that the vision we (in this generation) know as the writings of Daniel chapter seven revealed that there was a day when the glory and dominion in this earth was going to pass from the last failed human kingdom into the hands of the King of eternity. He knows that what he is preparing to describe is the fulfillment of that amazing vision.

So he tells us – *“my dear friends, Christ has prepared all of the saints – some who will be brought from their peaceful sleep, others who will be alive at that astonishing hour – to go forth to that earth-rending event when **‘the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.’** Daniel recorded his vision of it, many prophets echoed it, and when I’m done recording what I saw and heard, you will have an unmistakable template for how that blessed time of transition will fall out. To Christ will be granted glory and dominion before your very eyes!”*

Nearly 2,000 years later -- more than 2,500 years after Daniel uttered the words from his vision – a collection of souls are approaching the time in earnest. The kingdoms of the world are shaking. The infrastructure of the human race and the very earth herself is degrading in preparation for the riding of the white, red, black, and pale horses and the utter dissolution of the sixth seal. Nobody who has eyes to see can miss that ***“the fig tree[s]’ branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves”*** ... that ***“summer is near” (Mark 13:28)***. By any reasonable and scriptural calculation, it will only be a very short time before Christ will receive ***“glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen.”*** He will receive his earthly kingdom. All the living race – together with the saints who are occupying land and skies, and their elect angel friends – will give glory to the Son of God as King of kings and Lord of lords. He will have dominion – ***“every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear” (Isaiah 45:23)*** that He is ruler of all the earth.

So, doxology should erupt in our spirits. Our spirits should be enflamed at present to be joined with the voices recorded in this blessed book – at that later time when the pre-Revelation providence has come to close, and the Day of the Lord opens before the congregated saints and angels in heaven and earth.

“And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.” (Revelation 5:11-12)

I love you all. Amen.

ⁱ The “lodestone” references that remarkable material found in the earth that is naturally magnetized. The material has been used for centuries by those who navigate the earth and seas to show them true north. “Lode” is an old English expression meaning “Pathway”, so the “lodestone” is the stone that helps those on a pathway to stay on course.

ⁱⁱ The vision Daniel received in chapter seven was discussed in a pair of sermons on January 5, 2020 and March 22, 2020 ... both as part of the series done on Jews in Eschatology that can be found at this link:
<https://godhatesfags.com/audio/sermonseries/eschatology-regarding-the-jews.html>.