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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Divine Purpose #33

“The Consummation of the Covenantal Program (4):

The Kingdom of God - II”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee again for the privilege of the study of the Scriptures. And we thank Thee for the way in which they reveal to us so many things concerning life, itself, the basis of life in salvation through Christ, our present life by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and our future hope through the events that lie ahead of us. We give Thee thanks and praise for the sufficiency of the word of God. We pray that as we study we may profit from our time together and grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In whose name we pray. Amen.

[Message] We’re turning again to Revelation chapter 20, and looking specifically tonight again at verse 1 through 6. You’ll notice the outline for lecture thirty-one looks very much like the outline last week; but the differences lie in the second division of the outline in Roman II, the fourth last thing, “The Kingdom of the Messiah.” And we want

to spend our time tonight, specifically, in that part of the outline. And then, next week, the Lord willing, I think, we shall be able to finish our outline.

This is the study of the Kingdom of God and, of course, this particular chapter is very significant for that. So let me read verses 4 through 6, before we begin. I'm reading from the New American Standard Bible.

"Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years."

I mentioned last week, in the introduction to the first of our series on Revelation chapter 20, and the subject "The Kingdom of God" as seen here, that the basis of man's dreams of a Utopia, an El Dorado, is found in the biblical teaching of the word of God, and the apocalypse as one might expect is the capstone of the teaching. John's apocalypse and, specifically, in the latter part of it has seven last things set forth. In fact, as I mention in the outline, it concludes with seven last things.

We have an introduction in verse 1 through 10 of chapter 19, and then the first of the last things is the description of the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus, given in verse 11 through verse 16, to which we looked a few weeks ago.

Then in verse 17 through verse 21, that which is the equivalent of the final struggle, in which the beast and the false prophet are finally cast into the lake of fire, which burns with brimstone and the operations of those on the earth, who have been opposing the authority of God in heaven come to an end with the work of our Lord. In chapter 20, verse 1 through 3, we have the third of the last things; and that's the binding of Satan. And the fourth is the kingdom of the Messiah, of which we've just read in our Scripture reading. The fifth last thing is the last rebellion, a strange section, no doubt. In fact, everyone who reads this finds this rather strange.

And here, we have the last rebellion, verse 7 through verse 10. And following that, we have the Great White Throne judgment, which concludes chapter 20. And, finally, in chapter 21, verse 1 through chapter 22 in verse 5, the seventh last thing; the new heavens and the new earth.

Now, we comment upon the fact that these things are linked together and called by many scholars "the last things of the book" because they begin with a little phrase or a little clause that's similar. Notice verse 11 of chapter 19, "And I saw heaven opened." Verse 17, "And I saw an angel standing in the sun." As a matter of fact, we have another one in verse 19, but as one looks at the context of that paragraph, it certainly seems to be a subordinate clause; that is, subordinate in the development of the argument. But we do have the same clause, "And I say the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assemble to make war against Him who sat upon the horse, and against His army." Verse 20, verse 1 of chapter 20, begins in the same way, "And I saw

an angel coming down from heaven." In verse 4, "And I saw thrones and they sat upon them." In verse 11, "And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it." This is the sixth of the last things. And then the seventh in chapter 21, verse 1, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth."

Now, that little clause is very important because one can see that these visions are presented by John as visions that follow, one right after the other. If this is true, if this is true to the chronology of the subject of these visions, then, of course, we have rather obvious support for a pre-millennial viewpoint because we have our Lord's Second Coming in chapter 19, verse 11 through verse 16. We have the final conflict by which the enemies of the Lord meet their defeat; specifically, the beast and the false prophet. Then we have the binding of Satan and the description of the Kingdom of God, followed by the brief rebellion, the Great White Throne judgment, and the new heavens and the new earth.

Now, you know, of course, that the term "premillennial," "postmillennial," "amillennial," is a term that relates the coming of Christ to the kingdom. When we say the coming of the Lord Jesus is premillennial, we mean that the coming of the Lord takes place before the Kingdom of God upon the earth. If we use the term post-millennial, then since post, the Latin prefix means after, we are saying that the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus is after the Kingdom of God. If we use the term amillennial, "a" being the alpha pre-dative in Greek, used to negative in Greek, then we mean there is no Kingdom of God upon the earth. So premillennial; our Lord comes before the Kingdom of God; amillennial, there is no Kingdom of God upon the earth; postmillennial, he comes after the Kingdom of God upon the earth.

Well, you can see if this order is really the order of these events, chronologically, we have his coming, the final conflict, the binding of Satan, and the Kingdom of God described. And so in the Johannine order, the Coming of Christ is pre-millennial. That is his coming precedes the Kingdom of God upon the earth.

Everyone who holds other views is, of course, anxious to disprove that particular argument. In fact, one of the outstanding amillennialists, in his book discussing this, admits that that's a very fine support for a premillennial viewpoint. Some seek to support their view by a recapitulation argument; that is, if they can show that chapter 20, is a recapitulation in time. In other words, if verses 1 through 3, go back to the time of the first coming, then that would destroy the progress of the visions in a chronological way.

Now, we made reference to this last week, but tonight, if we have time, I want to deal with that a bit more specifically at one of the points in the study. If we don't do it tonight, we'll do it next week.

Now, we did also make one point; that there seems to be progression in these visions chronologically. Now, mind you, John could be just giving visions that he saw and the events within the visions do not follow, necessarily, chronologically. You have to study the visions a little more closely in order to determine an answer to that question.

But we did point out that in chapter 19 in verse 17 through verse 21, we have the beast and the false prophet. They are seized and they are thrown alive into the lake of fire, which burns with brimstone. And then in chapter 20, verse 7 through verse 10, we find reference to them again, and the Devil, verse 10, "And the Devil, who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false

prophet are also." So that would seem to indicate then, that there is progression through the contents of the visions.

Furthermore, we pointed out that there is a specific statement to that effect in verse 7. "And when the thousand years are completed." We're talking about chapter 20. "When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison." So there are indications that the contents of the visions do follow in chronological succession. And if we can show that, I think, we can show that then we have presented an extremely strong argument for a premillennial viewpoint.

Now, last week, we spent a bit of time on the binding of Satan, and we sought to show that it was future. We tried to deal with some of the objections that were made trying to link the binding of Satan with the statements made in Mark chapter 3, verse 26 and 27, an incident in our Lord's earthly ministry. For those of you that were not here, let me just briefly recapitulate what we talked about.

Verse 26 and verse 27, the Lord Jesus has just preformed a miracle. And in the course of the discussion in which he is accused of being possessed with Beelzebub, he says in the 26th verse, "And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is finished. But no one can enter the strong man's house and plunder his property unless he first binds the strong man and then he will plunder his house." And on the basis of that, it has been contended that the Lord Jesus bound the "strong man" in his work on the cross, and that what we are looking at in Revelation chapter 20, is a symbolical picture of what happened in the first advent, when the blood was shed on Calvary's cross.

Further, in order to support this those who hold a contrary view to mine say that when we read, "and through him into the abyss and shut it and sealed it over him so

that he should not deceive the nations any longer," great attempts have been made to point out that when we say that Satan is bound. That is, when those who hold that view say that Satan is bound, they do not mean he's bound in every way. Obviously, one should take that view and many used to take that view. They used to simply say, "Satan was bound by Christ's blood, shed on the cross." Well, biblical students read statements like, "The devil goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour," and they all have made the statement, "If the devil is bound, he certainly has a long chain."

Well, in order to meet that objection, then those who want to contend that he's still bound, because, you see, they have to say that, they have to refer back, otherwise this chronological procession of these visions and the contents of them destroy any sense of opposing viewpoints or, at least, a very strong argument is given contrary to them. They have said that we must think that the Lord Jesus has bound Satan only in this respect; that he should not deceive the nations any longer. So that today, the nations are not being deceived; but the nations are being won for the Gospel of Christ.

Now, we sought to show that if that's true, then one finds it very difficult to understand 2 Corinthians chapter 4, verses 3 and 4, where Paul, writing about things in the present day, following our Lord's sacrifice on the cross, says, "And even if our gospel." This is verse 3 and 4 of 2 Corinthians 4, "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." So today is a day in which Satan is blinding the minds of men.

Now, sometimes it is said that he is blinding the minds of men but those who are the elect are able to believe. Well, that's an extremely weak argument because, of course, the elect were able to believe in the Old Testament times before the cross, which is supposed to be the time at which Christ bound Satan. So that argument really is an argument that is very, very lacking in strong support.

But further, it has an even greater weakness. I mentioned that sometimes people say, when some premillennialists, I am not among them, I don't agree with the premillennialists on every point. Some of the premillennialists, particularly, the premillennial dispensationalists and I don't, necessarily, think that everything that they say is wrong, either but affirm that the last chapters of the Book of Ezekiel, in which there is a temple set forth with sacrifices and offerings made, those who hold to that particular situation as being somewhat literal, affirm that those offerings that are offered during the kingdom age are offerings that we could call "memorial" offerings. That is, they are not really offerings by which sin is removed; but they are memorial of what Christ did in his coming on the cross. And since the kingdom is an age in which many Jewish people would be in there, in the Kingdom of God, they might think of carrying out memorial offerings and sacrifices similarly to the way we think of the Lord's Supper. That is, we observe the Lord's Supper as a memorial of what Christ has accomplished. So in that age, as a memorial of their own historical background, they will offer the sacrifices.

Now, it's, I think, a rather difficult question, but my own views are not similar to that. Sometime I'd like to speak about them but we don't have time to do it now. I simply say this; that when one reads the Epistle to the Hebrews and reads the great stress that that author makes on the finished work of Christ, and that the Levitical cultus

has been done away with, it's very difficult to think that anything like that will be a part of the Kingdom of God upon the earth. So a legitimate criticism against that view, I think, lies in that objection.

But, now, can you not see that the same kind of thing is found here, by regarding the view of these individuals who use that argument against premillennialists. Because what they are saying is this; Christ, by his work on the cross, bound the Devil, so that he should not deceive the nations. That's the effect of the shedding of the blood on Calvary's cross, which was a finished work. But now, we read in verse 7 of chapter 20, "And when the thousand years are completed, Satan is released from his prison." In other words, the finished work of Christ is not really finished or it's not a completed work which accomplishes what it is said is accomplished. That is, the strong man is bound because he's released again. It's the same kind of thing that, in a sense, speaks against the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ and detracts, I think, from the glory of his finished work.

So what we then find in the binding of Satan is what naturally follows after the Second Advent of Christ, and in the light of the fact that the Kingdom of God is going to exist on earth with the Lord present we have Satan bound for a thousand years. We gave, at the conclusion of our study last time, some theological and some philosophical reasons why we should expect a Kingdom of God upon the earth. It's a very reasonable thing. Essentially, since sin occurred in history, since the Cross occurred in history, and the forgiveness of sin occurred in history, since the resurrection occurred in history, it's and, since, incidentally, the creation about us has been subjected to the curse because of what happened in history in the Garden of Eden, and since the creation has not yet been delivered from the curse, though Christ has died for sin and its effects, what more

reasonable thing could we expect than to have a Kingdom of God upon the earth, in which the full effects of the finished work of the Lord Jesus are manifested to the whole creation.

So it's very reasonable, I think, to expect that Satan should be bound and that the Kingdom of God should be upon the earth in visible, physical, spiritual form. And that's why in verse 3, in the last clause, we read, "After these things," not "he shall be released" but "he must be released for a short time." In other words, there is a logical necessity in the binding of Satan and the release of Satan because of the theological significance of his binding and his loosing. Notice carefully that little word "must." That's a word in the original text that refers to logical necessity. In the New Testament, we have three words for necessity that are fairly common. One refers to moral necessity; one refers to a necessity that is located in the natural constitution of things, and probably the most common is the word that refers to logical necessity and that's the word that's used here, "He must logically be released for a short time." Now, that's the third last thing.

Let's turn, now, to the fourth last thing, the Kingdom of the Messiah, verses 4 through 6, and capital "A" in our outline, "The Vision of the Thrones and the Saints." The Apostle John writes, "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark." One might ask, at this point, the question that I have phrased here as Arabic 1 in our outline, As far as the identity of those who reign with Christ, his co-rulers, who are they? It's surprising, quite a few opinions have been offered; various combinations of these terms. And let me say

this, if one looks at this in the original text, there are several ways in which one might answer that question. That is, legitimately. I think, however, that if one looks carefully at this, and remembers that lying back of it is Daniel chapter 7, specifically, Daniel chapter 7, then we would come to the conclusion that the answer to the question, "Who rules and reigns with Christ?" Is simply this; all the saints rule and reign with him, not a special group of them, some are singled out like the martyrs, but they are singled out because of the special significance of the fact that they have lost their lives in the last days, in faithful service to our Lord in the midst of very trying circumstances. It's very natural that they should be singled out in a special way.

But if tonight you were to go home and read Daniel chapter 7, half a dozen times, I think, you would discover that this vision is built rather strongly on the structure of Daniel chapter 7. And in Daniel chapter 7, specifically, in verse 9, verse 13, and 14, and then verse 18, verse 22, and verse 27; you'll find that Daniel's picture of the Ancient of Days coming to receive the kingdom or the Son of Man coming to receive the kingdom from the Ancient of Days is a picture that is very parallel with this. And, I believe, that you will come to the conviction since that chapter says all the saints come with him, and we are on the right track in interpreting the answer to the question, "Who sits and rules and reigns with our Lord?" by answering it, all the saints.

We have further reason to think that that is so. The last, you know, when you have references, in context specifically when pronouns are mentioned or when other particular expressions are mentioned that have antecedents, one of the rules of exegetical work is that one must be careful to identify antecedents. And one specific rule that is of great importance is that ordinarily, we should look for the nearest possible antecedent, if we are seeking to identify and interpret something, about which we may

be in some doubt. For example, a pronoun, if we find in the preceding context, something to which it might refer, and it's the nearest antecedent, although there may be, also, another antecedent to which it might refer, we always prefer the nearer antecedent. The reason for that is very simple. If you are speaking with people, and you constantly make reference to things that you said about two minutes ago, the consequences are usually confusion in language. In fact, you usually will find some people who talk that way. I never talk that way, of course. But there are people who talk that way. And, back in the old days, I would have said some females do it, but I have confessed my sin and I don't say that anymore, now, and, furthermore, I've been chastised sufficiently and, consequently, I know that I'm wrong in saying that. So I won't say that. I have some male friends who talk like that, too. That is, if you listen to them, you're not always sure to what their pronouns refer. As they go along talking, pretty soon you have to say, well, do you mean this or do you mean that? They've used a pronoun and you're not sure to what it refers.

So in order to have articulate, literate, easy to understand speech, you have to be careful to identify your antecedents; and it's much easier if you identify them with the closest or the nearest possible antecedent.

Well, if you will take your Bible, and you have to do this in the original text, probably, but if you will take your Bible and go back in the preceding context, and look for a plural antecedent, to which this, "And I saw thrones and they sat upon them," you will inevitably come back to chapter 19 in verse 14, where we read, "And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following him on white horses." In other words, those that sit on the throne are those, probably, that accompany our Lord when he comes back to the earth at his Second Advent. And from

what we know, the primary group that return with our Lord is the saints of the ages past. So the last plural subject to which these pronouns can refer is the saints of chapter 19.

We also read in 1 Corinthians 6:2, that the Apostle Paul says, "We shall judge angels." So those who sit upon thrones and do the judgment work are the saints of God. They are those who are so exalted in the process of judging that they sit with the Lord and even judge angels. Paul says that in 1 Corinthians chapter 6 in verse 2. I know you don't feel qualified to judge angels but, then, at the present time you are not qualified. Nor, of course, am I to judge angels or any other for that matter, we don't have sufficient understanding. But all judgment has been given to the Son and since he stands for us and represents us, and we are identified with him, the Bible says, we shall judge angels.

That's why, incidentally, as believers, we should not submit our disagreements with other believers to the courts of our society because we are justified individuals, if we are true believers and they are unjust. So why should Christians go to law with non Christians? Paul makes the point in 1 Corinthians 6. In spite of making the point, many Christians do just that. So don't sue me. [Laughter] In this litigious society, don't sue me.

Well, Paul, of course, had a just reason for saying that. At any rate, coming back to the point then, the saints are referred to as those who rule and reign with Christ. I wish I had time to deal with it in more detail, but we don't.

Now, Arabic 2, "The Interpretation of 'They Lived.'" What is meant by "they lived?" We read here, "They came to life," or the Authorized Version has "They lived." I want to say that it's not necessarily required that one render the Greek verb here, "they

came to life." As a matter of fact, that is a rendering that, probably, is designed to support a particular interpretation. If it's an ingressive theorist and, I think, it is, then this rendering is perfectly all right. But it's also possible to render it, simply, "They lived." But, we'll accept this rendering by just mentioning that in other translations you may have, "They lived and reign with Christ for a thousand years."

Now, what is referred to by "They lived"? Now, I think, you can see that if we say that this is a reference to the resurrection of the body, "They lived and they reigned with Christ for a thousand years," then again, we have shown that the millennial reign of our Lord follows the resurrection of the body. And since the resurrection of the body takes place at the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus to the earth; then the Kingdom of God lies in the future and not in the present. Almost all amillennialists, they differ among themselves like premillennialists differ among themselves, but it's the standard view of amillennialism that the Kingdom of God is in process at the very moment of this moment. That is, the thousand years is to be taken symbolically. It began at the time of our Lord's first coming, concludes with the Second Advent, at which time the saints enter into the eternal state. So we are living in the millennium. We are living in the Kingdom of God.

But, now, if it's true "they came to life," means they were bodily resurrected and then they reign with Christ for a thousand years, and since the bodily resurrection has not taken place, then, of course, the ruling and reigning must lie in the future and not in the present.

So this is a crucial question. Now, I'd like to suggest to you that this expression, "They came to life," does refer to the resurrection of the body. In the first place, by the way, I'm simplifying and I hope in this sense we can grasp the major points. First of all,

notice, that we read on in verse 5, "The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed." That would be the resurrection of others, who are not saints. And then John says, "This is the first resurrection." Now, when he says, "This is the first resurrection," this is a reference to, "They lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years." Because the very next verse says, "Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power." Well, obviously then, the first part of verse 5, up to, "This is the first resurrection," is something of a parenthesis. That is, it's an attempt to explain, just briefly, about the rest of the dead who don't come to life and reign with Christ for a thousand years.

Now, notice that expression, "This is the first resurrection." Now, that expression, "resurrection" is an interesting noun, of course. It occurs in the New Testament over forty times. My recollection is, I'm just going by some notes that I've put here in my exegetical notes on this section, I have this spelled out in much more detail and with much more accuracy, but my recollection is it occurs forty-two times in the New Testament, but it's over forty times.

In every case but one, it refers to bodily resurrection. In other words, the vast amount of the usage of the noun, *anastasis*, which is the word that is used here, supports bodily resurrection. The only place is found in which it does not in the Gospel of Luke, about chapter 20, verse 36 or 37 or 37 and 38, and even that may be a little bit questionable as supporting another viewpoint; although, it does not seem to refer to bodily resurrection there.

So we have a vast amount of usage that supports the idea that when we read, "They lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years," that they experienced bodily

resurrection, which takes place at the Second Advent and they ruled and reigned with him for a thousand years.

Secondly, this verb, "They lived" is also found in the Book of Revelation, even in this very form, in chapter 2, verse 8. In fact, it's found in chapter 13, with reference to the false prophet. But here, and again it has a physical sense there as well, but notice chapter 2 in verse 8, of the Book of Revelation. Here, the very same form is used of our Lord Jesus Christ. And we read in chapter 2, verse 8, "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write; The first and the last, who was dead and has come to life, says this." That not only is the same verb, that's the very same verb form. "Has come to life." In other words, the same verb with the same form refers to the resurrection of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ, in this particular gospel. In chapter 13, in verse 14, I believe, it is, we have a reference again in the precise form and, again, to a physical resuscitation.

Now, the reason I'm laying stress upon physical, as bodily resurrection or physical resuscitation is because it is the contention of almost all amillennialists that this term "and he lived" is a reference to the new birth.

Now, we would then, of course, have a strange kind of interpretation; we would have "and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years," as a reference to the new birth. That is, that they were born again and they reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But then we would have in verse 5, the rest of the dead did not come to life, did not, were not regenerated. Well, no, of course, the rest of the dead are never regenerated. So we would have the first usage of the term *zao* to live, in one sense and here, in the same context, we would have the verb used in a second sense.

Now, many of you know that we have urged individuals to read, if they really want to study the Scriptures, to read Anthony Hoekema's book, "The Bible in the

Future." The reason that, I think, that one should read this book is because if you're going to hold a particular position, you ought to know what others are saying about the position. It's always a help. And, I must say, I differ with Professor Hoekema on a number of points. But reading his book has strengthened my own convictions because he's challenged them and, I think, I've found an answer to them.

Now, Professor Hoekema finds this a very important thing because, you see, if I can show that this is a reference to the bodily resurrection then his view goes by the boards. So Professor Hoekema has suggested that the word *ezhsen* here in verse 4, refers to life in heaven, in communion with the Lord during the intermediate state between death and resurrection. So the millennium is now and the kingdom is heavenly and the saints are living with the Lord in heaven. So by this, you see, he's seeking to show that the resurrection has not taken place at the present time, according to that particular view. And we can still hold, the millennium is now and the saints live in heaven and the kingdom is a heavenly kingdom.

But let me say this with reference to Professor Hoekema. In the first place, the tense of this verb, while not a conclusive argument, as most students of the Book of Revelation indicate, opposes this. This is most likely and ingressive aorist, as it is in chapter 2, with reference to our Lord. There the one who came to life, who was dead and who came to life, is one who was dead and who was resurrected. That's obviously the point.

Furthermore, the "living" here, refers to life before the resurrection; but John calls this the "first resurrection." You see, in a moment, he will say, "This is the first resurrection." But Professor Hoekema says, "This is a living before the resurrection. They are living in heaven right at the present time, awaiting the resurrection." But John

doesn't agree with that. He says, "This is the first resurrection." They lived and they reign with him for a thousand years.

Thirdly, what does Professor Hoekema do about the fact that this verb, *ζαο*, is a verb that or *anastasis*, I should say, the noun is a term that does not, apparently, have this sense? Well, Professor Hoekema finds a great deal of difficulty with that and he doesn't say anything about it. So here is a term that is used forty plus times, which he omits discussing. But with reference to the verb, to live, and the sense of "to live in heaven" in communion with the Lord, he searches the New Testament through in order to find a place. And, a moment ago, I said Luke 20. I did not, I gave you the wrong passage then it should have been Luke chapter 2.

But in Luke chapter 20 in verse 37 and 38, this is what I was referring to. Old age is catching up with me. At any rate, he seeks in looking through the New Testament, looking at his concordance, to find a place where the verb, to live, means to live in heaven, in communion with the Lord. And he can only come up with one place. In fact, he says, "This is a very, very unique usage." And he finds it difficult to find it and he suggests that out of many uses of this term, there is one that might qualify and its Luke chapter 20, verse 37 and verse 38. So Professor Hoekema realizes this is another weakness in his viewpoint.

Fourth, he does not refer to the fact that the "reigning" is upon the earth, earlier in the book. If you'll turn back a few pages in the Book of Revelation to chapter 5, verses 9 and 10, in the vision that begins in chapter 4, and concludes in chapter 5, we read in verse 9 and 10, "And they sang a new song, saying, 'Worthy art thou to take the book and to break its seals; for thou wast slain and didst purchase for God with thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation; and thou hast made

them to be a kingdom and priests to our God, and they will reign upon the earth.'" So the reference then in chapter 5 in verse 9 and 10, is to the reigning of our Lord upon the earth.

Professor Hoekema is not through. He says in verse 5, "The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed." Now, you can see if he says that "to life with Christ" is to live in communion with him, he finds the same problem with those who say that this is the resurrection of the body. Because, John says, the rest of the dead did not come to life. Now, if that's a reference to the bodily resurrection, then that the suggestion of this is that they are eventually resurrected as the saints are resurrected, with the same kind of resurrection.

If you say that they are living in heaven in communion with the Lord, you're also saying the same thing, the rest of the dead did not come to life, that is, they did not live in communion with the Lord until the thousand years were completed. So you can see, that what he faces then is by this interpretation of "they lived" he faces the obvious objection; then the rest of the dead, who are the lost, are going to be resurrected, just like the saints? Or if you follow your specific view, the rest of the dead, who are not the saints, are going to live in communion with the Lord in heaven? So he cannot accept that view. So what do you do? When you cannot accept that view? Well, you say, that implication is not part of this text. In other words, what you say then is, when it says, "The rest of the dead did not come to life," we're not to think because he adds, "until the thousand years were completed, that that means that they will come to life then. In other words, we're not to make the implication that the rest of the dead will live at that time.

Now, what would you do with something like this? You can see that these are really interesting attempts. They are the interpretations of despair, in my view. But, nevertheless, they are attempts by individuals to support their view, if they possibly can. So Professor Hoekema is still living. I do appreciate him very much. He's a very fine man. He's written some very useful books. He's written, just a book, recently, on "Man," which is an excellent book, just been published.

Now, if that's true, then what kind of support can Professor Hoekema give us for it. Well, he says, if you will look at the Greek expression that is used here, "until the thousand years were completed," you will see, if you look at chapter 5, verse 13, of the Epistle to the Romans as the fact that a sentence ends with an until, doesn't mean that that which is stated in the following until really comes to pass. And so he points us to Romans 5:13. There are not many places he could point to, but that's one that he tries to point to.

Now, unfortunately for Professor Hoekema, he's not a student of Greek. Now, I mean by that, he's not a professor of New Testament. He's not, what I would call a first class, really first class, exegete. He's a good man; a fine theologian. A first class theologian; but not a first class exegete. And he's overlooked the fact that there are two kinds of constructions that follow "until." One is a construction very much like a prepositional phrase; that's the construction to which he points. This is a construction that is clausal; that is, it's an "until" clause, not a prepositional phrase. And it so happens that the Professor has overlooked something in the immediate context. He not only has made an error of grammar by taking a construction in which "until" is used, but is not parallel with this; but he's overlooked the present context.

Will you take a look at verse 3 of chapter 20? "And threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed." But then we have the specific statement, "After these things, he must be released for a short time." In other words, the implication is a valid implication here. And, further, if you will study the Book of Revelation, you will find other cases in this book where that's true. So the Professor, to say it mildly, is simply wrong. Furthermore, let me show you one other thing; if it is true that we are not to accept the implication, then why the clause? It's a wasted clause. Look at it? Why did he not say, if that's true, the rest of the dead did not come to life? You don't have to say, "Until the thousand years were completed." You would have made your point, and you wouldn't have made it possible for Johnson to criticize you. [Laughter] In case of Professor Hoekema. So the whole enterprise of Professor Hoekema on this point is wasted. It does not hold. There is nothing really that you can say to support it.

Now, one other thing that we might mention here and that is that when we read in verse 4, "And I saw thrones and they sat upon them and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus." Now, if we're talking about coming to life, for beheaded people, what kind of life is it normal to expect that we speak about? If they lost life physically, and we say, "they have come to life," is it not reasonable to think that they come to life with the same kind of physical life that they lost? So the very term "beheaded" suggests then that they receive back the same life.

I wish I could talk further about this. I'm sure that I might say a few things that would be difficult for those of you who haven't had Greek to understand, so I'm going to

go ahead and try to finish the last point; the interpretation of "they reigned," and ask the question, Where?

Well, we have seen from chapter 19, that when the Lord Jesus comes in his Second Advent, he comes back to the earth. Well, that would suggest in itself that the kingdom that follows is a kingdom upon the earth. At the end of the thousand years, the saints are still on the earth. Notice verse 9, "And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city and fire came down from heaven and devoured them."

So we have our Lord coming to earth, we have the thousand- year-reign of the Messiah. Incidentally, the thousand-year-reign of the Messiah is an interim kingdom. We tend to look at the thousand-year-reign of our Lord as if it's a vast length of time because our lives are seventy years. Some of us manage to make it to seventy. And that's the normal lifetime. Why are you smiling? [Laughter] So some live seventy years and we think, my, that's a long time. And it is a long time. But, really, when we think of a thousand-year-reign of our Lord upon the earth, in the light of infinity, what is the Messianic Kingdom upon the earth? [Snaps fingers] Less than that! Less than that! So lets bear that in mind. At the end of the thousand years, the saints are still on earth. That's very plain. The Lord comes to the earth, the saints rule and reign with him. At the end of the period of time, they are still on the earth. Verse 9. We've already referred to chapter 5, verse 10, where in that particular vision it is stated that they shall rule and reign with him upon the earth. They will reign upon the earth.

Now, the Old Testament promises, with regard to the kingdom of our Lord, identify the land entered, the land as the land that was entered by the nation Israel. You read through the Old Testament, let me suggest to you that you do this sometime.

Why don't you just take a little test. Start in the Old Testament. Read the Abrahamic promises carefully. And then as you read through the Old Testament, just look at the usage of the term "earth" and "land." And, I think, you will see that in the Old Testament, that the term "earth" and "land" and the promises associated with it, identify the land that is to be entered in the future as the land upon which they are at that time. That is, I think, required by sound principles of interpretation. We don't give the term "land" and "earth" the meaning of a new heavens and a new earth in context in which it's plain that the author has been speaking about the present land and earth. That's a violation of simple hermeneutics.

Now, in passages like Isaiah 65 and 66, where we do have the expression new heavens and new earth, we're justified in seeing that. And in related passages, one might be justified in seeing that, too, though one does not have the terms new and heavens and earth. But, ordinarily, language is to be understood in its common sense.

One final thing before we stop, the 2nd Psalm, is cited or alluded to. It's better to use the term alluded because in the Book of Revelation, no text from the Old Testament is ever cited with an introductory formula, such as is used in the Gospel of Matthew or the Pauline writings or other books of the New Testament. But the book is filled with Old Testament allusions.

Psalm 2, is alluded to at least five times in the Book of Revelation. If you go home and read Psalm 2, you will find that that particular psalm, we had a reference to it in chapter 19, when we studied the Second Advent. And we read there that, "from His mouth there came a sharp sword so that with it He might smite the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron." That's from Psalm 2. Read Psalm 2, and you will see that the earthly rule of the Messianic King promised there is an earthly rule. So that, Psalm

2, cited or alluded to, I say, alluded to five times, predicts that the place of the rule of the Messiah is upon the earth, where the rebellion against him, described in the opening verses is taking place.

Now, I don't think I have time to deal with the 5th verse, so I think I will stop at this point and we will pick it up here next time. I, especially, want to pay attention to the interpretive beatitude in verse 6, and then we'll take a brief look at the last rebellion, concerning which we all, I think, have some questions.

Let's close our class with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the privilege of the study of the Scriptures. We thank Thee for the assurance that we have that if we keep reading and studying the word of God, the whole the Holy Spirit will guide us into truth. We pray, Lord, that Thou wilt never allow us to think that we know all the truth. Give us the wisdom and give us the desire to be subject to the word of God; and, if our thoughts are wrong, to change them. After all, the important thing, Lord, is that we submit to Thy teaching. Enable us to do so, illumine us, enlighten us, concerning the Holy Scriptures, we pray.

In Jesus' name. Amen.