



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Revelation 5:1-14

John Bunyan Conference I

TRANSCRIPT

[Introduction of Dr. Johnson] All right at this time we'll have Dr. Johnson come back and speak to us.

[Johnson Lecture] In the earlier days of Dallas Theological Seminary, one of the things that the administration thought would be unusual in view of the fact that they had as their goal to train expository preachers that they would have four times a year a man come and spend in the earliest days a month expounding the Scriptures every day, and then when I was there it was there for two weeks. And so we would meet in the morning at 10:00, again in the afternoon at 2:00, and would have eight messages, seven more and then an exam Friday afternoon on the book that was taught. They were book studies, so those studies were done with well known expository preachers who had had what the administration thought was a successful ministry, and it was one of the goals to give the students and opportunity to observe someone who expounded the Scriptures because that's what they were seeking to train the students to do.

And one of the men who came every year when I was there, and then later when I was on the faculty for a good while, was H.A. Ironside of the Moody Church in Chicago. Dr. Ironside was a very humorous man, had lots of marvelous stories of his past. He had

been with the Salvation Army. He had been a missionary to the Indians in Arizona as well as doing expository preaching among the Christian brethren, and he had preached all over the world. So we looked forward to Dr. Ironside being there. He was always interesting. His lectures were always interesting, and they were expositions of the word of God and he generally would finish the book that he was expounding. But when he would come in the afternoon at the 2:00 meeting, he frequently would say to the students, “I know you have just had your lunch. I want you to know I am not going to speak too loud, so you can go ahead and take your nap if you’d like.” [Laughter] So I want to say that to you. I know you have just eaten. Your food is not even digested yet, and some of you are going to be nodding. That’s all right you are following in Ironside’s tradition. [Laughter] And so we will try to leave you alone if you insist.

We are turning for my last study to Revelation chapter 5, and the subject of the message is the Christology of Heaven, or we’ve been talking about the atonement according the Apostle John. But this is the atonement according the heaven. Revelation chapter 5, verse 1 through verse 14. I’d like to read through the verses. I will attempt to give a brief exposition of them as we go through the chapter after I finish reading it. And the apostle writes in verse 1 chapter 5,

“And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither (If you want to say nither or neither that’s perfectly all right. [Laughter] I am saying neither.) neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the

throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung (That’s acceptable English, but I confess I like to say sang. Sing, sang, sung, but actually sung is correct. I was sure it was wrong, but I looked it up. [Laughter] It’s possible to use it. [Laughter] It’s not the preferred reading you understand, but it’s there, and one of those favorite songs that we sing has it also. You know the hymn probably.) They sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed (Now here we have some textural problems. And I am going to just read through them following primarily the critical text at this point) Redeemed to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; (Now obviously we have to supply something.) Redeemed some from or by Thy blood out of every kindred tongue and people and nation. (This is what is called a partitive genitive in Greek grammar, and so it’s legitimate to supply. If you say redeemed from, you are talking about a redemption of men or some from, so it’s legitimate. It’s not something added in order to enforce something I am going to say in the exposition.) Redeemed men to God by Thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation or redeemed some. And hast made them unto our God kings and priests: and they shall reign on the 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. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour,

and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.”

Over the past fifteen or twenty years, we’ve seen ample evidence that the world is largely ignorant of the true nature of Jesus Christ. We’ve had the rock opera. *Jesus Christ Superstar* with it’s refrain, “Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ who are you? What have you sacrificed?” No one seemed able to answer the question and certainly not the opera. Then the film based on the book *The Last Temptation*, so disturbing to so many believers, illustrating deeply also the world’s blindness concerning the Lamb of God. Some well known theologians also fail miserably in comprehending the nature of the God-man.

John Knox, not the ancient one, the modern one, would have us acknowledge his humanity but without preexistence. “No way of having both.” Professor Knox said. Even the confessed evangelical Russell Aldwin, has made puzzling statements in his book saying that he was “Subject to temptation, but not necessarily yielding to it.” What does that mean? John Hicks, failure to appreciate our Lord’s deity is well known. We’ve made reference to him. Maurice Wilds, another modern theologian has said, “Are we sure that the concept of an incarnate being is after all and intelligible concept?” Sounding like John Knox, that is the modern one.

Modern theologians like to believe that there is a plurality of Christology’s in the New Testament, and now comes the Jesus seminar. Here we are told by one of the main figures in the seminar John Dominic Crossin that Jesus was “an attenuating Galilean Jewish cynic peasant who did not want to become “a broker or mediator between God and his audience,” but was a radical advocate of egalitarianism adamantly opposed to various sorts of hierarchies including that of parents over children. That’s an interesting thing isn’t it? Jesus was “like a hippie” among Augustan, that is Augustus Caesar, Augustan yuppies.

In this third quest prominence has been given to the Gnostic gospel of Thomas. The first quest dates may be said to be 1778 to 1906 or up to the time of Weyher and Schwitzer the second quest dated from 1959 in James Robinson's A New Quest of the Historical Jesus Through the Age of Bultmann. The third quest began in the early 1980's and is characterized by these three things particularly, an uncritical optimism about the Gospel of Thomas, exegetical failure, neglect of context, many other things with regard to the exegesis of the text of the New Testament and bias.

The apocalypse is set in history of course. It was set in the first century and so we should naturally first of all seek to understand it in its context. We could say this. That if this represents reality the apocalypse is not characterized by the modern doubt. Only on earth is there any question about the identity and the worth of Jesus Christ. In heaven they understand. What we have here is a great heavenly scene with sanctuary and throne and scroll containing a testamentary disposition. That's the meaning of a scroll sealed with seven seals, similar to Germany during the pre World War days when anyone received a letter with five seals on it that was an immediate sign before you even open the envelope that money was in it. A seven-sealed document would have been known by anyone as a testamentary disposition, a will. So that's the point of the sealing with seven seals. What it is is a testamentary disposition of earth's affairs. It's an advance history so to speak of Messiah's enthronement for us, and the victory that he shall ultimately have. John's despair is engulfed by immense joy of the lion's triumph ultimately in the empire of the thousand years set forth in chapter 20.

Now I'd like to look at it. First we'll look at the seven sealed book, then the sovereignty of the lion lamb described in verse 5 through verse 7, and finally I want to make a comment or two because it's important over the shouts of praise that follow in verse 8 through verse 14. The seven sealed book, this is a continuation of the vision of the great heavenly sanctuary with the throne of God and the angelic court present

described for us in chapter 4, so chapter 5 is really a continuation of chapter 4, and there you'll remember it concludes with this great vision of the throne.

Now we're going to see something in connection with it. He describes the book I say as a seven-sealed book. A book written within and on the backside sealed with seven seals. There was an ancient practice called *moncepotio*. That's the Latin term. It's a term that has to do with a testamentary disposition. It is applicable to this. A monkepotio and the seven seals. The way in which a will was done in the first century is quite a bit different from the way in which we do it. We call our lawyer and we tell him basically what we would like and have him write up a document. A will was done by means of witnesses in the early period in this first century and it was characteristic to have seven witnesses.

The will was actually a document that conferred property even though the man was living. The ceremony would have seven witnesses standing by and then there would be an individual there who was called the *famili imptor*. That is “the buyer for the family” or “the buyer or purchaser of the family.” *Familia imptor*, “a purchaser for the family.” *Famili* is both genitive and dative. It might be “buyer for the family”.

Now he was a friend, a trusted friend, because the property would be conveyed to him before the individual whose will, whose testamentary disposition is being carried out had died. In other words I would make my will before I died. But in order to give it to someone who would then in turn give it to my heirs, I had to have someone would be honest and would receive the property and then convey it to those to whom I want it conveyed. So there was the *famili imptor*. There was in the ceremony the scales on which the *famili imptor* would place the money for the buying the property, for it was sale. It really was a sale to this *famili imptor* so the scales would be there and at the proper point the *famili imptor* would come over and he would put the coins on the scales and that would complete the transaction. And then the property would become the property of the *famili imptor*. Sometimes the amount of money you might wait on it, but

ordinarily there'd be some coin in place there, and then later on this individual who was now the interim heir, like an interim pastor of a church, he was interim heir. He would then at the death of the individual convey the property to the ones that the man's who's the will was being made wanted it to be conveyed. So that's the picture. They would have understood that. They would have understood that just like the Germans did when they saw a letter arriving with five seals. They knew it was money.

So here, now in verse 4 John says, well I should go back I guess to verse 2, “And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?” This you see is the book of the conveyance of the property, and so naturally the question arises, “Who is worthy to open the book and loose the seals thereof and no man in heaven nor in earth, nor under the earth was able to open the book neither to look thereon.” Obviously they were disqualified from receiving the property, and John we read wept much because no one was found worthy to open the book. In the throne room so to speak, the apostle weeps because there is no one there who is able to take as the heir and receive the property and convey it to those to whom it should be conveyed. So he weeps over the universal inability to execute the contents. No one.

This someone has said, “Is a sentence of doom on all political Messianism.” I'd like to read the statement because I think it's a very good statement. It's one made by Elderberry Stauffer, the German student of the background of the New Testament particularly. He says, “The herald angel steps forward and calls, who is worthy to open the book and to loose it's seals? No one is worthy. No power in heaven or hell and no emperor on earth. This is the sentence of doom upon all political Messianism. Shall the secrets of the creation then be unresolved? Shall history remain without goal or meaning? Shall the fury of the dragon and the cries of the martyrs, the self-glorification of the world and blaspheme against God never cease? The whole creation waits fearfully and the seer weeps in the midst of the throne room stands the lamb. With the wound silent.”

Well that’s a very interesting background, but I think it’s true what we have here is title to this universe. Title to that which Adam corrupted by his fall and now is to be carried out the return and the accomplishment of the ultimate purpose of God in the universe so that revelation then is a most profound book. In verse 5 through verse 7, these are also profound verses. It reminds me of Hosea chapter 13, in verse 9, which the prophet giving the words of God says something to the effect that Israel has destroyed herself, and then adds, “in me is thine help.” So the throne room then is there with the lamb standing silent, no loud self-assertions as Isaiah said, “Ye shall not cry nor make a noise in the street.” As Isaiah 42 says with reference to the servant of the Lord. For he of course is the servant of the Lord as the writers of the New Testament make very plain in citing passages from Isaiah 42, 49, 50 and particularly 52 and 53.

In verse 5, after John says, “I wept much.” We read, “And one of the elders said unto me, stop weeping.” This is one of the illustrations that is used to explain the significant of the tenses in Greek. John here said to weep much and so now the elders say, “Stop weeping. Behold the lion of the tribe of Judea, the root of David hath prevailed to open the book and to loose the seals thereof.” Evidentially he is the interim heir and the one who really has the authority to do this. At any rate we read, “He has prevailed.” That’s the word that means to conquer, but in Revelation it’s translated in the Authorized Version “prevailed” frequently, so he has prevailed to open the book. Don’t weep the lion of the tribe of Judea, the root of David.”

What a wonderful name. The lion of the tribe of Judea, well that suggests doesn’t it the tribe of Judea and the way in which Jacob was it who characterized Judea in his prophecy concerning the tribes and then the root of David and immediately there comes to mind the great Davidic covenant of 2 Samuel chapter 7, and the promises that are set forth there, in my mind and when I read the New Testament and the Old Testament especially those covenants, the Abrahamic, the Davidic, and the new covenant are unconditional covenants.

Now I have some good friends, who like to say, “Yes, there are conditions set forth here or there. The conditions however appear within the promises that God will, by his saving work in the hearts of men, prepare their hearts to receive them. These are unconditional promises. They will be carried out, and the fact that they are cited over and over again through Scripture indicates that, so when we read here, that he’s the lion of the tribe of Judea it’s not simply a reference to his identity, but it’s to remind us that the Davidic covenant has to do with just this kingdom that we read about in the Book of Revelation. “He has prevailed to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof.”

Marvelous text Genesis 49 verse 9, Isaiah chapter 11 verse 1, and Revelation 22 verse 16, follows along later on. I’m thinking also of Hebrews chapter 2 verse 5 through verse 9, where the promise that is set forth in Psalm 2 is set forth and then the idea of the fact that things are not as they should be is set forth, but then we see reference to the man the Godman who is to bring to pass the accomplishment of those ancient promises. The vision follows in verse 6, “And I beheld and lo in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts stood in the midst of the elders stood a lamb as it had been slain having seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.”

It’s very interesting that the term that is used for the lamb here is not the term *omnos*, which we’ve had, previously for example when John the Baptist said, “Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.” This is the word that means it’s the word *arneon* that means either a little lamb. It’s a diminutive, or at least a tender lamb. Gentle lamb is probably the best. It’s the term that’s characteristic of the Book of Revelation. It’s used about twenty nine times. I say about because questions of text have to do with the exact number, but it’s about twenty nine times and it’s characteristic of this particular book. It’s an absolute new conception, the little lamb, the gentle lamb. This is the Book of Revelation. So meekness is added to majesty when we think of the Lamb of God. So in one brilliant stroke Bob Mount says in his commentary, “The central theme of

the word is visually portrayed here.” What is said about him? First of all a Law of Moses attributes as it had been slain.

Now that does not simply mean killed. This is the term that means to slaughter. *Shavdo* is the term that means to slaughter a lamb, so the idea is of a slaughtering of an animal. He stands slaughtered, the manner of the triumph and the ground of the celebration of it. In verse 9 we read, “They sang a new song saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, open the seals thereof for Thou wast slaughtered and hast redeemed to God by thy blood, some out of every kindred tongue and people and nation.” In verse 12 again, “Worthy is the lamb that was slaughtered to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength.” Slaughtered like a sacrifice offered, the lambs and the other animals slaughter by the priests, and then offered as sacrifice. But this lamb stands erect. He has been slaughtered but he is still standing erect. “There stood a lamb [Amen from audience] as it had been slain.” Amazing, amazing. Obviously John is trading upon the fact that this lamb, while he may have been slaughtered is now alive. In other words the resurrection there in this figurative form. He’s alive in the sight of heaven, a risen lamb.

Well we’ve had warning about this haven’t we? Because in chapter 1 verse 18 we read from our Lord himself, “I am he that liveth and became dead and behold I am alive forever more. Amen. And I have the keys of hell and death.” So the slaughtered lamb now standing, the interim heir. Well actually the ultimate heir, but he’s going to in this figure take the place of the interim heir. It’s his kingdom. So we read also it’s characterized by seven horns and seven eyes. “Having seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.” Horns strength and eyes, insight seeing. These are figures taken from the book of Daniel chapter 7 verse 7, chapter 7 verse 20 in the Old Testament in other places as well suggestive of knowledge in our Lord’s case, we know it’s omniscience and as well of strength, so what we see here in this figurative way is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God the gentle lamb invested with the attributes of deity. How important that is.

You know when I was studying in the University of Edinburgh on several occasions one of the men that I listened to was Tom Torrance, Mr. Torrance, Dr. Torrance is a Christian man. He's a Barmian scholar through and through. Still living. I haven't seen anything about his death yet. He's about my age, and a very learned man, but a very, very close follower of Carl Bart. But at the same time Dr. Torrance was a strong believer in the deity of Christ, a strong believer in the resurrection of our Lord's body. He has a marvelous statement. I don't whether I ought to read it, but just summarize what he says about the person of our Lord. He says, “The Nicene and Constantinopolitan fathers realize that if they allowed the dualist ways of thought in the prevailing culture to cut the bond of being between Christ and God the Father then the whole substance in heart of the Christian gospel would be lost.” And I love this statement. “If what Christ does for example in forgiving our sins is not what God does, then it is not finally valid.”

The deity of Christ is that important, but he continues, “If God himself has not come to be one with us in the incarnation then the love of God finally falls short of the coming all the way to be one with us and is not ultimately loved. Certainly in the way we have understood it. If it was not God himself incarnate who suffered for us on the cross in making atonement then the sacrifice of Christ has no ultimate and final validity, and we are still in our sins. If Jesus Christ and God are not one in the same being,” And I like this, “then we do not really know God. [Amen from audience] for he is some hidden inscrutable deity behind the back of Jesus of whom we can only be terrified, for we are sinners and we don't know who and what he is.” You know an evangelical of the strongest stripe couldn't have said it, I must say, couldn't have said it as well, but couldn't have said it better than that.

Then the final judgment of the world will be a judgment apart from and without respect to Jesus Christ and his forgiving love and atoning sacrifice, cut the bond and being between Jesus Christ and God and the gospel becomes an empty mockery but if Jesus Christ who is one in the same being with God then all the Jesus said and did on our

behalf has staggering significance, but in this case, it's essential to realize that Jesus Christ the Son of God is also man of one in the same being in nature as we are. If he's not really man then the great bridge God has throw across the gulf between himself and us has no foundation on our side of the gulf. Jesus Christ to be mediator in the proper sense, must be wholly and fully God as well as man, so here we have the slaughtered lamb standing, adorned with seven horns and seven eyes in the fullness of strength and knowledge of a lamb that is an effective illustration and figure of our great Savior the Lord Jesus Christ.

Notice also he stands in the midst of the throne. I think that's most interesting. In the midst of the elders stood a lamb, as it had been slain and then first in verse 6 in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, in the midst. That is in the center of heaven itself stands the lamb. Oh, Mr. Spurgeon ahs a great paragraph on this. I don't have time to read that for you, but you can just imagine what he makes of that, of our Lord being the center of everything, and goes on the expatiate in his own ministry how he is the center of his ministry and how any other center is contrary to this particular picture that is given us here and therefore Mr. Spurgeon says, “My heart and the strings of my heart do not resound to any modern theology whatsoever, because the lamb is the one who stands in the center of heaven and the thought there is of the redemption that he has accomplished in his blood and the resurrection that guarantees his victory.” So seven horns and seven eyes in the midst of the throne, the centrality of our Lord Jesus Christ in the church in ministry and, my brethren and my sisters, that should be true in me also, in me.

Well the acquisition of the book is described for us, “And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.” It has been said, Brier R.H. Charles said it. You might not expect him to say it because he doesn't stand within the most evangelical fellowships of Christians. He's written two great volumes on, two big

volumes on the Book of Revelation in its Greek text. But he said, “Heaven is the homeland of music.” And here we have in verse 8,

“And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood some out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;”

Could I say, translate that “people or men” but it’s a partitive construction in the Greek text. So we’re talking about the grammar of the text itself, and we try to follow the grammar of the text, not adding little things here or there that we think might make it plainer or easier for us to understand. So here, and now follows in the next few verses, a most interesting thing because if heaven is the homeland of music we have three groups now expressing re-marvelous praise. We read in verse 11, “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.” In verse 13,

“And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.”

In other words the many angels then followed by every creature in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and finally the four beasts, all of them this three fold

climatic praise of the lamb who now has received the book. You know Peter tells us angels are interested in prophecy, and so evidentially they think this is rather significant because they themselves are shouting blessing and honor and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the lamb for ever and ever all those question so of the angels. Peter tells us that, you know. He says they are interested in prophecy, which things the angels desire to into. So they have been looking and pondering. I don't know whether they have any prophetic conferences up there. [Laughter] It'd be interested to know in their puzzlement, but now they know and so the angels the whole group in heaven, every creature which is heaven on the earth, and even under the earth and the four beasts following three great groups follow, just like the shooting of a Roman candle. July the 4th, we know what a Roman candle does. You shoot it into the sky. There's an explosion, when it goes into the sky and the stars are there, and then there's a second explosion, more stars, and finally a third explosion and more stars. It's kind of like that, these three groups all exploding in praise [Amen from audience] over the answers to the questions that they've had upon their hearts, the things they've sought to understand.

Now I want to look just briefly at the song of the creatures and elders in verses 8 through 10. We read here, “They fell down.” And in verse 9, “They sang a new song saying Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood (Men some of you have maybe an American Standard Version. I think it supplies the term “men”. That's a legitimate way to do it. Or we could say, “some”, but) men or some out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;” So here they relate his worth to the past, obviously a reference to the cross. “Thou wast slain, and Thou hast redeemed to God by thy blood.” So slain and redeemed, those two verbs related to the past. As a matter of fact I don't think there's a person in this room that would deny they refer to the cross. “He was slain, and redeemed.” And that which he accomplished on the cross is the ground of his

redemption, and that redemption here is looked at as a purchase, and we know that that's legitimate biblical language as well. It's a purchase. So he has been slain. He has redeemed in the past.

There was a question back in Acts chapter 1 and verse 6 that was asked. Do you remember? A lot has been made over it. I don't want to make anything over it here, particularly, but I think it's appropriate to cite it. We read,

“When they therefore were come together, they asked the risen Lord saying, Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hat put in his won power, but ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you and you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

Here is the answer of the question in acts chapter 1 in verse 6, which our Lord felt it was improper at that time to go into. Now how are these individuals there in heaven? Well it says, “Thou wast slain, and Thou hast redeemed to God by thy blood, some out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation.” In other words his worth is related to the past, the cross, the redemption was a purchase and as a result of what has happened there in the present time there these individuals stand. The future Acts chapter 1 verse 6 has its answer here. “Ask these men how they were saved. How they received the glories that they received, how they found the faith that they now know. Do you think they will give you an exposition of free will?” I don't think they will. They will not give you any such exposition. They will say, “In yonder fountain filled with blood and the benefits that have come from it, drawn from Emmanuel's veins or all of our blessings and that's the ground upon which we stand right here.” Ask them where they will reign, and

they tell us. They actually say that they are going to reign on the earth. Isn't that interesting?

Now I know you have some discussions about pre-millennialism and amillennialism, and I don't want to get into that. I just want to make a citation here. It's a pretty good citation. [Laughter] For those of you who don't want to be stirred a bit about the question, you can step over in the next room there, whole those that are looking for a Kingdom of God on the earth can here the quotation, but I think it's a pretty quotation. It's made by a Lutheran, and you'll recognize the man as being Zies. J.A. Zies from his lectures on apocalypse. These are the things that he said, and I don't mean this in anyway to upset my brethren. You have my permission to talk about something different and I promise I won't get mad at you, but this is what Mr. Zies says, “People tell us that that is quite to low end course a thing to think of the earth in connection with the final bliss of the saints. They preach we do but degrade and pervert the exalted things of holy Scripture when we hint the declaration of the wise men that the earth endureth forever, and that over it the glorious and everlasting kingdom of Christ and his saints is to be established in literal reality.

But if the ransomed in heaven with golden crowns upon their brows kneeling at the feet of the able before the very throne of God and with the prayers of all saints, and the predictions of all the prophets in their hands could sing of it as one of the elements of their loftiest hopes and joys I beg to turn a deaf ear to the cry of carnal, sensual, unspiritual, with which some would turn us from the blessed hope. Shall the saints in glory shout, ‘We shall reign on the earth’ and we be accounted heretics for believing that they knew what they were saying? [Laughter] is it to come to this that to be orthodox we must believe that these approved in crowned ones kneel before the throne of God with a lie upon their lips? Shall they from thrones in heaven point to earth as the future theatre of their administrations, and give adoring thanks and praises to the lamb for it, and we be

stigmatized as fanatics and Judiazers for undertaking to pronounce the blessed fact in mortal hearing. Oh, I wonder how the dear God above us can endure the unbelief.”

I don't think you are unbelieving brethren. I think you don't understand maybe. [Laughter] But I don't think you are unbelieving, and I know you have things to say in response. Those were his words, “How the dear God in heaven can endure the unbelief with which some deal with his holy word. Shall we then keep silence on the subject when the living ones and elders fail to sing about it in heaven? When inspired apostles no longer admit the subject into their holy writings? Then, but not 'till then let it be dropped from the discourses of our sanctuaries, and from the inculcations of them that fear God and woe, woe to that man who is convinced of it's truth but for the sake of place of friendship refrains from confessing it. He stultified the adoring songs of celestial kings that he may win a little empty favor by base pandering to the pleasure of an ignorant unbelieving and godless world.” Those are pretty strong words. [Laughter]

Now I am not interested primarily in that. I don't think that's the point of the message what they think of the atonement in heaven, but what I want to now say. Notice the salient aspects of the atonement that is set forth here. In the first place the one who accomplishes the atonement dies a violent death. He is slaughtered. Figuratively the lamb's slaughtered, so it's a violent death. And I don't think it's asking too much to be given the liberty to say it's a penal death. It's a death for others who bears their punishment. And so secondly it's a substitutionary and representative death. These individuals were weeping, but now as a result of what they hear they are joyous. Why? Because they recognize that it is done for them. And the author of this book knows precisely that it has been done for them. He stands as the representative. He's the covenantal head of the people of God. He's the common person as the Puritans used to like to say. He's the common person. He's the sponsor of the whole of the redeemed of the Lord God in heaven.

Sunday morning at the church here, I was talking about 2 Timothy chapter 1 and Thomas Boston, incidentally Thomas Boston. I made the comment. Thomas Boston was B.B. Warfield's favorite Puritan. You should read him. His works have been published. They are ten big volumes, but you should read them. One of his favorite texts, he calls it “that famous place” is 2 Timothy chapter 1 in verse 8 through 11. And there remember the Apostle Paul writes concerning Jesus Christ, “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,” Given us in Christ Jesus, our sponsor, our covenantal head, our representative before the world began. That's a great testimony to the deity of our Lord. He exists before the world began. The Greek text says, “Before age long times.”

This was consummated, Timothy, that's why you should not be disturbed because you are persecuted, because your gospel is scorned because your destiny is settled before age long times. My Christian friend, there are people who say. “I don't want to hear theology. I want something that's practical.” Look, nothing can be more practical than to know that that covenantal relationship was set up before age long times, and I by virtue of the work of the Spirit within my heart, belong to that company and no matter what I am involved in I know, I know my future has been settled by the, as he puts it “the purpose and grace of our great God in heaven who has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” Our Lord's work is representative. No wonder the Apostle John understating that turns from weeping to joy when he sees the significance of this, we could call it ordinance performed before him. “In yonder fountain filled with blood is of course our hope and future.”

And then, and this is the main point of the message. I'll spend about three minutes on this. [Laughter] Rest is so good, isn't it? It's just so good, but now this atoning work it is a penal work. I believe it is. It's penal. As I mentioned today in the discussion, even in the Roman Catholic official doctrine, the doctrines of the counsel of

Trent, it is stated that he has made satisfaction. Satisfied -- that's the verb *satisfacio* that is used. *Satisfactio* is the noun. Satisfaction that's at the heart of a penal substitutionary atonement, a satisfaction, that's propitiation. That's what propitiation means. It has been made, so it's penal. It's a violent death. It's a penal death under judgment. It is substitutionary and representative. The weeping is now joyous, but here is the point. It is particular, particular. Why is it particular? Well, I've already given you hint, because we have a partitive genitive there. There it is, he has redeemed to God by thy blood not every kindred tongue and people and nation, [Amen from audience] but ones from every kindred people and nation. [Amen from audience] Don't you see that? It's very important.

Incidentally you can find that in the critical literature. It's there, but of course many people don't read the critical literature, that is the exegesis of the original text, but there it is right there. John here teaches a particular redemption. He says he has redeemed to God by thy blood, not every kindred, every tongue, all peoples all nations but, some or from that great group, he has redeemed some. It is particular and when you want to argue the point remind your friend that is a partitive genitive, and he may not be able to answer you, but he will be astounded with the fact that you understand something of that. [Laughter] And he'll be impressed. He'll be very impressed with your knowledge of you say, “Don't you understand that that's a partitive genitive?” You have my word for it. It's a partitive genitive. [Laughter] And it's there in the literature. It's all there. It's very plain. It's just that we over look things like that because we're not preaching the text today, exegetically and expository as we ought to be, so this atoning work is a penal atoning work. It's a substitutionary work representative one it. It is particular. The scope of his death is not universal plainly stated right here.

Well we wind up here with the shout of the angelic hosts. I know I am over time. The angels interested in prophecy, we've said, but at the same time, they themselves worship and finally the great saying of the creation the whole creation in verse 13

followed by, “The four beast who say, Amen. And the four an twenty elders who fall down and worship him that lives for ever and ever.”

This great chorus climaxes in what has been called an unparalleled fortissimo to the Father and to the lamb. I want to ask you to turn over to chapter 22, verse 9. I won't say much about this, but chapter 22 in verse 9. This is an interesting incident. Here we read,

“Then (I'll read while you find it.) I John saw these things and heard them and when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things, then sayeth he unto me, See Thou do it not for I am Thy fellow servant of Thy brethren the prophets and of them which keep the sayings of this book. Worship God, worship God.”

So these angels tell John don't fall down before us. Worship God. Who do the angels worship? They worship our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. They are worshipping God. They worship our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. All heaven contrary to many contemporary and non-contemporary theologians and ministers below with their followers know who he is and what he has done. They shout, “Crown him. Crown him. Crowns become the victors brow.”

There's a little story I close with. Robert Browning in a letter published after his death cites several utterances of men of genius to the Christian faith, and among them one from Charles Lamb. He said, “In a gay fancy with some friends, Mr. Lamb” As they were discussing questions as to how he and they would feel if the greatest of the dead were to appear suddenly in flesh and blood once more, on the final suggestion after a number of suggestions had been made, “What would we do if so and so appeared in our midst?” One of them said, “And if Christ entered this room,” Mr. Lamb was noted for his stuttering. “He changed his manner at once and stuttered out as his manner was when he

was moved. He said, something like, “YYYYY You see. If SSSSSS Shakespeare entered, we should all rise. If he aaa appeared, we must kneel.” Well I think with Mr. Lamb most of the Christians who really know him as the Lamb of God slaughtered for our sins that’s exactly how we feel. Let us kneel before him.

[Prayer] Father we are grateful to Thee for the privilege that is ours. We thank Thee for the word of God. We thank Thee for the marvelous ways in which it yields the blessings of the truth founded upon the rock of eternity. The more we read, Lord, the more certain we certain we become. That our great triune God in heaven has sought us out in marvelous love, has brought us to himself, has performed a work that is simply the beginning of the age long demonstration of the glory and beauty and majesty and love of the triune God for his family. We thank Thee, Lord. How could we ever do anything else, but bow before Thee and thank Thee? We do. In our Savior, our sponsor’s name, Jesus Christ. Amen.