

THE RULE OF MAN

PART I

MAN'S RULE DURING THE MILLENNIUM

By Arlen L. Chitwood

Man's rule during the coming age will be confined to this earth. It is this one province in the kingdom of God over which Satan and his angels rule, and it is this same province over which man will one day rule in the stead of angels. *Christ* will rule in the stead of Satan, wearing the crown which Satan presently wears; and those ascending the throne and ruling as *joint-heirs with Christ* will wear crowns presently worn by two classes of angels — fallen and unfallen, but all originally associated with Satan's rule (II Sam. 1:10; 2:11; 5:3-5; Rev. 4:10, 11; 19:12).

A RULE OVER THE EARTH

Israel will rule upon the earth at the head of the nations, with Christ seated on David's throne in the midst of His people. Christians though, along with certain Old Testament saints and Tribulation martyrs, will rule from the heavens over the earth, seated on the throne with Christ.

In this respect, Christ will have a dual reign; and governmental power and authority will be exercised from both *an earthly* and *a heavenly* sphere. Christ will sit on David's throne in the city of Jerusalem upon the earth, and He will also sit upon His Own throne in the new Jerusalem in the heavens above the earth.

It will actually be those ruling from the heavens who will ascend the throne and exercise power as joint-heirs with Christ at this time. Israel upon the earth will simply be the ruling nation; and though power and authority will emanate from the two thrones upon which Christ will sit (both David's throne upon earth and His Own throne in the heavens), the individual, joint-heir relationship which will exist in the heavenly realm will not exist in the earthly.

Those comprising the earthly seed of Abraham do not possess the same promise as those comprising the heavenly seed in this respect. Though both are to "possess the gate" of the enemy (rule over the Gentiles) and the Gentile nations are to be blessed through both (Gen. 22:17, 18), only those comprising the heavenly seed will ascend the throne to rule as joint-heirs with Christ.

Satan and his angels presently rule from the heavens over the earth. Satan is the "anointed cherub [messianic angel]" placed over this earth, along with a great host of subordinate angels who rule with him (Ezek. 28:14; Eph. 6:12; Rev. 12:7). Angels ruling under Satan exercise their power and authority through rulers upon the earth. They possess counterparts in the earthly sphere and rule through these counterparts. In this respect, there is a gradation of rulers upon the earth which corresponds to a gradation of rulers in the heavens.

During Daniel's day, following the conquest of Babylon by the Medes and Persians, attention was called to heavenly rulers called "the prince of the kingdom of Persia," "the kings of Persia," "the prince of Greece," and "Michael your prince" (Dan. 10:12, 13, 20, 21).

A messenger had been dispatched from heaven and sent to earth in response to Daniel's prayer. In order to reach earth, this messenger had to travel through the realm in which Satan and his angels ruled, and he was detained in this realm by the angel in Satan's kingdom who ruled over Persia — "the prince of the kingdom of Persia."

Michael came to help, and during this time the messenger remained in this heavenly realm with "the kings of Persia." These kings were apparently subordinate rulers who exercised power from the heavens with the "prince of the kingdom of Persia" over the Persian kingdom upon earth.

One can only deduct from Dan. 10:12-21 that the gradation of rulers in the earthly kingdom of Persia had a corresponding gradation of rulers in the heavenly kingdom, with the rulers in the heavenly sphere exercising power *through* those in the earthly sphere. Also the heavenly messenger, while speaking to Daniel, referred to "the prince of Greece" (v. 20), an apparent allusion to the Grecian kingdom (possessing both heavenly and earthly rulers) which would one day rise to a position of power and conquer the Medo-Persian kingdom.

One other interesting piece of information is also

given in this chapter of Daniel. "Michael your prince" (v. 21) is a reference to the heavenly ruler over Israel, showing a sharp distinction between Israel and the Gentile nations. Though Israel is a nation among nations upon earth, Israel, with respect to the nation's calling, is not to be "reckoned among the Gentile nations" (Num. 23:9).

Israel alone, of all the nations, possesses no ruling angel in Satan's kingdom. Israel is a special creation in Jacob (Isa. 43:1), allowing this nation to be recognized after a separate fashion from the Gentile nations. Israel's prince is *Michael*, a ruling angel in God's kingdom who exercises power and authority separate from the power and authority exercised by Satan and his angels.

It is this present angelic rule from the heavens, referred to in Daniel chapter ten, that Christ and His co-heirs will exercise in the stead of angels during the coming age. As it is today, so will it be then: Rulers in the heavenly realm will exercise power *through* rulers in the earthly realm. There will be earthly rulers throughout the various Gentile nations as well as in Israel. The times of the Gentiles will have ended, and the Gentiles will be subordinate to Israel's rule upon earth; and rulers in the heavens will exercise power *through* rulers in both Israel and the Gentile nations.

A RULE FOR THE OVERCOMERS

Man's rule, realizing the purpose for his existence, will begin when the millennial kingdom has been established; and this rule will continue throughout the eternal ages. Israel and the Gentile nations will continue to exist as separate, distinct entities right on into the eternal ages on the new earth, figuring prominently in God's government of the new earth; and those ruling as co-heirs with Christ will exercise a type power and authority which will not end after the millennium has run its course but extend on into the eternal ages as well.

A *sharp distinction* though must be recognized between the exercise of power and authority during the millennium and the exercise of power and authority during the eternal ages. Christians who reign with Christ during the millennium will continue to reign with Christ throughout the eternal ages, but it must be recognized that the overcomer's promises are *strictly millennial* in their scope of fulfillment.

Overcomers will be rewarded at the judgment seat of Christ for faithfulness during the present time, with a view to being recompensed during the one thousand years Christ reigns over the earth. In this respect, it is incorrect to refer to *rewards* as being “eternal,” for they are not. Christians will exercise power after an entirely different fashion from a different throne during the eternal ages.

That the overcomer’s promises are *millennial alone* in their scope of fulfillment can be demonstrated several ways. And this would be in perfect keeping with the foundational framework of Scripture, set forth at the very beginning — showing everything occurring throughout the six days (foreshadowing the present 6,000 years, Man’s Day) pointing to that which would be realized on the seventh day (foreshadowing the future 1,000-year Sabbath, the Lord’s Day).

For example, within a positive framework, it can be shown that several of the overcomer’s promises in Rev. 2, 3 are millennial alone in their scope of fulfillment. And, within a negative framework, it can be shown that the forfeiture of one’s birthright can occur only under conditions which will exist during the millennium, not beyond.

THE OVERCOMER’S PROMISES

In Rev. 2:26, 27, overcoming Christians have been promised “power over the nations.” They will rule the Gentile nations with “a rod of iron,” and this authoritarian rule is compared to the power a potter could command over his vessels by shattering them into fragments at will — “...as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers.” Such a scene can exist *only* during the millennium.

The entire purpose for the millennium is to bring all things under subjection to Christ at the one place in the universe where sin entered, producing disarray. And a rule such as that described in Rev. 2:26, 27 will occur during this time in order to bring this to pass.

God is going to take one thousand years to allow His Son to reinstitute *complete order* in that part of the kingdom where *disorder* occurred. After the Son has accomplished this work, He will deliver “up the kingdom to God, even the Father” (I Cor. 15:24-28); and an authoritarian rule with a rod of iron over the nations of the earth will be a thing of the past.

In Rev. 3:21, overcoming Christians have been promised that they will be allowed to sit with Christ on His throne:

“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”

Such a promise could not possibly extend into or be fulfilled during the eternal ages, for Christ will not be seated on a throne fitting the description set forth in Rev. 3:21 during ages beyond the millennium.

The Son today is seated at His Father’s right hand, on His Father’s throne (though He is exercising the office of High Priest rather than reigning with His Father). During the millennium the Son will be seated on His Own throne as the great King-Priest (He will have terminated His present high priestly ministry, will have left His Father’s throne, and will have assumed the long-awaited, promised position on His Own throne).

At the end of the millennium though, Christ will relinquish this position (for all things will have been brought under subjection) and once again assume a place on the throne with His Father. This throne will be called, “the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Rev. 22:1, 3), and Christ will then reign with His Father apart from exercising any type priestly office (there will be no sin following the millennium and thus no need for a priestly ministry).

Thus, promises such as those in Rev. 2:26, 27; 3:21 *must* be looked upon as millennial in their scope of fulfillment.

FORFEITURE OF ONE’S BIRTHRIGHT

There are two classic examples in the Old Testament of individuals forfeiting the rights belonging to the firstborn — Esau and Reuben. Esau forfeited his birthright for a single meal (Gen. 25:27-34; 27:1-38), and Reuben forfeited his birthright because of sexual impropriety (Gen. 35:22; 49:3, 4). Esau’s birthright went to his younger brother, Jacob; and Reuben’s birthright was divided among three of his younger brothers — Judah, Levi, and Joseph.

The fifth and last of the five major warnings in the Book of Hebrews has to do with the possibility that Christians can, in like manner, forfeit their birthrights, disquali-

fying them from exercising the rights of primogeniture during the coming age (Heb. 12:14-17). The account of Esau forfeiting his birthright is set forth as a type, with Esau’s experience foreshadowing that which can also be experienced by Christians.

Esau considered his birthright to be a thing of little value until after the rights belonging to him as firstborn had been forfeited and he awoke to the stark reality of that which had occurred. Then, and only then, did Esau realize the true value of the birthright. Esau, seeking to reverse that which had occurred, tried to get his father to change his mind and bless him also, but to no avail (*cf.* Gen. 27:38; Heb. 12:17). The birthright was no longer his and could not be retrieved. As a result, Esau “lifted up his voice, and wept” (*cf.* Gen. 25:34; 27:38).

Esau’s condition and state of mind at this time point to the same condition and state of mind which will exist among Christians who forfeit their birthrights. This forfeiture will be revealed at the judgment seat of Christ, and the results of this forfeiture will exist for the duration of the millennium. The same cry by Christians which Esau voiced will produce the same results. The blessing belonging to the firstborn will have been bestowed upon faithful Christians; and the Father will not, He cannot, change His mind and bless the unfaithful also.

The results of such a forfeiture though cannot exist beyond the millennium. All tears will be wiped away at the end of the millennium (Rev. 21:4 [the reference to all tears being wiped away prior to the millennium in Rev. 7:17 is only for a select group of individuals realizing an inheritance in the kingdom]), and conditions relating to the forfeiture or nonforfeiture of one’s birthright cannot really apply beyond this point in time.

The wiping away of all tears at the end of the millennium would portend equality within a realm where equality had not previously existed. It would clearly appear that during the eternal ages distinctions among Christians such as those set forth in the overcomer’s promises or conditions having to do with the forfeiture or nonforfeiture of one’s birthright will no longer exist.

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