

THE RULE OF MAN

PART II

MAN'S RULE DURING THE ETERNAL AGES

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At the end of Man's Day, immediately preceding the beginning of the millennium, a change in *the government of this earth* will occur; then, at the end of the millennium, immediately preceding the beginning of the eternal ages, a change (though of a different nature) in *the government of the universe* will occur. And man will be actively involved in changes which will occur at both times.

Scripture provides a great deal of information concerning man's part in the government of the earth during the millennium. The whole of Scripture is, after some fashion, focused upon this time. When one moves beyond the millennium though, Scripture provides very little information concerning the exact place which man will then occupy within God's universal government. There are only several brief statements in Scripture concerning government within the kingdom of God beyond the millennium, but within these brief statements enough is revealed to clearly show that God has far-reaching plans for man which only begin to unfold during the millennium.

Viewing that which is revealed in the whole of Scripture concerning the government of the universe within God's kingdom, a person can be drawn to only one conclusion: When God created man, there was actually a near-purpose and a far-purpose in view. The near-purpose had to do with *the government of this earth*, and the far-purpose had to do with *the gov-*

ernment of the universe. In this respect, the millennium is only the beginning of an unending number of ages during which *man will exercise power and authority, realizing the purpose for his existence*.

During the millennium, Christ will sit on His Own throne and rule over this earth, and others will ascend the throne and rule as co-heirs with Him. And Christ, with His co-heirs, will take one thousand years, ruling with a rod of iron, to effect order out of disorder. Once *complete order* has been restored, the kingdom will be turned back over to the Father; and numerous changes, having to do with the government of the universe during all the subsequent ages, will resultingly occur (I Cor. 15:24-28).

When that part of the kingdom previously placed under the Son's control has been turned back over to the Father, the Day of the Lord will end and the Day of God will begin. At that time, the present heavens and earth will be destroyed, and a new heavens and a new earth will be brought into existence (The "heavens" would refer to that part of the heavens associated with this earth and kingdom, not the galaxy or universe as a whole. Scripture outlining the destruction of both the heavens and the earth [II Peter 3:10-12] could possibly be brought to pass through God causing our sun to nova. Note that there will no longer be a need for the sun [Rev. 21:22-25].)

After the new heavens and new earth have been brought into existence (II Peter 3:13; Rev. 21:1), God will then change the location of His throne from which He rules the universe. The throne of God today is located in a northernmost point in the universe (Isa. 14:13), north of this present earth. God's throne will remain in this place during the millennium; but during the eternal ages, God's throne will be located in the new Jerusalem, which will be the capital of the new earth. And not only will God's throne be in this new locality, but the Son will sit on this throne with His Father. God's throne, at this time, will specifically be called, "the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. 21:3-5; 22:1, 3).

GOD'S RULE OVER THE UNIVERSE

God rules the universe today from His throne in the far reaches of the North, but He will one day rule the universe from His throne in the new Jerusalem. This is a change which will occur at the end of the millennium and exist from that point throughout the eternal ages.

Through viewing the overall scope of the kingdom of God in Scripture, there is a clear inference that this earth is only one province among many in the kingdom. God's rule in this kingdom extends throughout all the galaxies of the universe; and from a Scriptural perspective, innumerable provinces similar to the earth exist elsewhere in the universe, apparently in all the galaxies.

Scripture provides a glimpse into this facet of God's government of the universe in the Book of Job. In Job 1:6; 2:1, on two different occasions, the "sons of God" are seen presenting themselves before the Lord, with Satan appearing "among them." Satan, a son of God appearing "among them," demonstrates *equality with them* (all angels are "sons of God" because of a special, individual creative activity of God). Satan was the messianic angel ruling over one province in God's kingdom (the earth), and the only logical conclusion which could follow is that the other sons of God were messianic angels ruling over other provinces in God's kingdom (other worlds).

The appearances of these sons of God could only be congresses of these messianic angels, who apparently appeared at regularly scheduled intervals in God's presence to provide a report relative to their provinces in the kingdom. Such meetings would occur at the "mount of the congregation ['meeting place'], in the sides of the north ['utmost parts of the north']" (Isa. 14:13).

A "mount" in Scripture signifies a *kingdom* (Isa. 2:2-4; Dan. 2:35, 44, 45). The thought from the expression "mount of the congregation" in Isa. 14:13 would thus be, *the meeting place [where the messi-*

anic angels assembled] to render a report concerning activity in their province, within God's kingdom, located in God's presence at a northernmost point of the universe.

The earth is one of nine planets revolving around a medium-size star (our sun), and it has been estimated that our own galaxy contains possibly two hundred billion such stars (suns) — some much larger, some much smaller. The distance from the earth to the nearest star outside our solar system is four and one-third light years, and the distance to the farthest star in our galaxy is thousands of light years.

It is one hundred thousand light years across our galaxy and between two million and two and one-half million light years from our galaxy to the nearest neighboring galaxy. Beyond that, man has been able to reach out with telescopes and view stars estimated to be billions of light years removed from this galaxy (a light year is the distance light travels in one year — approximately, six trillion miles).

In the light of God's government of the universe, as revealed in Scripture, it is interesting to note how a number of present-day astronomers view our own galaxy as they study the heavens through their telescopes. Some of these individuals believe it is probably the rule rather than the exception that other stars (suns) have revolving planets, forming solar systems similar to our own system with its nine planets. Astronomers cannot see these planets. But, through the use of infrared techniques developed in recent years, systematic blockages of light can be seen — blockages of a nature which could only be attributed to planets revolving around stars (suns). Also, information derived through the use of the Hubble telescope in more recent times has provided additional confirmation for these earlier discoveries.

Any way one views the matter, the vastness of the universe over which God rules is staggering. David could look into the heavens during his day, viewing only a small part of one galaxy (only a minute part is visible to the naked eye [not more than about

2,000 stars can be seen by the naked eye at any one time — approximately 1/500,000th of the total visible in the most powerful telescopes, or approximately 1/100,000,000th of the estimated total in this one galaxy alone]), and proclaim, "When I consider thy heavens, the works of thy fingers... What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" (Psa. 8:3, 4). And man today can view the heavens through telescopes, seeing things far beyond what David could see with the naked eye, and do no more than respond with similar thoughts, asking the same question.

David gave the answer to the question, and the answer is still the same today and will remain the same throughout eternity. *Man is the one whom God created to have dominion over the works of His hands* (v. 6).

MAN'S PLACE IN GOD'S ETERNAL RULE

The eighth Psalm could be understood in its ultimate scope in the sense of dominion out in the heavens. Such dominion during the coming age must, of necessity, be confined to the earth; but during the eternal ages, dominion exercised by man will extend into the heavens as well.

It seems apparent that *apart from man* the earth would be no more than just another province in God's kingdom, ruled over by a messianic angel. But the creation of man has *changed* all of this. Man's creation has offset the scales completely, for, following man's creation, the earth was revealed to not only be the most significant place in the galaxy but in the entire universe as well.

The reason for all of this is evident. The creation of man is *peculiar to this earth*, and man was created in *God's image and likeness* for the specific purpose of *possessing dominion over the works of God's hands*. Dominion throughout the universe is exercised by angels, and angels were not created in God's image and likeness.

Man was made "a little lower than the angels,"

for he was created to possess dominion held by angels, which man did not hold following his creation (nor has man held it to this day). Even Christ appeared on this earth, apart from His glory, in the same position as man — "a little lower than the angels" (Heb. 2:7, 9).

Such though will change at the beginning of the millennium and change again after a different fashion at the beginning of the eternal ages. At the beginning of the millennium, Christians will replace angels ruling over one province and rule in their stead. During the eternal ages though, it does not appear that Christians will actually replace angels in other provinces, as on the province ruled by Satan and his angels (that which awaits Satan and his angels was occasioned by sin, and there is no record or intimation that sin entered any other province in the universe). Christians in that day will possibly occupy positions under God over provincial governors in one or more provinces. Such a thought would be in perfect keeping with Paul's question in I Cor. 6:3, "Know ye not that we shall judge ['rule' (*cf.* v. 2)] angels?"

When God created man after His image and likeness, immediate plans for man had to do with this earth. However, since man at the end of the millennium will assume a position with Christ on a throne from which *universal government* will be administered, an entirely new light is cast upon God's creative activity in the first chapter of Genesis.

God, at the time He created man, had far-reaching plans for His creature, as well as the earth. And these far-reaching plans will be realized only when *complete order has been restored in the one province where sin entered, a new earth has been brought into existence, and universal power emanates from the throne of God and of the Lamb in the new Jerusalem, the capital of the new earth.*

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