

Exod 05-03-13a

This is Sunday, March the 13th, 2005. We continue this morning our study in the book of Exodus. We'll take a moment as we approach the Word of God to bow our heads in prayer.

It gives us individually the opportunity to ensure that we exercise the function of our priesthood to draw near to God with a true heart in full assurance of faith with our hearts having been sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Shall we pray? Father, we are grateful for another opportunity to spend time in fellowship and in the study of your Word. We thank you for this gift, for the presence of your Holy Spirit so that we can understand it, remember it, and apply it.

We thank you most of all for the Lord Jesus Christ who even now sits at your right hand and makes intercession for us. We thank you for the new and living way that he has opened for us through the veil. We thank you that we have a great destiny.

We are provided with everything we need to hear the call and to be the called and to reach that maximum potential that you have designed for us in this age through your Son. We pray that our study this morning will contribute to our growth and maturity, that we can lay hold of those things for which we ourselves were apprehended. We pray for those who safeguard our freedom, especially those who are in high places in government, those who are serving overseas, those who serve in harm's way, both foreign and domestic venues.

We pray especially for those believers who may not be able to attend church that you will grant them a special blessing, remind them of the great truths that reside in their souls through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Comfort, encourage, and strengthen them and grant them the opportunity for fellowship and encouragement from believers of like mind. Once again, we are grateful for our opportunity this morning.

We pray that you will bless our study in your word. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

For our scripture reading this morning, I would like to do something a little bit unusual. I want to pull from two passages in the same book separated by about 15 chapters. We are in the study of the priesthood.

We are trying to get a better grip on our own priesthood as we look at the Levitical priesthood that is given to us in the book of Exodus. Initially, when we are thinking about what faces us on the work days of the week, when we look at what faces us in our relationships, our conversations, our interactions, the first thing, I imagine you are like me, the first thing that pops into your mind is not priesthood. We don't wake up in the morning, pull on our clothes, stick the keys in the ignition, drive off somewhere, and walk into an environment and think, alright, now, how is my priesthood going to function here? It just doesn't really reside in the forefront of my mind.

So, our goal is to try to have a greater sensitivity, a greater awareness of what our priesthood means in the daily events of life. Because it's a big deal. The book of Hebrews is all about the high priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ and how that has converted the individual responsibility for believers from ritual to reality.

We don't have the Levitical rituals that we are studying this morning, but we have the realities that they represent and that they teach. So, I would suspect, give yourself a little personal quiz here. Think about the last week.

It's been a week since we talked about Exodus. So, in the past week, how many times has the concept of individual priesthood occurred to our mind? How many times in the last week did we really stop and think, hmm, priesthood, what does that mean? I suspect it hasn't really been floating to the top of the circus that is our mind. But it ought to.

And that's my contention. Well, my mind is a circus. I don't know what your mind is.

A three-ring or four-ring or five-ring circus. At any given moment, I can be thinking computers or family or job or Bible class or personal failure or just any one of a number of subjects. Come up.

And most of us, I think, are this way. I don't think I'm that weird. But honestly, look at the convergence that we've had between our study in Exodus and our study in Hebrews and even our study in Ezekiel, looking at the leadership in Israel and their failure, how those who ought to be teaching in Israel and building the people of Judah together into a wall used bad mortar.

And the first time the storm comes, the wall dissolves and the bricks all crash to the ground. All of this has to do with being aware of our place in God's plan. And fully one-third of that is priesthood.

The other two-thirds being ministry and ambassadorship. Without the proper function of our priesthood, the other two don't happen. You cannot minister when you are unclean.

You cannot be an ambassador when you do not have the power of God to give you perception, to give you a sense of timing, a sense of place. As Solomon said in Ecclesiastes, there is a time and a season for everything under the sun. And it's not always the time to minister.

It's not always the time to be an ambassador. But it is always time to be a priest. It is always time to look at ourselves and be sure that we are pure, that we are functional, that we have access to the throne of grace, that we are not an impediment to the plan of God, but are in fact an asset, that we are good and faithful servants.

It's never a bad time to think about our priesthood. We have to try to raise our level of awareness, our level of priority on this aspect of our life. This is our identity.

This is who we are. It has a lot to say about our self-image. How do you think of yourself? How

do we view ourselves in the context of work, school, family, social situations, clientele, the things we come in contact with as we go through the day? Do we have on our priestly garb? Are we sanctified? Are we doing our job as priests? Well, our scripture reading this morning is out of the book of, and out of 66 books, you probably never guessed the book.

I give you 5 seconds to guess the book our scripture reading is coming from, and I bet nobody will get it. Don't be thinking Zephaniah, just because it's a hard name and an obscure message. The book of Revelation.

We're going to go to Revelation. We're going to start in Revelation chapter 5. Revelation chapter 5. You don't really think of Revelation as a priesthood book, but we're trying to shake up our thought patterns here this morning. We're trying to give ourselves kind of a fresh purchase, a little fresh traction in our thinking with regard to priesthood.

Revelation chapter 5. Subtitled in your New King James, the lamb takes the scroll, the book with the seven seals. This is the launching point for a lot of revelational studies, isn't it? A lot of work in the apocalypse begins and concentrates on these seven seals. I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals.

Here's a question for you, but before I really even read the scripture reading on this scroll. How many times have you looked at the scroll and the seven seals and heard people preach and talk about it? I mean, it's just endless, isn't it? Did you ever ask yourself the question, how does John know the scroll is written on the inside? It's sealed with seven seals. How does he know what's on the inside? Just idle curiosity.

I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals. And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look at it.

So I wept much because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll or to look at it. But one of the elders said to me, do not weep. Behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.

And I looked and behold in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders stood a lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. Then he came and took the scroll out of the right hand of him who sat on the throne. Now when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the lamb, each having a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

And they sang a new song, saying, You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain and have redeemed us to God by your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God, and we shall reign on the

earth. Then I looked and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures 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 who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing. And if you can read that without hearing the music from Handel's Messiah, you haven't listened to Handel's Messiah enough.

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, I heard saying, Blessing and honor and glory and power be to him who sits on the throne and to the lamb forever and ever. Then the four living creatures said Amen and the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped him who lives forever and ever. Well, we are not yet at least studying the book of Revelation and there's a lot we're going to have to leave unexplored out of this chapter.

What I want to focus on is the new song in verses nine and ten. Three aspects of this song. Who sings it? What does it say? And what does what it says mean? So first of all, who is singing it? You have the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders.

We're not going to have time to substantiate our view here, so I'm just going to offer it to you as a given. The twenty-four elders are human beings. The four living creatures are not human beings.

Is everybody sort of willing to accept that on faith? The four living creatures are much more in line with the cherubim that we saw in the early chapters of Ezekiel. They have unique properties that indicate they are not of the seed of Adam. The twenty-four elders, on the other hand, are very much so representative of mankind.

So you have an angelic and a human set of representatives singing this song. That's our first theory, our first hypothesis. They sang a new song, saying, You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain and have redeemed us to God by your blood.

Now, in our more detailed study of the book of Revelation, which we are going to do here in the not-too-distant future, we will spend some time talking about what this might mean in the mouths of the four living creatures. I'm not going to address that this morning. I just leave it to your personal amusement to meditate on that and figure out what that might mean.

We'll talk about the twenty-four elders, who we know are human beings. You were slain and have redeemed us to God by your blood out of what? Every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. Would this be something related to Israel? It seems doubtful, unless you view these people as proselytes to Judaism or proselytes to Israel as Rahab, Ruth, Uriah the Hittite, and so on.

These are from a wider group. Those believers who existed prior to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Those who exist after the cross.

Every tribe, nation, tongue, people, and have made us kings and priests to our God, and we

shall reign on the earth. Made us kings, made us priests. You'll notice that this is not the vast multitude, ten thousand times ten thousand, saying we are kings and priests.

It is a subset. It is the elders that are in view here. The vast multitude sings a different song.

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and blessing. Seven fold, in line with the seven seals, in line with the seven eyes, in line with the seven spirits. There is seven, which is the number of completion.

Is it not seven? No, go ahead. Oh, you're frowning at me as though I miscounted. No, no.

There are a lot of... I know that frown. There are seven elements here. What is seven represented in the Bible? One of the most well-known numbers.

Telaiao. Completion. Fullness.

Maturity. Things have come to fruition. The seven eyes, the seven spirits that are associated with the Lamb.

This is what signals His worthiness to open the seven seals. He's got an eye for each seal, if you will. He's got a spirit for each seal on the book.

He is qualified because He has power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and blessing. So in every way, John no longer has to weep because here is the one fully qualified to open the scroll. Later on, every creature in heaven and earth, the participants get wider and wider.

You start with the four living creatures and the 24 elders singing the new song. Then you have the living creatures, the elders, and many angels around the throne. 10,000 times 10,000 sang with a loud voice this sevenfold song in verse 12.

Then every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea and all that are in them I heard sing. Now, isn't it interesting? Creatures in the sea are singing this song. Is this whale song? I mean, what dolphins are... Well, seriously, what does it mean in the sea? This is why we need to study this book in detail.

I can't explain everything this morning. Blessing, honor, glory, power, be to him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever. How many elements in that song? Four.

Four is the number of God's power on earth, northeast, south, and west. The number of man in history, so to speak. And so you have this additional song.

We are looking at the first song that says, You have made us kings and priests to our God. So this is a subset. However you want to slice it, whether they are angels or not, we know that there are human beings involved and they are not the same group as the every creature in heaven and on earth or the 10,000 times 10,000.

It is a subset, smaller group. How do you get into this group? What do the 24 elders represent? In other words, here is the main question. Who is going to be kings and priests? We have reviewed numerous times Peter talking about God making us a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

Here is priesthood talked about in the millennial kingdom, in the day of the Lord and the things that follow it. This song is sung in heaven. The lamb is standing there with the scroll in his hand that is as yet unopened.

And as soon as he takes the scroll and everyone recognizes, he is the answer. He is the one who can read this. And what does the scroll represent? What do the seals represent? This is the final, what in the military we would call the five paragraph order for wrapping up human history in its six days before the day of rest, which is the millennial kingdom.

This is what has to happen. This is the mission. This is the purge.

This is the judgment. This is the reconciliation of everything in the first 6,000 years of human history so that God can make Jesus Christ's enemies his footstool, can put him on the throne of his father David, can bring in the millennial kingdom. That cannot happen until everything written in this scroll is fulfilled.

And when will the kingdom come? When will the righteous be rewarded? When will the wicked be punished? When is the great denouement going to happen in history? Why do you think John is weeping when here is this scroll but nobody can open it? There is no way to complete history. There is no way to complete the plan of God in history unless someone can open this scroll. Here he is.

And John stops weeping and people in the heavenly realm begin to praise God and sing this new song. Well, we are looking at this strictly from the standpoint of what does it mean to be a king and priest in this context. So, go forward now to Revelation chapter 20.

Revelation chapter 20. You can't really start 20 without looking at the end of 19. The beast, the kings of the earth, their armies gathered together to make war against him who sat on the horse and against his army.

Verse 20 of Revelation 19. The beast was captured with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence. By which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshipped his image.

These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. The rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

So, the beast and the false prophet have the unenviable distinction of being the first two inhabitants of the lake of fire. Satan is not in there yet. The rest here are not in there yet.

They are killed but it doesn't say anything about the lake. So, the beast and the false prophet, you know, sometimes when it's been kind of cool weather and then it's warm enough and people want to swim. Everybody kind of stands around seeing who's going to be the first to jump in.

Find out what the water temperature really is. Are their teeth going to chatter so bad? Are they going to turn so blue that nobody else wants to jump in? Well, this is kind of the opposite. The beast and the false prophet are the first to occupy the lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Chapter 20. Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. What do you suppose this chain represents? People talk about the bottomless pit a lot.

They don't talk much about the chain. Having a great chain in his hand, he laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. And he cast him into the bottomless pit and shut him up and set a seal on him so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished.

But after these things, he must be released for a little while. Once again, things are put under a seal and for the millennial kingdom to wrap up in accordance with God's plan, that seal will also be broken. And when that seal is broken and the Magog rebellion takes place, God executes yet another purge and judgment before the kingdom of the Father comes in.

So in each case, before you have the kingdom, before you have the blessings and rewards, you have the breaking of one or more seals. And I saw, verse 4, thrones and they that sat on them and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus.

By the way, who is big on beheading these days? You know, beheading kind of went out of style, kind of had a revival in the French Revolution and then went away. But who is big on beheading? Well, if you have seen any video of men in orange clothing making their final plea for their life, you know who is doing beheading these days. Just a little pre-no-charge association there.

I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshipped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands, and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

This is the first resurrection. We pay attention to context when we read the word of God. What is, in absolute terms, what is the first resurrection? The Lord Jesus, nearly 2,000 years ago, is the first resurrection.

So when somebody says first, you have to look at the context of what they are dealing with,

right? In fact, in the raising of human beings who have died, this is the first resurrection. Can it comprehend both the rapture and the raising of the Old Testament saints at the second coming? This is one of the arguments against those being two distinct and separate things. How can these people be part of the same resurrection when they are separated by seven years? Yes, it can, because you step back and you comprehend the day of the Lord begins at the rapture, culminates when Christ sits down on the first day of the millennial kingdom.

When you step back and look at that, God's raising of the saints from any age pre-Moses, between Moses and Christ, between Christ and the rapture, raising of those who have been sanctified by faith, who have been set apart, redeemed, reconciled, God has propitiated, and they are raised, that is the first resurrection. You step back and look at it, the fact that it has two parts, one for the church and one for Israel, is not in view here. The rest of the dead, and by the way, these people who have been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, are by no means the only ones raised at this point.

They represent those who have the testimony of Christ. It says specifically, I saw the souls of those who have been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshipped the beast or his image, had not received his mark. These are people who were martyred in the last seven years of what age? The age of Israel.

Had there been others who were beheaded for their testimony to Christ in the age of Israel? Who was the greatest prophet of the age according to the Lord Jesus? How did he die? Beheaded for the testimony of Jesus. On the Israel clock, how far removed is John the Baptist from the tribulational saints, tribulational martyrs? Months? Weeks? Not much at all, if you subtract out the church age. So, there is a summary element here.

There is a comprehensive view. The rest of the dead, who were the rest of the dead? I mean, and this sort of makes sense from everything else we know, right? If you say, well, only those who actually got beheaded in the tribulational period are going to be raised, the millennial kingdom would be exceedingly thinly populated, would it not? How many people can you behead? There is only 144,000, you know, 12,000 from each tribe and kindred and so on, from whom you could draw. So, you might have, you know, did 50,000 of them get martyred by beheading? I mean, obviously this is a representative group, just as are the 24 elders.

The rest of the dead did not live again until the 1,000 years were finished. The rest of the dead are the unbelievers from the first 6,000 years of history. They do not live again.

Believers are raised, unbelievers are not. Blessed and holy is he who has part, and I would say a part, you can put a little up caret there and put a part, has a part, a meros, a portion in the first resurrection. The one who has a part in the first resurrection, it does not mean takes part, it means when the resurrection happens, this is when the distribution of the inheritance takes place.

Who gets a part in the first resurrection? Blessed and holy. Who can God bless? Who is

sanctified? Who has washed their robes and made them clean in the blood of the Lamb from those ages? That is who is blessed and holy. That is who has a meros, a portion of the distribution.

We just glide over this, you know, when we read it in casual terms and say, well, you know, blessed and holy is he who has a part in the first resurrection, because he just got raised, everybody who got raised has a part. That is not what it is saying. Blessed and holy is he who has a part in the first resurrection, over such the second death has no power.

Over such the second death has no power. Do you remember the promise back in Revelation chapter 3, where he says he will not be hurt by the second death? No, it is chapter 2. I should have written that down. Who sees it? Someone help me out.

Which church is it where he says he will not be hurt by the second death? Chapter 2, verse 11. Thank you, Daniel. Yes, Church of Smyrna.

Your works, tribulation and poverty, the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not. Do not fear those things which you are about to suffer. The devil will throw some of you into prison.

You may be tested. You will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful unto death.

I will give you the crown of life. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death. Smyrna is characterized by those who go through tribulation, who suffer and are faithful unto death.

You do not have to suffer death to be faithful unto death. If the level of your faith is such that were you put in that position, you would be faithful. Thank the good Lord most of us are never going to be challenged in that way.

We don't live in many places on the earth like Afghanistan or Pakistan or Thailand or the Peruvian Andes or many other places where you can literally die for your faith today. We don't live in those places. But many of us have the level of faith that were we put in those circumstances, we would indeed be faithful unto death.

You don't have to be tested in that way to prove that that is the level of your faith. But that level of faith is what is rewarded. Be faithful unto death.

Many times continuing to live is more of a challenge than being executed. This is the gist of what the Apostle Paul says when he says, Well, to live is good and to die is gain, but I find it more needful to stay with you and teach you. I would rather go and be with the Lord personally.

That's what Paul says. It's a harder thing to stay here and get the forty stripes minus one and be shipwrecked and imprisoned and limp along with the thorn in the flesh and not be able to

see and all the rest of it. But it's needful and at many times your faith is demonstrated to a greater degree by living than it is by dying.

So, once again, chapter 20, verse 6. Blessed and holy is he who has a part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power. What is the second death? It tells us in this same chapter.

When the thousand years have expired, Satan is released, goes out and deceives the nation. You have the Gog and Magog numbered together to battle. Sand of the sea went up on the breadth of the earth, surrounds the camp of the saints and the beloved city.

Fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours them. Verse 9. The devil, verse 10, who deceived them is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. I'm not just idly emphasizing the fact that they are the first two inhabitants.

They go first and the devil is third. You have the unholy trinity as the first three occupants. People are always throwing rocks at the doctrine of the trinity.

Well, you have a holy trinity and you have an unholy trinity. The beast, the false prophet and Satan are the first three inhabitants of the lake of fire. They will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

It's interesting to me. There is day and night in the lake of fire forever and ever. But there is not day and night forever and ever in the kingdom of the Father.

Night goes away in the kingdom of the Father. Night does not go away in the lake of fire. Then I saw a great white throne.

Him who sat on it from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. There was found no place for them. This is a reference to the elements melting with fervent heat.

This is the time at which God clicks file exit on the great program of human history. And the universe will wink out just like your programs do when somebody kicks the cord out of your computer. The heavens and earth fled away.

Have you ever watched your screen when the power goes off? And it is gone. It is as though it had never been. And all of your hard work, if you didn't save it, is just as gone as if you had never done it.

I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God. And books were opened. And another book was opened, which is of life.

And the dead were judged according to their works by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it. Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them.

Three different locations that spit up their dead. The sea, death, and Hades. They were judged, each one according to his works.

Of course, this is a great passage to demonstrate that when Jesus talks about Hades, he is not talking about the lake of fire. Then death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

Those over such the second death has no power. In verse 6, what is the second death? Your stuff being cast into the lake of fire. Death and Hades going in there, that's the second death.

Anyone not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. It does not say that those people are experiencing the second death. It says they go into the lake of fire.

The second death is death and Hades being cast in. What does this represent? These people have stood and been judged according to their works. They and their works have been residing in the sea and in death and in Hades.

They come to the judgment bar, the great white throne, with their box of works. It's like when you get fired and leave your office, you carry your stuff out in a cardboard box. Everybody comes out of the sea and death and Hades with their cardboard box full of their works.

Unfortunately, there is no sacrificial atoning blood in the box. There is nothing that can wash away my sin. Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Nothing can make me whole again. Nothing but the blood of Jesus. That is the precious flow that makes us white as snow.

No other fount I know. Nothing but the blood of Jesus. I don't care how big your box is.

I don't care how full it is. When you stand before the great white throne judgment and the books are open and you are judged according to what is in the box, ultimately the inventory always lacks the atoning work of Christ. The redemptive, the expiatory work of Christ is not in there.

You and your box get cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. Death and Hades are the repository place for everybody who is standing there with a box.

It is you and your life's work. It is you and your reputation. It is you and your fame.

It is you and your accomplishments. It is you and everything you thought made you a good person. It is as though death and Hades themselves have been defiled by all of those people with their box of filthy rags.

God takes the people and the place you have been defiling for the last X number of years. The people, their box of works, and the place where they have resided, death or Hades, and by implication the sea, although it doesn't really make sense to dump the sea into the lake of fire.

That's kind of like the irresistible force meets the immovable object.

But the Bible goes on to tell us that when the kingdom of the Father arrives there is no more sea. So we don't have to get into the physics of that. But the idea is these places where the dead have resided with their attributes, their accomplishments, all of it gets thrown in the lake of fire.

This is the second death. The second death is the destruction of people and their works together. That's what the great white throne judgment is about.

That's why it says judged according to their works. People say, well how come they are not judged according to faith? They have already been judged according to their faith or they would not have been weeded out of those that are resurrected at the beginning of the millennial kingdom. It's like the sheep and goats judgment.

When Jesus says to the sheep on his right and says to the goats on his left, says to the goats depart, well they were already sorted by sheep and goat before he began speaking. Same thing here. You wouldn't be at the great white throne if you had not rejected Christ, either in prospect or in retrospect in human history.

So the faith issue is settled. Now God is saying, I'll let you have an appeal. Just like I gave the devil an appeal when he fell and I put on this big human history demonstration.

This is not a summary judgment. Show me what you've got. Let's take everything out of your box and you show me what you've got that equals the blood of my son.

Well, they pull everything out and it's all trash. And they, their box, the trash and the place that they've been dwelling all gets thrown in the lake of fire. It's important also that death and Hades are cast into the lake of fire because there is no more need for such a place.

People are not going to be dying. People are not going to be falling short and be standing around with a cardboard box. So the place no longer needs to exist.

The concept of reserving people for judgment ends at the great white throne. That concept doesn't carry forward into the future. And that ought to be a great comfort.

People are always saying, well, is God going to strap our volition down? Could we fall a couple of million years into the eternal future? Well, God doesn't have a place to reserve such people because it has been cast into the lake of fire. So if there is any sort of fall or judgment, God is not going to reserve people and have an appeal process and take the stuff out of the cardboard box. That whole thing has been dumped into the lake of fire.

That concept is over. The demonstration has been finished. The point has been made.

And it's kind of like it says in Hebrews 10, there remains no more sacrifice for sin, just a certain fearful expectation of judgment. Well, this has been covered. It's been handled and it's over with.

So all of this that we've covered in our first service this morning hinges on our contact point of priesthood. So go back to verse 6. Blessed and holy is he who has a part in the first resurrection. Over such, the second death has no power.

Why is priesthood important to you and to me? This is the question I asked at the beginning of our service. Why should that be floating to the top of the circus that is our mind? Because if we can get a grip on this, if we can exercise this knowledge and keep it fresh in our minds as we live day by day, we can be these people who are blessed and holy. We can be the people who have a part in the first resurrection.

We can be people over whom the second death has no power. Our works will not be boxed up and put in the incinerator. Our life will not be a complete and total waste of time from the standpoint of divine evaluation, from the perspective of divine judgment.

There will be gold and silver and precious stones. Blessed and holy is he who has a part, has an assignment of reward, a division of the spoils in the first resurrection. Over such, the second death has no power.

Why is not being hurt by the second death a promise to the saints in Smyrna who persevere under pressure, have faith of the level that will sustain them even unto death? The promise is made, you will not be hurt by the second death. That tells us that people who don't exercise that level of faith, who don't remember their priesthood, can be hurt by the second death. The produce of one's life turns out to be nothing more than dead branches that go into the incinerator.

There is loss of reward, loss of blessing, loss of opportunity, loss of service, loss of what I can think of as an engineer as reflective surface. We exist to reflect the glory of God. If we are a bicycle reflector, that is not nearly as good as being a giant mirror, a giant reflection of the glory of God.

We determine what our surface area of reflection of God's glory is going to be by these daily decisions, by the exercise of our priesthood. We will have more to say about this after the break. We will pause here.

When we come back, we will resume our look at the Levitical priesthood in Exodus and in Numbers.