

Current Affairs #60 – The Glorious Sons of God

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Now I want to resume our discussion of the four horsemen of Revelation 6, commonly referred to as the four horsemen of the apocalypse. We had been walking through this section, but as we got to the third of the four horsemen, we began to look at the voice that spoke from in the midst of the four living creatures. We went back into the earlier chapters of Revelation, 4 and 5, and we saw that the Lamb was in the midst of the four living creatures.<sup>1</sup> We went back from that to looking at the four living creatures, and that had us in the Book of Ezekiel, the first ten chapters, to deconstruct the four living creatures, who are the same in the Book of Ezekiel as they are in the Book of Revelation, the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> chapters.<sup>2</sup> We began to understand that in these very difficult times, in a time that great darkness has come and will increase in its intensity upon the earth, that God is lifting the veil of revelation and allowing us to see who we actually are, as the people of God, from before the foundations of the world—in other words, how God saw us before the foundations of the world.

Because, you see, in contemporary Christian theology, evangelical theology, the goal has always been—and, in fact, it is the same as Roman Catholic theology (that is where the evangelicals got it from)—the goal has always been to go to heaven when you die. The common expression used to be, “Give me your hand, give God your heart, and join the church of your choice.” The promise was, and usually, some of the propagators of this gospel would ask the question, “What would happen if you died tonight or if the Lord returned?” It was foundationally a scare tactic, but it was built upon a theology that is only partial, and it is not even the most important component of it.

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All Scriptures quotations are from the NKJV Bible, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>1</sup> See Revelation 5:6: “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.”

<sup>2</sup> See Ezekiel 1:5,10: “<sup>5</sup>Also from within it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man.; <sup>10</sup>As for the likeness of their faces, each had the face of a man; each of the four had the face of a lion on the right side, each of the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and each of the four had the face of an eagle.”; see also Revelation 4:6-7 NKJV: “Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle.”

To this very day, if you ask evangelicals the question, “What is the gospel really about?”—they would say it in the following way: They would say God created man. Man sinned. Christ came and died for our sins on the cross, and if you accept His salvation, you will go to heaven when you die (which means you will avoid going to hell). This is Calvinism stripped of all of its sophistication, in its barest essentials. Calvin, of course, was a Roman priest, as was Luther before him, and they are generally credited with establishing the foundations of Reformation, and then modern evangelical theology. All of those things I have said are true, but they are neither the beginning of the story nor the end of the story. They do not explain to you why God created man. They focus, rather, on the risk management—the aspect that had to do with retrieving man from the condition of sin. A condition, by the way, that God planned for before He created man. The Lamb was slain from the foundations of the earth.<sup>3</sup> So this is not a complete theology by any stretch of the imagination. The elements that are said are true, but they do not answer the fundamental question, why. Why did God create man?

We have attempted to answer that over and over again, and so I will not dwell on it at this point. God created man in anticipation of man being in Christ. He saw the creation in Christ. He looked from the beginning of the matter to the end, and when He said, “We will make a man in Our image and likeness,”<sup>4</sup> He understood that to be the man in Christ. The man in Christ is designed to bear the image and likeness of God in creation, so we are put here as part of the corporate son. In our individual capacities and as part of the corporate whole, we are put here to exactly represent the nature and the character of God to humankind. That is why we are here.

It is not primarily about going to heaven when we die. And, in fact, although we will go to heaven when we die, we will be brought back from heaven when the Lord returns to the earth, when He comes back. So if heaven is the final and ultimate destination from the viewpoint of theology, then

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<sup>3</sup> See Revelation 13:8: “All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

<sup>4</sup> See Genesis 1:26: “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’”

it is a disappointment because heaven and earth will pass away<sup>5</sup> And the Lord intends, before the passing away of heaven and earth, to bring us from heaven upon the return of the Lord. Because the story does not end when you die. The story does not even end with the return of the Lord.

Here is why we attempted to delve into the four living creatures, and before that, the man above the water. The theology that focuses on going to heaven when you die continues to see us through the lenses of our humanity—continues to see us as sons of men, not sons of God. Because sons of God are partakers of a divine nature<sup>6</sup> and possessors of a divine character, same as God. That is why He gave us a spirit out of His own person, so He might relate to us Spirit to spirit. The descriptions of the man above the water and the descriptions of the four living creatures show man in a glorified form, the glorified form of the sons of God, and more particularly, the unitary and singular whole of the corporate man. Such a being lives comfortably between the realms of heaven and earth, moves between the heavens and the earth, and is the same when perceived on the earth as is seen when he is perceived from the heavenly.

We see the same four living creatures, typified by the four spirits, present in the son of God:

- the spirit of the lion, which is the ruler;
- the spirit of the eagle, which is the prophetic soaring between the realms;
- the spirit of the ox, which we deconstructed to mean the cherubim—the steadfast, the unmovable, the always abounding in the work of the Lord characteristic; where nothing deters you, ever, from the pursuit of the representation of God, which is your purpose for being;
- and finally, the face of a man, to speak of the son of man containing these characteristics of the Spirit of God.

The man above the water is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is inclusive of the many members of His body. We saw the symmetry between the way the man above the waters is described, and

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<sup>5</sup> See Matthew 24:35: “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.”

<sup>6</sup> See 2 Peter 1:4 NASB: “For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.”

we saw with that, how perfectly it coordinates with the risen Christ or with the pre-creation Christ, the One who is clothed in light, the One who has a body of beryl, the many-splendors of the body of beryl,<sup>7</sup> whose hair—I am always intrigued by the reference, “His hair as white as wool.”<sup>8</sup> I once heard a Black preacher say that is the proof that Jesus was Black, because it is a reference to the texture of hair. That is simply nonsense. It is the connection between the Lamb and the Lion. It is the indication that He is both the Lamb and the Lion.

But onto other things. Anytime you domesticate the Scripture, anytime you look to the natural world for understanding of the spirit, you are going to be wrong. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned.<sup>9</sup> So references, for example, like (we will come to this later on) to the sound of the wings of certain demonic characters and the popularized but domesticated version of it: that the sound of their wings was the sound of horses running into battle; and some erstwhile notable wanted to stand out by suggesting that John, in the Book of Revelation, did not understand about helicopters. I am surprised they did not say it was black helicopters. But again, you see this plethora of nonsensical attributions on the basis of just domesticating the Scriptures, having the natural order of things be the basis of the interpretation of the spiritual. You should never do that. Every time you do it, you are going to come up short. You will be flat wrong, and that being wrong will not only deceive you, it will deceive others.

Anyway, we pulled back the lenses for a panoramic view of this Son of God, the many-membered Christ, the four living creatures being the reference to the corporate man. Above the waters, he stands upon the word, and he knows the times and the seasons. That is why the angelic, that

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<sup>7</sup> See Daniel 10:5-6: “I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz! His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude.”

<sup>8</sup> See Revelation 1:12-15: “Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters.”

<sup>9</sup> See 1 Corinthians 2:14: “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

surrounded the man above the waters, asked him about the timing of such things. The four living creatures present a truly transcendent picture of the Son of God in His many-membered form. The whole idea behind taking us into these particulars of Scripture was to show us how formidable we are, even against our enemy, when who we are is viewed from an eternal point of view, when who we are is viewed as God always intended us to be.

There was always meant to be, as it were, a lifting up out of the ordinary and a transposition of us into carriers of the glory of God. You know, Jesus said, as He left the earth in John 17, “Father, the glory You have given to Me, I have given to them.”<sup>10</sup> Some of His glory was seen and spoken of on the Mount of Transfiguration, when Jesus was transfigured, transformed, and presented as vastly superior to any human form. So much so, Peter understood that he was in the presence of God when he was viewing the exalted form of Jesus as shown on the mount where He was transfigured, where His figure was like blazing fire, such as we see Him again in the Book of Revelation, and prophetically in books like Daniel and Ezekiel and the like. In fact, Peter said, “We will make three tabernacles or three booths—one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah—to celebrate” (cf. Matthew 17:4) A similar example is when Jesus came up out of the water, having been baptized by John the Baptist, and God spoke out of the cloud and said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (cf. Matthew 3:17).

All of that to say that my deliberate intention in digressing from the discussion of the four horsemen of the apocalypse to a discussion, first of the four living creatures, and also of the man above the waters, was intentional in my desire to present to you a picture of that which God foresaw. This is not even just the overcoming church; this is the original intent. This is how we were seen in the image and likeness of God. When you juxtapose that to failing humanity, corrupt and compromised and subject to the demonic, to schemes and ploys of the enemy to entrap and to contain, when you view this exalted man, when you view this man from the viewpoint of the eternal, how God originally saw man, and you compare that to debauched humanity evincing the progression of entropy, the decline that resulted from man’s sin in the Garden and the subsequent

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<sup>10</sup> See John 17:22: “And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one.”

and over time fullness of that decline, you have a radically different picture. One is of helpless humanity subject to the rampaging of the enemy through his schemes and devices, which we want to unpack during this next session, and one is the triumphant and glorious result that matches exactly what was seen from the beginning. So, it is an inevitability. My hope was to lift your gaze, to lift your vision, so that in these dark and difficult times you do not see yourself cast in the mold or in the shadow of the rest of the human population. That was the intent.

So now when I come back, as I am about to do, to the four horsemen and pick that up, I want you to keep firmly in your mind that you represent the man above the waters, the one who knows the times and the seasons that have been ordained by God, and lives comfortably in the *kairoi* of God— the revealing in time of the original intents. When you view yourself through the lenses also of the four living creatures, understand that it was always the intent of God to cause the glory to move from the temple and to hover over and abide upon the four living creatures. So, it is how history was meant to unpack.

In type and shadow, the presence of God was over the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark of the Covenant was placed in the Holy of Holies in the ancient temple. And before that, the Ark of the Covenant was in a tabernacle in the wilderness. We will notice this about the presence of God: the presence of God was with and hovered over the Ark of the Covenant. It was not just in the temple; the presence of God was specifically over the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark of the Covenant was comprised of a box made of acacia wood overlaid with beaten gold and contained:

- the two tablets of stone that God had given to Moses on Mount Sinai,
- the Book of the Law (631 laws),
- a pot of manna, which is a type of the presence of God (Bread from heaven),
- and Aaron’s rod that budded, which was an indication of a Kingdom and its rule unconnected to a tree or unconnected to this earth; the rod bud budded, though it had been removed from a root system that sustained it as part of a branch on a tree.

Clearly, these elements were symbols of a holy people on the earth.

But, on top of the lid of the Ark of the Covenant were what? Two cherubim. Consider that the word “cherubim” was used to describe the four living creatures in their flight, as they were flying

back and forth or as they moved, propelled by the Spirit. Wherever the spirit went, the spirit of the living creatures went with them, and the wheels that were under them sometimes were on the earth, sometimes were above the earth.<sup>11</sup> They moved by a power that was not sustained by the earth. And they had eyes in them, all over the wheels, like the creatures had eyes beneath their wings.<sup>12</sup> This, again, has to do with seeing and moving as the Spirit of God led the four living creatures to see and to move.

Our notion of cherubim as being, more or less, a type of the angelic does not altogether take into account the more inclusive usage of the word “cherubim” from the word *kruwb*, which means ox, oxen, or the plower (which is what oxen did, they drew plows). God established, not only under the cherubim, but for the cherubim, this exalted position which would:

- describe their order of governance – the rod;
- it would speak of how they were supplied economically – the pot of manna;
- it would describe their righteousness and the covenantal order of that righteousness which is to say both
  - the tablets of stone on which were written the laws of Moses, indicating a covenantal relationship entered into by God,
  - and the Book of the Law, which was how they ought to live.

So, a holy people, covenantally bound to the heavens, bound to God, who lived not by bread alone but by every word that proceeded from the mouth of God, who were ruled as a Kingdom. The rod of Aaron was an indication of the priestly function—the king and priest function that would be undertaken or that would be completely assumed in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Their earthly appearance would be defined by these four elements, but who they were was depicted on the lid or the cover of the box. They were the cherubim, and it was for them that all these things were ordained.

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<sup>11</sup> See Ezekiel 1:20: “Wherever the spirit wanted to go, they went, because there the spirit went; and the wheels were lifted together with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.”

<sup>12</sup> See Ezekiel 10:12: “And their whole body, with their back, their hands, their wings, and the wheels that the four had, *were* full of eyes all around.”

Now if God has gone to that length to prepare and to establish a people in the earth, how are we going to be overthrown by any event that comes into the earth? All of which—the timing of which, the sequences of which, the permission for which—God must grant. For the enemy cannot operate in the earth without asking the permission of God. We learned that from the Book of Job. And Jesus reinforced that principle when He spoke to Pilate. He told Pilate, “You have no authority over Me unless the One who sent Me has given you such authority” (cf. John 19:10-11). In other words, nothing can happen in the world other than what God permits, and nothing may happen to the people of God other than what He permits to happen to them. But whatever He permits and whatever happens, and the sequences in which these things happen, the people of God are prepared and will be prepared for such things. For the picture of them is not that of the son of man. Though they live in the flesh, they are not of the world, they are not of the flesh. Increasingly, we are being drawn up to the glory of that which was originally descriptive of who God made us to be: a man in the image and the likeness of God.

As we get back into the passages that speak of this difficult and dark time that is coming, I want to use the first of these next five recordings both to summarize why we studied the man above the water and the four living creatures, and to draw your focus up to who we are as the sons of God, not as the sons of man. This gospel of going to heaven when we die would make us vulnerable in our thoughts, in our souls, to the rampaging of the enemy upon the earth. But as the sons of God, we will know the time, we will know the seasons, and we shall overcome by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of our testimony, and the clarity of our purpose in this earth.

As we continue this discussion, we will start with the fourth horsemen. Continue to study with me.