

Daniel Series Part 18

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[0 : 0 0] As we come before you again this morning, our God, we are reminded of how great is our privilege. We are reminded of all that we enjoy in Christ Jesus.

And we would come and humbly and gratefully express our deep thanks to you for all that you have done and continue to do for us in Christ Jesus.

We thank you for the manner in which you were pleased to fix your eyes upon us even before the beginning of the world. For the manner in which in due course you sent your Son Jesus that he might live in this world and die for sinners such as we are.

And we thank you for the manner in which his death in our place was shown to be victorious and vindicated by his being risen from the dead.

And we thank you that as we consider these things, we consider also the many privileges that occur to us who are in Christ, who have been enabled to put our faith in Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

[1 : 1 3] And so, yes, even with Christ raised up to the heavenly places. And we are but scratching the surface of all the good things that we enjoy because of that identity that we have, because of that union with your Son Jesus.

Indeed, even as we come and pray, we do so in Jesus. For we can do so in no other way. We can come in no other way but resting on who he is and what he has done in our place.

And so we do come and we would give thanks. And we ask that you would receive our thanks, feeble though they may be, and inadequate though they certainly are, that you would receive our thanks and work in us that we might be ever more grateful as we discover in a deeper way all that you are and all that you have done for us, and most especially in the person of your Son, Jesus Christ.

We thank you that as the saints of the Most High, we do indeed belong to God. We thank you for that belonging. We thank you for being part of the family of God.

And yet we also recognize, even as we have read in the book of Daniel this morning, that that does not guarantee for us an easy ride.

[2 : 3 7] Indeed, far from it. We have read of how the saints are persecuted, and how the saints are the object of the hatred and the wrath of the enemies of God.

And we come recognizing the solemnity of that truth, and we come recognizing that these are not only words that we read on the pages of the Bible, but these are things that we read in history and indeed today, of how so many of your people are indeed the objects of the hatred and the fury and the violence and the oppression of evil men.

And we do pray this morning very particularly for such. We pray for the persecuted church. We pray for fellow believers around the world who endure violence and suffering because they name the name of Jesus.

We would pray for believers in North Korea. We pray for believers in China. We pray for believers in the Middle East, in Saudi Arabia, in the Gulf states.

We think of believers in northern Sudan. We think of believers in Central Asia, in different countries in that part of the world. And the list could go on.

[3 : 55] We don't want it to be simply a list, but we want it to be a plea to you on behalf of all those who are suffering because of their loyalty to your Son, Jesus.

We pray, Lord, that you would be close to them and you would afford them protection. We are clear, your word is clear, that we will not be spared much of this suffering, but we pray that we would be upheld.

And we do pray and intercede especially for those who suffer in ways that we know nothing of, at least in our own personal experience. We would pray also for those nations where there is violence that is affecting all those who live there.

We know that Christians certainly have no monopoly on suffering. And so we do pray for those who suffer whatever the cause. We think of the continuing violence in Syria, the many who have lost their lives.

And we pray especially for those who remain, those who have been left widowed or orphaned. And we pray for them. We pray for those whose lives are on the line even now.

[5 : 05] We pray for every effort that is made to bring a peaceful solution. We remember also those who are remembering suffering in the past.

We think especially today on the anniversary of the tsunami and earthquake in Japan. And no doubt for many a very somber day as they recall loved ones who have been lost.

And we do pray for them. We pray for your people in Japan as they would seek to be salt and light to those who live around them. Heavenly Father, we are also mindful of those families who are mourning the loss of loved ones in Afghanistan.

We think of the six servicemen who died in these past days. And we pray for their families. And we pray that you would be with them and bringing a measure of comfort to them.

We pray for those who serve in the services. We think also especially of those who are serving as chaplains and would seek to bring a word of comfort from your word, very particularly to those who suffer.

[6 : 12] Some, no doubt, will be involved in funerals and memorial services of one kind or another. And we pray for them. Lord, we commend to you these things.

We pray that as we would turn to your word this morning to consider some of these matters, that you would guide us and direct us and help us to have a greater understanding and a greater sense of concern for those who suffer.

And indeed, that we would be prepared for days when we too might be placed in a position of having to suffer for our loyalty to Jesus Christ.

All these things we pray in His name and for His sake. Amen. Now, before we turn to the passage that we read in Daniel this morning, let's sing again.

And we'll continue singing the psalm that we began, Psalm 16. And we'll sing verses 8 through to the end of the psalm. Psalm 16, verses 8 to 11.

[7 : 14] It's on page 17. And we'll sing to the tune, Old 134th. Before me constantly I set the Lord alone. Because He is at my right hand, I'll not be overthrown.

Singing through to the end of the psalm. And we'll stand to sing. Amen. I said the Lord alone.

Because He is at my right hand, I'll not be overthrown.

Therefore, my heart is glad, my tongue with joy will sing.

My body too will rest secure in hope unwavering.

[8 : 28] For you will not allow my soul in death to save.

Nor will you feed your Holy One to see the tombs he came.

You have made unto me the path of life divine.

This shall I know at your right hand, joy from your face will shine.

I got a letter last week from Adam.

[9 : 35] Now some of you will know who I am speaking about when I mention his name, Adam. Adam was with us, I think it would have been a couple of years ago. He preached at an evening service and then spoke at an after-church fellowship about his work in Central Asia.

And the geographic reference is rather vague deliberately because of the sensitivity of the work that he is doing. Now Adam is currently in Central Asia.

And in the letter that I received just a few days ago, he shares how he was persuaded that he should once again head in the direction of danger, and indeed increasing danger.

And he made the case, as it were, in the following way. And I'm going to read just a portion of that letter that I received. My heart tells me that it will not please the Lord to make a decision not to go out of fear or because it is hazardous.

It is behavior inconsistent with the expectations of our Savior. Think through the history of the church, all those who laid down their lives for their faith, entire Christian families with their children who were marched to the Colosseum in Rome to be torn by lions for sport.

[10 : 59] Would it not have been wiser and less dramatic if they would have just given lip service to the worship of the emperor or gently bowed to the idols of Rome, keeping their faith private to themselves in order to live long and worship Christ in their hearts?

Not long ago in Uganda, Idi Amin, in his satanic hatefulness, cast pastors and believers into alligator-infested rivers to make a show. Would it not have been easier if they had gotten out of Uganda?

Twenty-four years ago, I was in a prayer meeting in a basement of a dilapidated building in Central Asia. Most of those men in subsequent years gave their lives for the Lord.

Most of them were tortured before they were gruesomely murdered. All of them had families, some of them small children, others grandchildren. And he goes on.

What can we do in the light of such persecution, in the light of such a present reality? These are not lines that we've dug out from the pages of ancient history.

[12 : 09] This was a letter received just in this past week. What can we do? Are we impotent in the face of such persecution? What is God to say about the persecution of his own people?

Does God, with us, wring his hands in despair and shed a compassionate, if hopeless, tear? Is God unable to intervene and to protect his own?

Daniel's vision has much to say on this matter. Now, just to remind ourselves of how we have been considering this chapter thus far, we began by having an overview of the chapter, and we did so under the general heading of a brief history of time, how in this chapter we're given this panoramic view of world history.

But then we went on to consider a particular part of the vision that gave us a vision of God, in the chapter described as the Ancient of Days. And then a couple of weeks ago, we moved on to another aspect of the vision that speaks very particularly of Jesus Christ, one like the Son of Man.

And today we're going to conclude our consideration of this chapter by focusing on what we discover in the chapter concerning the people of God, and what we learn about who they are.

[13 : 49] What does Daniel's vision tell us about the people of God, or as they are described, the saints of the Most High? And as we think about this, we are going to divide our thoughts in the following way.

We're going to, first of all, consider the name of God's people that is used in a recurrent manner in the vision, the name of God's people. But then we're going to move on to what we've already introduced, really, the suffering of God's people, and what the vision tells us concerning the suffering of God's people.

But then we also have in the vision what we could describe as the vindication, or the victory of God's people. And very much tied in with that, we also have, and we'll look at it distinctly, though it's very much connected, the glory of God's people, before finally drawing things to a close by noticing also what we are taught in this vision concerning the delight of God's people.

So the name of God's people, the suffering of God's people, the vindication of God's people, the glory of God's people, and the delight of God's people.

First of all, then, the name of God's people. Throughout the vision, God's people are identified by a particular name or description. We've already thought about it this morning with the children, the saints of the Most High.

[15 : 22] We find it there in verse 18. But the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom. We find the same language again in verse 22, where we read of the saints of the Most High, and again in verse 25, and again in verse 27.

This is the name that is used in the vision to describe God's people. Now, I state that as a given, though it can be recognized, it should be recognized, that there is some debate as to whether this is a reference to God's people at all.

The reason for the debate is that the word that we have translated saints is literally a word that means holy ones. Saints is an entirely appropriate word to use, but literally it is these two words, holy ones.

And it's a word that is often used in the Old Testament to speak of angels, the holy ones. And so some wonder whether we should just assume that in fact it is a reference to God's people at all.

However, and I don't want to spend really much time on this, it doesn't merit it, but I think in the vision itself there is evidence that points very clearly to our concluding that the saints of the Most High, as they are described, are indeed God's people.

[16 : 55] In the reading, we've noticed how it is the saints who are the objects of this fierce persecution, and that certainly would point in the direction of them being God's people who are persecuted through the ages.

But then very particularly in verse 27, the vision makes explicit identifying who these saints are. Notice what we read there in verse 27, then the sovereignty, power, and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High.

So this is the name that is given in the vision to God's people, the saints of the Most High. But what can we say of the name or the description?

And in this sense, we're going to be reinforcing a little of what we've already heard in the children's address. But I think that name, very briefly we can comment, speaks of our identity and of our purpose.

First of all, we think of what the name says concerning our identity. Well, the name is the saints of the Most High. Our identity is a function of who we belong to.

[18 : 15] We belong to the Most High. That is the one who owns us. That is the one we belong to. And if we just ponder on that for a very fleeting moment, what a deep and what a profound privilege for us to belong.

It's interesting that this need to belong is a common and shared human aspiration and need. We all need to belong. And when we find ourselves isolated, that is a difficult and a painful place to be.

How many people suffer because they don't have any sense of belonging, be it in a family or in a community? We all long to belong. Well, what a great privilege for God's people that we belong, and we belong to God.

I say to you this morning, Christian friend, you belong to God. So, the name speaks of our identity as those who belong to the Most High, the Most High God.

But it speaks also of our purpose. We are the saints of the Most High. We are the holy ones of the Most High, set apart by God for the service of God.

[19 : 33] God has set you apart for a purpose. In the New Testament, this truth concerning our identity and purpose finds a beautiful expression in 1 Peter 2 and verse 9.

that you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.

We who belong to God, who have been set apart by God, that we might declare the praises of a God. The name of God's people, the saints of the Most High.

But the vision also touches on and spends some time considering and recognizing a second reality, and that is the suffering of God's people.

You know, so far as we think of the name that we enjoy, the name that we are given, all is a sweetness and light. We belong to God.

[20 : 46] We have been chosen and set apart by God. We are special. And indeed we are. We are the saints of the Most High. But what does the vision say concerning the saints?

Well, it says perhaps most loudly, though it says other things very loudly as well, but it says certainly very loudly that the saints will suffer.

The saints will be persecuted. We read there in verse 21, As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them.

We read in verse 25, He will speak against the Most High. This is the same character presented as the little horn. He will speak against the Most High and oppress His saints.

And then at the end of the verse, the saints will be handed over to Him for a time, times, and half a time. The vision prophesies severe oppression and suffering for the saints.

[21 : 53] And as we think about this suffering of God's people, three questions emerge that we want to deal with. First of all, what will this oppression be like? Well, in the vision we're given considerable information to answer that question.

What will the oppression be like? Well, it will be violent and brutal. So, we've read of how the little horn was waging war against the saints. The language of the battlefield, the language of bloodshed and violence, waging war against the saints.

This is violent. This is brutal opposition. It is also deliberate and directed. It's not simply that Christians get caught in the crossfire of violence in this world.

That is true. And even as we prayed, we recognized that Christians certainly don't have any monopoly on being the victims of violence.

But what has been spoken of here is very deliberate and directed oppression against the saints because they are saints. Christians can suffer in other ways, but what has been spoken of here is deliberate and directed.

[23 : 07] It's also persistent and destructive. The word that is translated, oppressed, that the saints will be oppressed, is a word that literally means that they will be worn out.

And that gives this idea of something that is persistent and continuing, and that certainly those who are enduring it may conclude that there is no relief.

We will discover in a moment that relief will come, but it's not a passing thing. It's not something that comes and goes very quickly. The oppression will be persistent and destructive.

Indeed, the language in verse 21 is not only the language of waging war, but it also solemnly and somberly declares that the saints are being defeated.

As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them. This is what the oppression will be like.

[24 : 08] This is what it is like for many of our fellow believers. And this, as we've already commented, is not something that belongs to books of church history.

These are things that are occurring even today as we gather here in all the freedom that we enjoy. We've heard a lot recently about North Korea with the change in leadership, and sadly it would appear no change in terms of the regime's stance vis-à-vis all who would oppose them, and very particularly all who are Christians.

Let me read you the testimony of Lee Sung-ai. Lee Sung-ai is a believer who managed to escape from North Korea.

And I'm simply going to read some of her testimony to illustrate how these matters are not matters that concern the past alone.

And I read, And between us we formed a small Bible study group.

[25 : 42] However, my neighbor became suspicious and reported me to the police, who then deported me to an interrogation center. I went through six months of extreme torture and interrogation.

I was repeatedly beaten and nearly suffocated. My teeth were knocked out, my nails extracted, and raw chili put in my wounds. I refused to give the name of my friends because I knew that they and their families would just experience the same brutality as I had.

After that I was sentenced to four years in Kyo-hao-so prison. Our cells had no roofs, so we were forced to dig holes with leaves for shelter. Around 30 or 40 people were dying there every day.

We were so hungry that we would take food from the mouths of dead people or fight for the undigested corn husks found in animal feces. Once I was so weak that I was given up for dead and put in the pile of corpses awaiting burial.

The suffering of God's people is violent. It's persistent. It's directed. It's deliberate. This is what Daniel discovers in his vision, and this is what we discover tragically and solemnly to be true.

[26 : 57] Yes, even today. But as we continue to consider the suffering of God's people, we ask not only what is it like, but who is responsible?

Who is responsible for this violence and this suffering? Well, in the vision, the persecution is attributed to the one described as the little horn, the little horn that grew out of the fourth beast.

Now, on a previous occasion, as we were considering the chapter, we noticed how the identity of the little horn seemed to coincide with a personage, a character presented in the New Testament as the Antichrist.

We're not going to revisit that this morning. But the question remains, so who is this little horn? We may wish to know, and certainly Daniel wanted to know.

Notice there in verse 19, Then I wanted to know the true meaning of the fourth beast. Daniel wanted to know. Who is he? But he is not given a clear answer.

[28 : 08] And as Daniel is not given a clear answer, well, certainly we are not given a clear answer. We have the same answer as Daniel had. The vision is, I think, deliberately unclear on identifying who the fourth beast is, if indeed that's the question, who, or indeed the little horn that grew out of the fourth beast.

The reality is that persecution of the kind described in the vision, and of the kind we have referred to in mentioning the testimony of that North Korean believer, persecution has been through the centuries, and continues to be a reality for God's people.

And that would suggest that the little horn is a permanent actor on the stage of human history, a beast who acts on behalf of the beast, that roaring lion who prowls around looking for someone to devour, our great enemy, the devil.

But the question does remain, is the little horn not also a specific and historically identifiable enemy of God and His people?

Well, we can tentatively suggest this, that there have been and there will be continual expressions of the little horn, many antichrists, to use the language of 1 John and chapter 2.

[29 : 41] But they will reach their apex in the appearance of, if you wish, the little horn in the last days, or perhaps more accurately, in the last of the last days.

For we are in the last days and now. But more important, I'm not saying it's unimportant, but more important than the actual identity of the fourth beast and the little horn, is to notice why Daniel wanted to know.

We commented a few moments ago that Daniel wanted to know, I wanted to know the true meaning of the fourth beast. Why did he want to know? Was this a matter of idle theological intrigue that he wanted to be satisfied on?

No, the reason he wanted to know was because of his concern for the fate of the saints. He was concerned as to how the saints would endure this suffering that was for him a future suffering.

Indeed, a future suffering that Daniel himself would be spared. And that concern of Daniel for the saints is a challenge for us.

[30 : 52] A challenge for us who are largely spared persecution. While countless of our fellow believers do suffer greatly. I say largely spared, probably more accurately, wholly spared the persecution that others do endure.

So we're thinking of the suffering of God's people. We've thought a little of what's it like? How can we describe it? We've considered who is responsible. But there's another question under this general area of the suffering of God's people.

And it's maybe the big question. Where is God? Where is God in the suffering of His people? Is He indifferent? Or perhaps even more disturbingly, does He look on impotently as His own sufferer?

In the vision, two truths ring out loudly. The first one is a very difficult one to get our heads round, but is declared with great clarity.

And it is this, that the persecution of God's people is ordained by God. Notice there in verse 25, what we read, He will speak against the Most High, the little horn, and oppress His saints and try to change the set times and the laws.

[32 : 12] And then notice what we read very tellingly, The saints will be handed over to Him for a time, times, and half a time. You see, the little horn does not have an autonomous existence or autonomous power to do as He pleases to whom He pleases.

The saints, we are told, are handed over to Him. And who is it that hands them over? Well, it is the Most High. It is the Most High and the Most High alone who has that prerogative and that authority and that power to do so.

He is the one who hands over the saints to the little horn. The persecution of God's people is ordained by God.

Now, why does God do this? And I don't have any easy or trite answers to that question. Certainly, as we consider the matter across the Bible, we notice that there are purposes that we can identify how in suffering God's people are purified and molded, how in days of persecution God's people are scattered that they might go and announce to others the good news.

We think of that very particularly in the book of Acts. We notice how the suffering of God's people provides an opportunity that they might witness to even their persecutors of the one in whom they trust.

- [33 : 42] And while we can recognize all of these things and they are legitimate, it is still difficult to understand. But it is certainly the case that suffering is an integral part of the Christian calling.

Think of the words that Paul addresses to the Christians in Rome in chapter 8 and verses 16 and 17. The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

Now, if we are children, then we are heirs. Heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. If indeed we share in His sufferings, in order that we may also share in His glory.

Where is God? Well, the persecution of God's people is ordained by God, but there's another truth that we must bring alongside that first truth, and it is this, that the persecution of God's people is restrained by God.

Ordained by God, but also restrained by God. Notice in verse 21 and verse 22, there's a very powerful and hope-filled little word.

- [34 : 48] Verse 21, As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them. What a dark picture, defeating them. But how does verse 22 begin?

Until. Until. Until. Until. Until. Until. Until. You see, there is a moment when the Most High intervenes and says, thus far and no further.

Until. Until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints. Also in verse 25, when we noticed how it is the Most High who hands over the saints, nonetheless, that is not all that is said.

The saints will be handed over to Him for a time, times, and half a time. Now, there are many interpretations that are given as to what this reference means.

And I'm not going to mention all the different possibilities. I think the crucial point concerning this reference is that God controls the times.

- [35 : 59] And in His time, He intervenes abruptly and decisively, thus far and not a moment longer.

The persecution of God's people, somber and painful though it is and difficult for us to understand, why is it that God would allow indeed ordained such things?

Nonetheless, it is also restrained by God. To be handed over by God does not equate to being abandoned by God.

That is something we have to be very clear on. That God hands over does not mean that God abandons. Very, very different realities.

Not a hair of the believer's head is singed beyond what He allows. The suffering of God's people.

- [36 : 56] But we have to move on and more briefly consider some of the other aspects of the description of God's people that we have here in the vision. We move on to the next one, which is the vindication of God's people.

Or we might tie in with that the vindication and victory of God's people. As we have just noticed, there in verse 21, we are told that the little horn was defeating the saints.

But is that the end of the story? Well, we already have discovered that by no means is that the end of the story. Defeating the saints until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High.

Victory is snatched from the jaws of defeat. And here there are two things that we should note. Firstly, that the judgment spoken of is in favor of the saints rather than, as we might have expected, against the little horn.

We see the little horn doing the worst that he can do. And you can almost imagine that when the judgment comes, it will be against him. And of course, it is against him. But the manner in which the vision describes it is in reference to God's people.

[38 : 09] The judgment is in favor of the saints. And here there is the sense of vindication. Those who have been trampled on, those who have been abused, those who have been violated in numerous ways, they are vindicated.

Judgment is pronounced in their favor. Judgment is pronounced in their favor. We should also note that when we think of God pronouncing judgment in favor of the saints, that God is continually, through history, pronouncing judgment in favor of the saints.

But while that is so, and it is so, there is also in the passage and in the vision the clear implication that all of these historical judgments, as it were, lead up to one final and definitive day of judgment.

When judgment will be pronounced in favor of the saints. So there is hope for God's persecuted people. The forces of darkness may appear and in actuality be very powerful and overwhelming.

They may, by all reasonable measures, appear to be defeating the saints. But the day of vindication will come. The day of victory has already been established.

[39 : 23] There is this hope that blossoms from that little word until, until the ancient of days came. So the vision speaks of the vindication, the victory of God's people, but it speaks also of the glory of God's people.

This is really very much tied in with this previous point. There in verse 22, when we read of judgment being declared in favor of the saints, we go on and read, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom.

This truth of the saints possessing the kingdom has already been mentioned in verse 18. But the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever, yes, forever and ever.

The language of the vision that speaks of the kingdom being handed to the saints is language that would seem to be at cross purposes with what we have noticed previously.

We haven't read it today, but we've noticed previously in verse 14 concerning the Son of Man. What do we read in verse 14 of the Son of Man? We read, He was given authority, glory, and sovereign power.

[40 : 41] How do we reconcile these two pictures of the kingdom being handed to the Son of Man, to Jesus? And yet, when the dream is interpreted, we're told that the kingdom is handed to the saints of the Most High.

So, what's the deal? To whom is the kingdom handed to? Is the kingdom given to Jesus, or is the kingdom given to the saints? Well, there is no contradiction, especially and particularly in the light of the teaching that we have repeatedly in the New Testament concerning how the saints of the Most High, believers, are in Christ.

We read in Ephesians chapter 1 really with that purpose to read a passage that constantly and persistently uses this language of Christians as being those who are in Christ.

And as we grasp the significance, or at least in some measure the significance of that spiritual reality that as Christians we are in Christ, we can understand the language of the vision that what Christ receives, His people receive.

So, if Christ receives the kingdom, then we who are in Christ receive the kingdom also. Merit to our union with Him.

[42 : 05] Jesus chooses to reign with His people. He chooses to grant to us the privilege of reigning with Him. Listen to what John Calvin says about this in reference to this very chapter in Daniel.

Hence, we are deservedly called kings, because He reigns. And language that is exclusively appropriate to Him is transferred to us in consequence of the intimate communion between the head and the members.

And if you allow me to just backtrack for a moment as we think of this truth that we are in Christ, and because we are in Christ, we enjoy spiritual privileges.

Let me just backtrack and consider what implications that has for us as we suffer in Christ. You see, this union has implications for that.

Just as we enjoy spiritual privileges on account of our union with Christ, so there is a real sense in which Christ shares in our persecution and suffering on account of His union with us.

[43 : 14] You see, it's a two-way street. We are united to Christ, but He is united to us. We remember well the words of the risen Lord to Saul on the road to Damascus.

Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? And anybody could say, well, what's he on about? Saul himself could have said, I'm not persecuting you, I'm persecuting these Christians.

But Jesus says, no, you're persecuting me. You see, I'm united to them. I'm the head. They are the body. We're united. They are in me. When you hurt them, you hurt me.

When you attack them, you attack me. And so, the glory of God's people receiving the kingdom. We receive it because of who we are in Christ, united to Him, the one who receives the kingdom, the one who is king of the kingdom.

Again, if you allow me just one more time to comment on what John Calvin says in this regard and how he sees the present exercise of Christ's rule and our participation in that rule as having a decidedly missionary flavor or expression.

[44 : 27] Again, these are comments in reference to this chapter in this vision. He says as follows, The glory of God's people.

The glory of God's people.

But before we move on, I just want to ask a final question under that heading. What ultimately is our glory? Is it the kingdom we receive?

Thus far, that's really what we've focused on, the glory of God's people, that we receive this kingdom that will endure forever and ever. And that is a glorious thing. Is our glory the manifold privileges that flow from and are inherent to our communion with Christ?

You see, these privileges, great though they are, are derivative. What I mean by that is that they derive from something greater. And that something greater is our union with Christ.

[45 : 34] You see, this is our ultimate glory. This is our highest glory. Not the privileges we receive, great though they are. Our greatest glory, the glory of God's people, is Christ Himself.

He is our glory. And in Him, we do indeed receive a veritable banquet of spiritual privileges that we can enjoy. But the greatest thing for us isn't what's on the table, but who is at the head of the table.

He is our glory. But we come to a conclusion by mentioning one final thing that we learn concerning God's people in this vision.

And that is this, the delight of God's people. And this is surely a fitting conclusion. To highlight and commend this final element found in the vision concerning God's people.

What is our delight? What is our chief delight? Well, our chief delight is to worship God. To be counted among the thousands upon thousands.

[46 : 38] The ten thousands time ten thousand. Spoken of in verse 10. Bowed before the one seated on the throne. Our chief delight is to be among that great company of all peoples, nations, and men of every language who worship the ancient of days and one like the son of man.

As we read there in verse 14. He was given authority, glory, and sovereign power. All peoples, nations, and men of every language worshiped Him. This is our great delight.

This is the delight of God's people. To worship God. And we can do no other. There can be no greater delight for us. He has chosen us.

He has redeemed us. He has vindicated us. He has raised us up with Christ to sit in heavenly places. He protects us and accompanies us in our suffering. And so, as His people, as the saints of the Most High, we gladly bow down in joyful and reverent worship.

May it be so. Let us pray.