

WEEK 7 —OUTLINE

The Highest Point in Our Spiritual Experience—Having a Clear Sky with a Throne above It

Scripture Reading: Ezek. 1:22-28; Rev. 4:2; 1 Kings 22:19; Isa. 6:1; Dan. 7:9-10

<< DAY 1 >>

- I. “Over the heads of the living creature there was the likeness of an expanse, like the sight of awesome crystal, stretched forth over their heads above” (Ezek. 1:22):
 - A. Over the heads of the four living creatures, there is the firmament, the expanse, which we call the sky.
 - B. The sky above the living creatures is like a great expanse of awesome crystal, indicating that above them is a clear, open, and expanding heaven:
 1. They have a thorough fellowship with the Lord vertically and also a clear fellowship among themselves horizontally; they have a wide and stable span of fellowship (1 John 1:3, 6-7; 1 Cor. 1:9).
 2. When we reach the point of having a clear, open, stable, and expanding heaven, there will be nothing between us and God, and nothing between us and one another.
 - C. The kind of sky we have as Christians depends on our conscience; our conscience is connected to our sky (Rom. 9:1; 2 Cor. 1:12):
 1. We need to maintain a clear sky with the Lord, that is, have a clear fellowship with Him (1 John 1:3, 6).
 2. If we would have a clear sky, we need to deal with any offense or condemnation in our conscience (Acts 24:16).
 3. When there is nothing between us and the Lord, our sky will be crystal clear, and we will have not only a good conscience but also a pure conscience (1 Tim. 1:5, 19; 3:9; 2 Tim. 1:3; cf. Matt. 5:8; Prov. 22:11; 2 Tim. 2:22).

<< DAY 2 >>

- II. “And under the expanse one pair of their wings went straight out, one toward the other; each had another pair covering their bodies on this side and on that side” (Ezek. 1:23):
 - A. The four living creatures stretch out two of their wings for coordination; this indicates that if we are under a clear, open, stable, and expanding sky, we can have a coordination that is altogether straight, with nothing crooked.
 - B. The four living creatures use the other two wings to cover themselves; this

indicates that in the coordination we should not display ourselves but should hide ourselves under the Lord's grace (2 Cor. 3:5-6; 12:9; Phil. 3:3).

III. "And I heard the sound of their wings, like the sound of great waters, like the voice of the Almighty, as they went; it was the sound of a tumult, like the sound of an army" (Ezek. 1:24a):

A. The voice is not that of an individual but is strong, like the sound of great waters:

1. The voice comes out of the wings that are joined together.
2. The voice of the testimony of any local church should not be the voice of any individual believer; it must be the voice of a corporate, coordinated body, a voice that comes out of the proper coordination (cf. Acts 2:14).

B. The voice of a corporate body becomes the voice of the Almighty, the voice of God Himself.

C. The voice is also the voice of an army fighting the battle for God's economy (cf. 2 Tim. 4:7).

« DAY 3 »

IV. "Whenever they stood still, they dropped their wings. And there was a voice from above the expanse that was over their heads. When they stood still, they dropped their wings" (Ezek. 1:24b-25):

A. When the living creatures hear a voice out of the clear sky above their heads, they stop and let down their wings:

1. This indicates that they know not only how to speak and sound forth their voice but also how to listen to God's voice (1 Kings 19:11-12; cf. Exo. 21:5-6; Isa. 50:4-5; Luke 10:38-42).
2. Whenever they listen to God's voice, they stop moving, stand still, and lower their wings.
3. They know how to give the voice by moving, and they know how to listen to God's voice by stopping.
4. In spiritual things, seeing depends on hearing; hearing is deeper than seeing and more intimate than seeing (Rev. 2:7a; 1:10, 12; Isa. 50:4-5; Matt. 18:15-17).

B. A clear and open heaven, speaking for the Lord, and listening to the Lord are all matters of fellowship (1 John 1:7):

1. Genuine fellowship is related to genuine coordination.
2. When we have fellowship with God and with one another, there will be genuine coordination among us; then we can speak for God and also listen quietly to His speaking.

« DAY 4 »

V. We need to see a vision of the throne of God for the divine administration throughout the universe (Rev. 4:2; 5:1; 6:16; 7:9; 8:3; 21:5; Dan. 7:9-10):

A. The book of Revelation unveils God's universal administration; this book reveals that the universe operates according to God's administration (4:2, 5).

B. The throne in Revelation 4 and 5 is the throne of divine authority:

1. God's throne is related to His administration, which is a matter of His economy (Eph. 1:10; 3:9).

2. God on the throne is behind the scene, ruling over everyone and everything (Isa. 6:1; 1 Kings 22:19).

3. Everything in the world situation is decided on the throne; nothing can happen outside the rule of God's throne (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6; Luke 22:31-32).

« DAY 5 »

VI. The highest point in our spiritual experience is having a clear sky with the throne above it (Ezek. 1:26-28):

A. The throne is the center of the universe, and it is where God is (Rev. 4:2):

1. The Lord's presence is always with the throne and can never be separated from the throne.

2. The Lord's throne is not only in the third heaven but also in our spirit; therefore, the Lord's throne is always with us (Heb. 4:12, 16 and footnote 161).

B. If we have a clear sky, the throne will be present, and we will spontaneously be under the ruling and reigning of the throne.

C. For God to have the throne in us means that He has the position to reign in us.

D. To have the throne above a clear sky is to allow God to have the highest and most prominent position in our Christian life.

E. In our spiritual experience, to reach the point of having the throne above a clear sky means that in everything we are completely submissive to God's authority and administration.

F. The clearer our sky is, the more we are under the throne; the more we have clear fellowship with the Lord, the more we will be under His authority (cf. Rev. 22:1).

G. If we have the throne above the clear sky, we are greatly blessed, and we should worship God for this blessing.

H. Today there are not many believers who are living completely under the

ruling of God:

1. The goal of dealing with the conscience is to recover us from human rule through self-rule to God's rule so that we may be directly under His control.
2. In His complete salvation God desires to recover us to divine rule so that we may live before God in simplicity and under His direct authority.
3. To be under God's rule means that we live by the intuition of the spirit.
4. The more we are ruled by God, the more weighty and noble we become.

VII. The throne is not only for God to reign over us but also for Him to accomplish His eternal purpose (4:11; Rom. 8:28; Eph. 1:9, 11; 3:11):

- A. God is a God of purpose, having a will according to His good pleasure (1:5, 9).
- B. In His economy God administrates the universe to fulfill His purpose (Rev. 4:11).
- C. If we have a throne in our spiritual life, God will not only rule over us but will also fulfill His purpose in us, with us, and through us (2 Tim. 1:9).
- D. If we want God's purpose and plan to be carried out in us and with us, we must submit to the throne.

« DAY 6 »

VIII. The only authority in the church is the throne above the clear sky (Matt. 28:18-19; 20:20-28):

- A. In the church there is no human authority (23:11; 20:25-27).
- B. Instead of trying to rule over others, we should humble ourselves and remain under the throne above the clear sky.
- C. If we are under a clear sky with the throne above it, genuine authority will be with us (2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10).
- D. Our weight before God depends on the degree of our subjection to God's authority; the more we submit to the throne, the weightier we will be.

IX. In Ezekiel 1:26 "the likeness of a throne" is "like the appearance of a sapphire stone":

- A. A sapphire stone is blue in color, and blue is a heavenly color indicating the situation and condition of God's presence (Exo. 24:10).
- B. The throne being in the likeness of a sapphire stone indicates the presence of God in a heavenly situation.
- C. If we have God's throne above the clear sky, we will be in a heavenly situation, having the appearance of a sapphire stone with the heavenly situation, atmosphere, and condition of the Lord's presence.
- D. We should care only for the presence of the Lord, not for anything else; in other words, we care only for the clear sky with the throne above it.

X. The throne in the heavens is transmitted to the earth through and with the living creatures (Ezek. 1:5, 26):

A. Wherever they are, the throne is there, and wherever they go, the throne follows them.

B. In this way the throne in the heavens becomes one with the earth, for the throne is transmitted to the earth (Matt. 6:10; 16:19; 18:18).

C. This needs to be the situation among the local churches today, the situation among the overcomers, and the situation and condition of our daily Christian life.

<< WEEK 7 —DAY 1 >>

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:22 And over the heads of the living creature there was the likeness of an expanse, like the sight of awesome crystal, stretched forth over their heads above.

1 John 1:3 ...That you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another...

Ezekiel 1:22-25 is very profound and deep. These verses tell us that upon the heads of the four living creatures there is the firmament, or the expanse, which we call the sky. The appearance of the sky is like awesome crystal.

[Ezekiel 1:22] reveals that after we have experienced all the things in the first twenty-one verses, the sky over our heads will be crystal clear. It will be like a great expanse of crystal. We will have a wide, clear expanse above us. This means that above us is an open, clear heaven.

The sky is not only clear; it is also expanding. It is not just a matter of having a clear sky vertically, from heaven to earth, but also a matter of having a clear sky horizontally. This means that the clear sky is expanding. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 101-102)

Today's Reading

Before we were saved, our sky was dark and cloudy, even foggy. It was also narrow, without any expanse. With us there was hardly any heaven, hardly any sky. But one day we repented, confessed our sins, and received the Lord Jesus as our Savior...After we made a thorough confession, we had the sense, for the first time, that the sky above us was clear...[and also] expanding.

Later, however, some problems might have arisen with ourselves personally, with our relatives, with the church, or with some of the brothers and sisters. Immediately our sky became somewhat cloudy again. It was not as cloudy and dark as before we were saved, but still it was no longer clear. Clouds and fog reappeared. We all have had this kind of experience. Eventually, we confessed our failures, condemned such things as our attitudes, motives, intentions, and goals, and received God's forgiveness and the cleansing of the blood of Jesus (1 John 1:9, 7). The sky above us became clear again, and once again we were under a clear sky. Then the sky began to open and expand above us. In our experience we should always have a clear, open, and expanding heaven.

The kind of sky a Christian has depends upon his conscience. Your conscience is connected to your sky. If there is no blemish on your conscience, your sky will be clear. If your sky is not clear, this means that there is some offense on your conscience. In order to have a clear sky, we need to deal with any offense and condemnation in our conscience. The story of our sky is the story of our conscience.

When we as living creatures reach the point of having a clear, open, and expanding heaven, there will be nothing between us and God and nothing between us and one another. There will be nothing cloudy or foggy covering us or separating us from one another. All the clouds, coverings, separations, and fog will be gone, and we will have a sky that is thoroughly clear and continually expanding. Our expanse will be as clear as crystal. When others look upon our clear sky, they will be astonished. Our sky is awesome because it is crystal clear and expanding.

This clear and expanding sky is also stable. As a rule, the sky above the earth usually has some kind of movement. Either the clouds are moving or the wind is blowing. But the sky above the living creatures is not moving; rather, it is as stable as crystal. There is no change,...no fluctuation. The heaven above them is clear, expanding, and stable. They have a thorough fellowship with the Lord vertically and also a clear fellowship among themselves horizontally. They have a wide and stable span of fellowship.

If a local church is proper, the sky over it will be clear and broad [rather than cloudy and narrow]. No matter what you say, no one will be offended. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 103-104)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 10

« WEEK 7 —DAY 2 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:23-24 And under the expanse one pair of their wings went straight out, one toward the other; each had another pair covering their bodies on this side and on that side. And I heard the sound of their wings, like the sound of great waters, like the voice of the Almighty, as they went; it was the sound of a tumult, like the sound of an army...

Under this sky, [this expanse], the living creatures stretch their two wings straight....Two of the wings of each of the living creatures are stretched forth and joined to the wings of others. The living creatures use their other two wings to cover their body. Whenever they move and whenever they act, a voice, or a sound, comes from their wings. This voice is like the “sound of great waters” and also like “the voice of the Almighty” (Ezek. 1:24), that is, the almighty God. It is also like the sound of a tumult, the voice of a host or army. Furthermore, when the living creatures stop and stand still, they lower their wings (v. 25). We need to consider the spiritual significance and application of all these matters. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 101)

Today's Reading

If we are under a clear and expanding sky, we can have the adequate and proper coordination, a coordination that is altogether straight. In the first chapter of Ezekiel, the word straight is used a few times. In verse 7 it is used for the calf's foot. In verse 23 it is used for the eagle's wings....This indicates that in our coordination we must be straight.

Sometimes the coordination in the local churches is not straight but is somewhat crooked....We should never play politics in the church life. If we say something to one brother, we should be able to say it to others as well. This means that our wings must be straight. Our coordination must be frank, sincere, earnest, and straight.

As the living creatures moved, Ezekiel heard the voice [sound] of their wings (v. 24a). This means that as they moved in a straight coordination, a voice came out. This voice was their testimony. From this we see that the voice of the testimony of any local church must come out of the proper coordination. It should not be the voice of an individual believer; it should be the voice of the coordination.

Consider the situation with Peter....Before the day of Pentecost, Peter often voiced something by himself,...[but when] Peter stood up with the eleven (Acts 2:14),...I believe that...they were like the four living creatures in Ezekiel 1. The voice which came out on the day of Pentecost was not the voice of an individual Peter but the voice of a corporate body.

On the one hand, the four living creatures stretched two of their wings for coordination, for moving, and for giving the voice. On the other hand, they used the other two wings to cover themselves. This indicates that in the church life, in the coordination, we all need to learn to hide ourselves under the Lord's grace....Hide under the eagle's wings. There should be no manifestation of the self or of any individual. No matter how great our portion may be, we need to hide ourselves under the Lord's grace. We should never boast in ourselves but always boast in Him.

If the situation of a local church is like that of the four living creatures described above, that church will be qualified and adequate to sound out the voice and to give a strong testimony. The voice will not be that of an individual person but will be like the sound of great waters....Ezekiel 1:24 says also that this voice is the voice of the Almighty. It becomes the voice of God Himself. It is the voice of a corporate body, but eventually this voice becomes the voice of God. How marvelous!

The testimony of a local church should be like this. The voice in your local church should be the voice not of any individual but the voice of the Almighty.

Eventually, as verse 24 says, the voice is the voice of a fighting army...fighting the battle for God's economy. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 105-108)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 10

« WEEK 7 —DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:24-25 ..Whenever they stood still, they dropped their wings. And there was a voice from above the expanse that was over their heads. When they stood still, they dropped their wings.

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.

[In Ezekiel 1:24b] we see that the living creatures do not move all the time. Sometimes they stop and stand still. When they stand still, they let down their wings, lowering them. When they hear a voice not out of their wings but out of the clear sky above their heads, they stop and let down their wings. This indicates that they know how to listen to God's voice. They know not only how to speak and sound forth their voice but also how to listen to God's voice. Whenever they listen to God's voice, they stop moving, stand still, and lower their wings. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 108)

Today's Reading

If we have a sky that is crystal clear, expanding, and stable, there will be a twofold result. On the one hand, having a clear sky enables us to speak; on the other hand, it enables us to listen. We speak to others, and we listen to God. This means that we should be a Christian who both speaks for God and listens to God's speaking. If our condition is like that of the living creatures in Ezekiel 1, our sky will be clear, and then we will be able to speak for God and also to hear God's speaking. The ability to speak and to hear depends upon having a clear sky.

A clear sky, speaking for the Lord, and listening to the Lord are all matters of fellowship. Genuine fellowship is related to genuine coordination. When we have fellowship with God and with one another, there will be a genuine coordination among us. Then as we move we can speak for God, and when God comes to speak to us, we can listen quietly to His speaking. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 108-109)

Both God's forgiveness and God's cleansing are needed for the restoration of our broken fellowship with God, that we may enjoy Him in uninterrupted fellowship. (1 John 1:9, footnote 4)

This should be the situation in all the local churches. A proper local church knows both how to move and how to stop, how to sound forth its voice and how to listen to God's voice. Is your local church like this? I am concerned that your church may not know how to stop, lower its wings, and listen to the voice from the sky. I am also concerned that in your local church there may not be the proper coordination. Instead, there may be a one-man show, with one person doing everything and insisting that everything and everyone be under his control. Any local church that is like this will be poor and weak. No matter what such a church may claim to have, there is no voice coming from the wings. The coordination of the four living creatures, on the contrary, is not a one-man show. One person does not decide everything. Their coordination is a coordination of all the living creatures.

Ezekiel 1 presents the clearest picture in the Bible concerning the proper church life, and we all need to see the church life as it is portrayed in this chapter. The coordination shown here is marvelous. All the experiences in a wonderful sequence bring the living creatures to a point where they are under a crystal-clear, expanding, and stable heaven. Therefore, the living creatures have a proper move on earth and give a proper voice and testimony to the whole universe. Here they learn how to stop and listen to God's voice. They know how to give the voice by moving and know how to listen to God's voice by stopping.

We all, especially the leading ones in the local churches, need to see this picture and experience what is unveiled in it. May the Lord be merciful to us and cause all the local churches to be brought into the experiences depicted in this chapter. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 109)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 10

« WEEK 7 —DAY 4 »

Morning Nourishment

Rev. 4:2 Immediately I was in spirit; and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and upon the throne there was One sitting.

5:6 And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders a Lamb standing as having just been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

In Revelation the throne of God is the center of God's administration. In the Epistles the throne is the throne of grace, from which we receive mercy and find grace (Heb. 4:16). In Revelation the throne is the throne of judgment, from which the world receives judgment. Eventually, after all God's judgments have been executed, the throne of God will be the throne of the supply of eternal life, out of which will proceed the living water of life, in which the tree of life grows, as the supply of God's redeemed in eternity. (Rev. 4:2, footnote 2)

In Revelation 4 is the scene in the heavens, its center being the throne of God, on which God sits, ready to execute His universal administration for the fulfillment of His eternal purpose...In chapter 5 is the same scene in the heavens after Christ ascended there. He was recommended to the apostle John as the Lion of the tribe of Judah by one of the elders, but He appeared to John as a Lamb. As the Lion, He is the Fighter against the enemy; as the Lamb, He is the Redeemer for us. He fought to redeem us, and He won the battle over the enemy and accomplished redemption for us. To the enemy He is a Lion; to us He is a Lamb. Hence, He is the Lion- Lamb. (Rev. 5:6, footnote 1)

Today's Reading

Whenever we have such a clear sky in our Christian life and in our church life, we will also have the throne, which is above the clear sky (Ezek. 1:26). The throne is the center of the universe, and it is where the Lord is. We often talk about the Lord's presence, but we need to realize that the Lord's presence is always with the throne. Where the Lord is, there His throne is. His presence can never be separated from His throne. The Lord's throne is in the third heaven, but His throne is also in our spirit. Hence, the Lord's throne is with us all the time.

As Christians and as local churches, we all should be under a crystal clear and expansive sky. Above this clear, expansive sky is the throne of the Lord. By having such a clear sky, we are spontaneously under the government of the Lord's throne.

We should always be under the ruling of the Lord's throne. Because we are under the throne, we do not need policemen and law courts to rule over us. If we need to be ruled by the police and by the courts, this means that we are not under the throne.

We should be under the throne of the Lord all the time. Perhaps we want to say a certain thing, but the ruling of the throne does not allow us to speak a word. As we begin to speak, the throne exercises its ruling, and we are forced to swallow our words. At other times, we may become angry and may be close to losing our temper, but we realize that we are under the ruling of the throne, and we are subdued. Who is ruling over us? We are ruled not merely by the teachings of the Bible but by the throne.

In our Christian life and in our church life, if the sky is clear, the throne will be there. But if our sky is cloudy and darkened, we will not see the throne. When we do not see the throne, we can be loose and do many things according to our taste and convenience...Whenever believers are in darkness and thus are not under the throne, they can be quite loose, speaking what they want to speak, expressing what they want to express, and going where they want to go. But a person who is under the throne has no liberty to behave in such a way.

In a sense, because we have been saved, we are liberated, but in another sense we are under the throne and have no liberty at all...Praise the Lord for the clear sky and for the throne! (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 112-114)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 11

« WEEK 7 —DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:26 And above the expanse that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, like the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was One in appearance like a man, above it.

Rev. 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.

The four living creatures are not only for the manifestation of the Lord and not only for the move of the Lord but also for the administration, the government, of the Lord. The Lord is among them and above them for His manifestation, move, and government. In such a situation God is not only the God of heaven but also the God of the earth (see footnote 3 on Matthew 11:25). Through the living creatures the heavens are open to the earth and are joined to the earth.

The Lord's presence is always with His throne. The Lord's throne is both in the third heaven and in our spirit (Rev. 4:2-3; Heb. 4:16 and note 1; cf. 2 Tim. 4:22). The throne above the crystal clear expanse indicates that whenever we have a "clear sky" in our Christian life and in our church life, we will be under the ruling of the throne. The highest point in our spiritual experience is having a clear sky with a throne above it. To reach this point means that in everything we allow God to have the preeminence and are completely submissive to God's authority and administration. (Ezek. 1:26, footnote 1)

Today's Reading

We Christians need to maintain a clear sky with the Lord. This means that we need always to have a clear fellowship with Him. We should have nothing between us and the Lord. When there is nothing between us and the Lord, our sky will be crystal clear, and our conscience will be pure, void of any offense (Acts 24:16).

The highest step in the spiritual experience of a Christian is to have the throne in our firmament, in our clear sky. To have the throne, or to arrive at the throne, is to allow God to have the highest and most prominent position in our Christian life. For God to have the throne in us means that He has the position to reign in us. Therefore, to reach the throne in our spiritual experience means that in everything we are completely submissive to God's authority and administration. Then we are no longer a person without the throne, without authority, without government.

A believer who does not have a clear sky with a throne above it can easily be loose and careless in his daily living. On the contrary, a believer who has a sky that is crystal clear has the sense of being under divine government and restraint; therefore, he cannot be loose or careless in anything he says or does. A believer who has a clear sky above him is under an authority which restricts and restrains him in things such as speaking or a display of anger. This authority is a matter of the throne.

The clearer our sky is, the more we are under the throne. The more we have clear fellowship with the Lord, the more we will be under His authority. We need to ask ourselves if there is a throne in our Christian life. If we have the throne above the clear sky, we are greatly blessed, and we should worship God for this blessing.

The throne is not only for God to reign over us but also for God to accomplish His eternal purpose. If we have a throne in our spiritual life, God will not only rule over us but will also fulfill His purpose in us, with us, and through us. Those who do not have the throne in their Christian life will not allow God to obtain His purpose with them. I hope that the Holy Spirit will deeply impress you with this matter. If you want God's purpose and plan to be carried out in you and with you, you must be a person who submits to the throne. You must be a person under the reign of God. Only then can God carry out His purpose in relation to you. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 111, 114-115)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 11

« WEEK 7 —DAY 6 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:26 And above the expanse that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, like the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was One in appearance like a man, above it.

Exo. 24:10 And they saw the God of Israel, and under His feet there was something like a paved work of sapphire, even like heaven itself for clearness.

The living creatures are still on earth, moving or standing, but above their heads there is a clear heaven with the throne. From what is portrayed in Ezekiel 1 we can see that the throne in the heavens is transmitted to the earth through and with the living creatures. With them and through them the heavens with the throne are opened up to the earth. In this way the throne in the heavens becomes one with the earth, for the throne is transmitted to the earth...We may say that the living creatures in Ezekiel 1 are the heavenly electrical lines. It is through them, by them, and with them that the heavenly throne is transmitted to the earth. Wherever they are, there is the throne. Wherever they go, the throne follows them. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 115-116)

Today's Reading

In the church there is no human, [natural] authority. The authority in the church is the throne above the clear sky.

As long as we are under a clear sky with a throne above it, there is no need for us to claim to have authority—the authority is simply there. We should never try to bring others under our authority. Such a thing is a hierarchy; it is something of organization. We should not try to rule over the saints. Instead, we should humble ourselves and remain under the throne in the clear sky...The only authority is the throne above a clear sky.

I can assure you that if we are under a clear sky with the throne above it, the genuine authority will be with us. No opposition or persecution will be able to defeat us or shake us because heaven and the throne are with us. If the sky above us is clear and the throne is with us, we will have the authority and the weight.

The weight of a person before God is equal to the degree of that person's subjection to God's authority...[A] brother is weighty because he has learned to subject himself to God's authority. The more we submit to the throne, the weightier we will be.

[In Ezekiel 1:26] we see that the throne has the appearance of a sapphire stone. Exodus 24:10 is helpful in understanding the significance of the sapphire stone in Ezekiel 1. Exodus 24:10 says, "They saw the God of Israel, and under His feet there was something like a paved work of sapphire, even like heaven itself for clearness." A sapphire stone signifies a kind of heavenly condition which exists when God is present in a particular situation. According to Exodus 24:10 when Moses, Aaron, and the chief men of Israel saw God, they saw under His feet the appearance of a paved work of sapphire. This gave the people an insight into the appearance of the Lord's presence. A sapphire stone is blue in color, and blue is a heavenly color indicating the situation and condition of God's presence. This verse also says that at that time the heavens were exceedingly clear. God was present in that kind of situation and atmosphere. Therefore, the sapphire stone signifies the situation or the condition of the heavens with God's presence in it. The throne being in the likeness of a sapphire stone shows the presence of God in a heavenly situation.

[In Ezekiel 1] the Lord is upon the throne above the expanse in the heavens, and the living creatures are walking or standing on earth. Through them the Lord in the heavens becomes one with the earth, and in this way the heavens are connected to the earth. This means that the heavens have been brought down to the earth and that the heavens are now moving on earth through, by, and with the living creatures. This needs to be the situation among the local churches today, the situation among the overcomers, and the situation and condition of our daily Christian life. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 116-117, 120-121)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 11

Hymns, #941

God's kingdom is God's reigning

The Kingdom — Its Meaning

941

1. God's king - dom is God's reign - ing, His glo - ry to main - tain; It
 is His sov - ereign rul - ing, His or - der to sus - tain. He
 ex - er - cis - es ful - ly His own auth - or - i - ty With -
 in His king - dom ev - er And to e - ter - ni - ty.

2. Upon the throne, the center
 Of government divine,
 God reigns, and with His purpose
 Brings everything in line.
 God's headship and His lordship
 He only can maintain
 As King within His kingdom,
 O'er everything to reign.

3. By reigning in His kingdom
 God worketh all His will,
 And under His dominion
 His purpose doth fulfill.
 'Tis only in God's kingdom
 His blessing we may know;
 'Tis from His throne almighty
 The stream of life doth flow.

4. Submitted to God's ruling,
 All virtue thus will win;
 Rebellion to His Headship
 Is but the root of sin.
 The evil aim of Satan—
 God's throne to overthrow;
 Our aim and goal is ever
 His rule to fully know.

5. Within God's sovereign kingdom
 His Christ is magnified;
 When Christ in life is reigning,
 The Father's glorified.
 When God is in dominion,
 All things are truly blessed;
 When Christ for God is reigning.
 God's glory is expressed.

6. In fulness of the seasons
 God's Christ will head up all.
 Then all will own His reigning
 And worship, great and small.
 Such reign in life and glory
 The Church e'en now foretastes
 And to His rule submitting
 Unto His kingdom hastes.