

What Will Endure?

by Bill Crews

“And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth” ~ Revelation 5:10.

The vision of the apostle John in **Revelation 5** is that of Jesus Christ appearing triumphant in heaven, having the appearance of a “Lamb ... slain” (v. 6) but being praised for having “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.” So in what way do the saints “reign on the earth?”

The Reign Of Saints

First of all, saints reign on the earth when they participate in the blood of Jesus Christ and are victorious over sin (**Eph. 1:7**), Satan (**Rev. 12:9**), and death (**Heb. 2:14-15**). This is all true because we “have been redeemed ... to God by Your (Jesus’) blood” (**Rev. 5:9**).

Because of this redemption, we have been made “kings and priests to our God” (**Rev. 5:10**), thus enjoying the spiritual victory that unites us in fellowship with God, and being able to approach our Perfect God as priests to Him, we are undoubtedly reigning!

Of course, the apostle Peter stated that the redeemed comprise “a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (**1 Pet. 2:5**). And again, “you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (**1 Pet. 2:9**). As a “royal priesthood” we are both kings and priests to our God. How can one be a “king” without a “reign”?

The apostle Paul contrasts the reign of spiritual death with the reign of spiritual life in **Romans 5**: “For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ” **verse 17**. So when we obey the gospel and are baptized for the remission of sins, and arise to walk in a new life, we reign victoriously.

Secondly, there will be a future reign in eternal life. “If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. ...” (**2 Tim. 2:12**). “So that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (**Romans 5:21**). On the day of resurrection, the final victory over physical death will be enjoyed by the faithful: “But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (**1 Cor. 15:57**). The consequences of sin will have been finally vanquished!

Thirdly, in Revelation, the saints who remained faithful unto death and did not worship the beast or his image, and did not receive his mark on their foreheads were placed on “thrones ... and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years” (**Rev. 20:4**). In other words, they enjoyed complete victory over Satan – death had no more power over them! What was true of the martyred saints in Revelation is, in principle, true of all of us who remain faithful until death, where Satan has no more power over us in any possible way!

The Apostles’ Reign

Though not in the scope of this article, we should mention that Jesus promised to His apostles that they would reign over the Twelve Tribes of Israel if they remained true to Him (**Matt. 19:28; Lk. 22:30**). Sometimes brethren are confused by this statement, but it is fairly simple to explain. In **Matthew 19**, Peter tells Jesus that the apostles “have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?” (v. 27). Jesus’ answer is that in the “regeneration” (the period when men are “born again” or the gospel age), Jesus would sit on His glorious throne, and the apostles would “also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (v. 28). This is done by the “reign” of the “apostles’ doctrine” (**Acts 2:42**) which remains in force throughout this dispensation. This is equal to the apostles’ “keys of the kingdom” seen in **Matthew 16:19**.

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