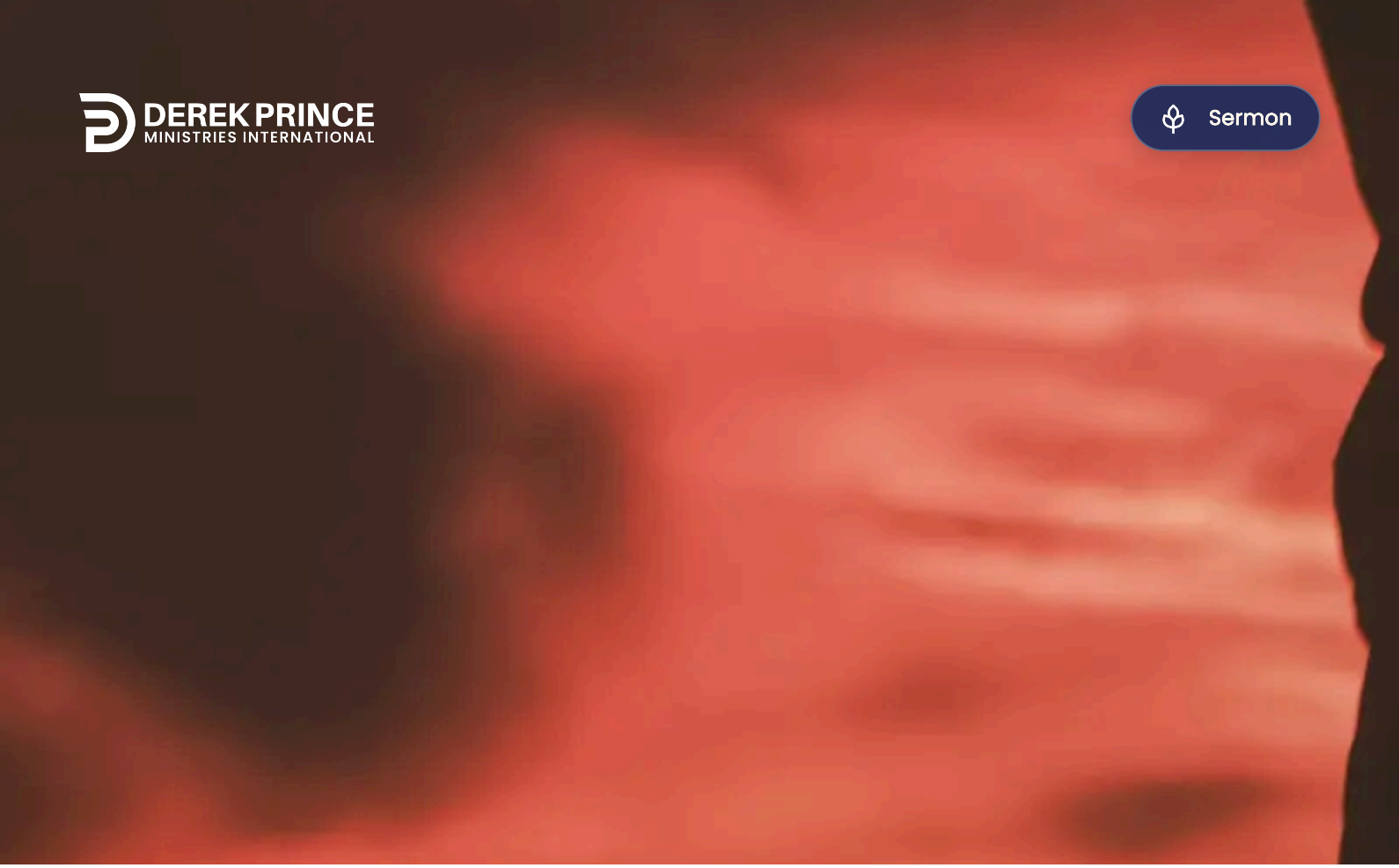

Secular and Spiritual Authority



Sermon
By Derek Prince

I'm going to speak now for a little while on the position of a Christian in regard to political power. Our responsibility. I'm only going to be able to touch on this in one message, but I have a series of messages on cassette entitled "Praying To Change History." There are six messages and they deal fairly thoroughly with this theme. So if you're not satisfied you should check on whether that would help you or not.

Now I just want to get myself "oiled."

You know one thing, I find Shreveport hotter than Fort Lauderdale. You may not agree with me, but that's the way I feel.

Now, I want to turn just two chapters back in Jeremiah and read to you in the first chapter, beginning at the fourth verse, and reading through the tenth verse. Jeremiah chapter 1, beginning at verse 4:

> "Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee."

Now, I don't want to get sidetracked but that has something to do with abortion, doesn't it? If you think about it. God already sanctified Jeremiah in his mother's womb. So don't let anybody say that life begins only after birth. That couldn't be in line with that Scripture. In other words, what's in the womb is already a person. Is that clear? I think it is. But let me say I don't think there's anything God objects to more strongly than the practice of abortion. I said this the other day, but some of you weren't here. He calls it murder. Now I'm not saying that to bring condemnation on anybody. I'm just telling you that's God's evaluation of that practice. I'm not talking about contraception, that's totally different. I'm talking about deliberately destroying life once it has been conceived.

All right. Now we're getting back to Jeremiah.

> "Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah,

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> Lord God!behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child."

Childis really not the right word, "youth." It's used, the same word is used of Benjamin... of Joseph when he was 37 years old, he was called the same Hebrew word. A youth is the right word. "I cannot speak I'm too young." You know, every person called of God in Scripture that I can think of felt inadequate. Not one person called of God believed he could do it. So when I meet a person who says God has called him and he knows he can do it, I question whether God has called him. It isn't scriptural. The calling of God is always above what we can achieve by natural ability. God doesn't call us to do something that we can do naturally. I'm talking now about the calling.

Verse 7:

> "But the Lordsaid unto me, Say not, I am a [youth]: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, says the Lord. Then the Lordput forth His hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lordsaid unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant."

Now for a young man who didn't feel that he could be a prophet at all because he was too young, verse 10 gives an astonishing revelation of authority, doesn't it? "I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pull out, pull down, destroy, root up on the one hand, build and plant on the other.

Now what I want to speak to you about this afternoon is the double relationship of the believer to political power and secular government. First of all, there is a reason why Jeremiah was able to exercise this tremendous authority. And the reason is revealed. It's in the previous verse, verse nine.

> "The Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And... said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth."

Where is the authority? It's in God's Word. And the truth of the matter is that God's word, when it really is God's word, is just as authoritative whether it's spoken actually by Almighty God from heaven, or by a human believer on earth. It makes no difference; it is the Word of God. It is of supreme authority. Everything on earth in human experience and history is subject to the authority of the Word of God.

And so when God put His words in Jeremiah's mouth by that act of touching his lips, through the Word of God in the mouth of Jeremiah, Jeremiah was set in a position of divine authority over the nations and over the kingdoms.

Now let me speak first of all just a little bit about the authority of God's Word. Keep your finger in Jeremiah and turn back to Isaiah 55. I believe that these are verses that Bob was quoting several times. Beginning in verse 8 and reading through verse 11 of Isaiah 55.

> "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord."

So you see, when you go your own way you are not going God's way, cause God's way is not your way. That's very definite.

> "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Now what is the point of contact between God's ways and our ways? His ways are as far above ours as heaven is above earth. How do we make contact with God's ways and God's thoughts? The next verse reveals it. It's through the Word of God.

> "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return to me void [or ineffective], but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

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What brings God's ways and God's thoughts into human life and experience? God's Word. Just as the rain comes down from heaven and the snow bringing with it the fruitfulness that will cause earth to bud and to bring forth, so God's Word comes down from heaven into our hearts and minds and lives and brings with it the fruit that God desires in our lives.

If you look at the last verse of that chapter you will see the exchange.

> "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and Instead of the brier, shall come up the myrtle tree."

The thorn and the brier are our ways. The fir tree and the myrtle tree are what God wants.

So God's Word has to come down and impart unto us His ways and His thoughts. Then there is brought forth in our lives the fruit that is acceptable to God. Only when our ways are replaced by God's ways and our thoughts by God's thoughts.

And then it says in the last verse the last half:

> "...and it shall be to the Lordfor a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

So to replace our ways and our thoughts by God's ways and God's thoughts, God's agent is His Word, and it comes down from heaven to earth. And notice that God compares it to two things: The rain and the snow.

Now the blessing of rain is easily understood. It softens the earth. It makes it capable of accepting seed and it causes the seed to germinate. But what about the snow?

Now I was driving in a Greyhound bus through the province of Ontario in Canada in the middle of winter. And I looked out at all those snow covered fields and God began to speak to me. And He said, "Would you believe that some of the richest harvests on earth are going to grow out of those fields in a few months? And do you realize that there's something in snow that isn't in rain that's particularly good for the fields? And yet the first effect of the snow is not to soften the earth but to make it harder. But when the snow has lain and the temperature changes and the sun arises and the snow melts, then that snow does the earth more good than the rain."

And it was so clear to me that God's word comes sometimes as rain, which is readily acceptable and immediately does its work, but other times it comes like snow. And we say, well that's a cold, hard word. I can't accept that. It doesn't sound like God. It doesn't sound like His love and His mercy. All you have to do is just let it lie there. Cause in due course when the temperature changes and the sun arises, it will melt. And it will melt your heart with it. And when your heart melts to receive the snow it does you more good than the rain. So remember that. Sometimes God's word comes as rain, but many times it comes as snow and some people are just not willing to receive the Word of God when it comes in that form.

Now going back to Isaiah 55 once more, notice verse 11: "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return to me [ineffective], . . . it shall accomplish what I please . . . it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

Now that Scripture is often misquoted. People hold a powerless, ineffective service, a word is preached that's Scripture but has no anointing and no life in it, nothing happens and they hide behind that Scripture and say, "Well, after all, God's Word will not return to Him void." But that isn't what God said. God said, "My word [listen] out of my mouth shall not return to me void." And it all depends whose mouth it is that speaks the word. You know why? Because when God's word goes out of His mouth, what goes with it? His breath—His Spirit. And it's God's Word and God's Spirit together that will not return to Him void. "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life."

Psalm 33:6: "By the word of the Lordwere the heavens made." But the verse doesn't end there. "And all the host of them by the breath of his mouth"—the Spirit of His mouth. It wasn't the word alone, but the Word and the Spirit.

So it's God's Word out of God's mouth that is effective. When it comes like that, it is totally effective. It will not return void, it will accomplish God's pleasure, it will prosper in the thing whereto He sent it.

Now God said to Jeremiah, "I've put My Words in your mouth because I want My word to be as effective in your mouth as it was in My own." But I want you to notice that He says to Jeremiah, "There's a condition."

Turn to Jeremiah the fifteenth chapter, nineteenth verse. And we could read more but we'll just take a look at this one verse. If you're interested in your own study, notice verse 16. Make a note of that to yourself later we won't look at it now.

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> "Therefore thus saith the Lord, If thou return [and that in the Old Testament is repentance. God was always calling His people to return to Him, to come back in repentance. That's what we read in Jeremiah 3:15: 'Return, O ye backsliding children,' and that's repentance.] If thou [will] return, [says the Lord,] then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me."

That is the place of the prophet. That is the distinctive place of the prophet. It's the one who stands before the Lord, hears His Word at His mouth, and delivers the message faithfully. That is the Old Testament phrase that denotes the prophet.

Elijah said to Ahab, he said "As the Lord God of Hosts liveth, before whom I stand, there's not going to be any rain or dew on the earth for the next 3 ½ years." Now that was an authoritative statement. Why could Elijah make it? Because he stood before the Lord of Hosts. He was the Lord's mouthpiece. And the word of the Lord was just as effective through the lips of Elijah as it would have been if Almighty God had spoken it audibly with His own voice.

And Elijah for 3 and one half years controlled the fall of dew and rain! Isn't that a breathtaking thought? First Kings 17:1: "There shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." Isn't that astonishing? "Ahab, I want you to know, the rain and the dew are under my control. And you won't get rain and you won't get dew till I say so."

Of all the characters in the Bible there's no one more fascinating than Elijah. He doesn't have any pedigree, he doesn't have any background, you don't know anything about his birth or his upbringing. He just suddenly appears in the court of King Ahab. Elijah the Tishbite from Mount Gilead says, "I'm Elijah; listen to me. No more rain and no more dew till I say so." That appeals to me. There's something about that that I enjoy. That's the confrontation of two kinds of authority: secular authority and spiritual authority. Cause that's what we're speaking about this afternoon.

All right. Now we haven't finished with what God said through Jeremiah—3:19: "If thou return, then will I bring thee again and thou shalt stand before me." We're in Jeremiah, not 3, did I say 3? I meant 15. Excuse me. Jeremiah 15:19:

> "If thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me [thou shalt be my prophet]: if thou take forth the precious from the vile..."

If you'll have a real sorting out—I believe that's exactly what I was trying to speak about this morning, "If you'll distinguish the true spiritual from the soulish. If you'll distinguish the genuine from the phony, if you'll not live in platitudes and religious clichés, but mean what you say and say what you mean, if you have truth in the inward parts, then, listen,

> "...thou shalt be as my mouth..."

"Then My word through your mouth will be just as effective as if it came from My mouth." It's God's Word out of His mouth. But a servant of God can be as God's mouth if he meets the condition. "If thou will return to Me in repentance, stand before Me, answer to Me, hear My words, separate the chaff from the wheat, the precious from the vile, the phony from the real, then thou shalt be My mouth."

And notice how He finishes:

> "...let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them."

Them is God's people. Don't please the people. Don't do what people want. Let the people come to you. Don't you go to them.

Do you understand what I mean? One of the big problems is people pleasing. People say to me many times, "You know, people want." I say, "So what?" Do you bring your children up by giving them all that they want? No wonder they're spoiled brats. But God doesn't spoil His children that way. The fact that people want doesn't change God the least bit. And in our ministry almost all of us have to come to a place where we decide which is more important, what God says or people want? Because they will not always agree. God said, He said in the first chapter— I think I'll have to turn back there for a moment. It seems the Lord is driving this lesson home.

He said unto him in the first chapter when He called him. Verse 8 "Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee." Don't be afraid of human personality or the influence of people. And then it says in verse 17 and it's still the same message of chapter 1. "Thou therefore gird up thy loins and arise and speak unto them all that I command

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thee. Be not dismayed at their faces lest I confound thee before them."

Now that's a very solemn thought. If the preacher is more frightened of people than of God, God will put the preacher to shame in front of the people. "Be not afraid of their faces, lest I confound thee before them."

Do you know in my own country of Britain, basically the clergy are very little esteemed, in most cases they're a kind of polite laughing stock. That's almost universally true in Britain. In many parts of the United States you'll find a real respect for ministers. The word reverendcarries quite a lot of influence with it. But in Europe, it's the opposite. If you want influence don't tell people you're a reverend, cause they'll think the less of you. You know why that is? Because basically the ministers of Britain have been afraid of the people. And God has confounded them before the people of whom they were afraid. And that happens to every minister that fears man. God withdraws His authority. God says, "My authority will be behind what I say. If you deliver it, I'll take care of the consequences. But if you're more concerned about what people say, I'll withdraw my authority and see what men can do for you without God."

So we come to this place where there are two levels of authority. Secular authority and spiritual authority. Now I want to say this, secular authority is real. Furthermore, it's ordained of God. Romans 13:1: "The powers that be are ordained of God." Secular power is placed in the world by God. You get the, which Bible is it, the New English Bible?—one of these new translations—and read Romans 13. You should read it right through. Don't— the King James is hard to understand because words have changed their meaning so much. But Romans 13 teaches that every Christian is obligated to be subject to the secular power of the land in which they live. It is unchristian to break law. "All power," the Bible says, "is ordained of God." You must obey, not merely because you are afraid of the punishment, Paul says, but for your conscience' sake. How many people believe that the speed limit is ordained of God? How many of you don't observe the speed limit? You're breaking Romans 13 every time you break the speed limit. You say, "Well, Brother Prince, I was in a hurry." You should learn to order your life so that you don't break law. Okay? And being in that much of a hurry will get you in more trouble than good in the long run.

Now understand what I'm saying. Secular authority is real and it's ordained of God. But there is a higher level of authority. And it's what I'm calling spiritual authority. It's divine authority. It's authority on a heavenly level.

Now Jeremiah was invested with spiritual authority. But I want to point out, he never broke secular law. In fact, he submitted to the government of his land. He was subject unto it even when it was unjust and arbitrary. And if you want the spiritual authority, you've got to be subject to the secular. This is a paradox. He was over them all, over the kings and over the nations, but obedient to them all.

I sympathize with— apparently in the Roman Catholic Church there's quite a strong left-wing, subversive element that says, "Overthrow the government; they're unjust." We just had a rather publicized trial in which a Catholic priest is accused of plotting to blow up the Pentagon or something, I don't know what. Whether or not he was guilty is not really important. The point is, that if you want spiritual authority, that's not the way to get it. Now I can understand a person chafing at obvious injustices and abuses of power. But the solution for the believer is not revolution. Not physical revolution though some physical revolutions have done a lot of good.

Let me stop for a moment here and I'm not digressing, I'm illustrating. How many of you—now come on, be honest and don't be religious—have seen The Fiddler on the Roof? Well, it should be more of you, believe me. Of all the films, movies, I've ever seen, that's one of the best directed, best acted and important films I've seen.

Now I'm particularly interested in the Jewish people, I agree. But the remarkable thing is I think by June of this year probably just about now, it will have broken all records on Broadway for the longest run. And it centers around a Jewish community in Russia at the beginning of the century. You know that's symptomatic? Thirty years ago no one would have been interested in a Jewish community in Russia. But you see, the Jews are coming right back into the center of the world's face. Anyhow, when I saw that movie, you know what I realized for the first time? The Bolshevik revolution was a good thing. It had to come. Now you may not agree with me, but I saw, something had to be torn up, broken up and stand for. And they got what was coming to them. I'm not saying Bolshevism is a good thing, don't misunderstand me. But the Christian does not— I don't believe he's a revolutionary, in the active political sense. I don't believe he's a subversive. But that doesn't mean he doesn't have influence. It doesn't mean he's unconcerned. In the last resort it's the Christian that has the influence.

Now this is what I want to convince you of this afternoon. That we are under an obligation to control the destiny of the nations. Primarily our own nation. Not by political means, though I think it's perfectly legitimate for a Christian to be

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involved in politics, if that's God's calling. But it's not political means I'm talking about. I'm talking about spiritual means.

One young man who thought he was too young to be a prophet, controlled the destiny of kings and nations by spiritual means. By the Word of God in his mouth. Now that is not just a dramatic statement, it's literally true. Jeremiah was a prophet to the nations. As opposed to Isaiah, who was essentially a prophet to Israel. And you study the prophecies of Jeremiah and they embrace almost all the nations of the Middle East and many other areas of the earth's surface. Something like 2,600 years have elapsed since Jeremiah prophesied. You look at the history of every one of those nations. Jeremiah decreed their destiny. Their destiny has followed exactly what Jeremiah said would happen to each of them. He was over the kingdoms and over the nations by the Word of God in his mouth. And that position of spiritual authority is one that God wants His believing people to occupy. We should be there. We are the people who make a difference.

Let's take some Scriptures quickly. One good one to start with is in Job 36 and verse 7. Job 36:7:

> "He [God] withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous: but with kings are they on the throne; yea, he doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted."

Every righteous believer has got a place offered him by God with kings on the throne. We are the ruling force in world affairs. Turn to Psalm 149, and read the last the three verses, 7, 8 & 9 of Psalm 149:

> "...to execute vengeance upon the [nations, rather than] heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints."

All the saints of God have the privilege of doing those things: to bring judgment on the nations, to bind their rulers and to execute the judgment written. God has committed it to His saints.

Now I want you to notice one very important phrase, the word written: "To execute the judgment written." Written where? In God's Word. Our authority never goes beyond the Word of God. It's only within the limits of His Word. But really the authority within the Word of God is, in a certain sense, limitless. This is where we are placed by faith in God, by obedience to Him, the righteous are lifted up and with kings are they on the throne.

Now turn to the New Testament. Turn to Matthew 18, verse 18, 19 & 20. Matthew 18, verses 18, 19 and 20:

> "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

All right. Whatever you bind on earth, bound in heaven. You can bind their kings with fetters and their nobles with chains of iron. You have the authority to execute the judgment written. Verse 19:

> "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree [harmonize, come together in spiritual harmony]... touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven... Where two or three [have been led] together [by My Spirit] in[to] my name, there am I in the midst of them."

God's authority is in the midst of His people brought together by the Spirit in the name of Jesus. I can't go into the fact that that's the correct meaning of verse 20, because that will take too long. Accept it for once in a way. "Where two or three have been led together [understand] by My Spirit into My name, there am I in the midst of them. From that place I will rule the world. What ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." Notice, the initiative is not with heaven, it's with earth. Heaven is waiting for us to do something about it. If we bind it on earth, it's bound in heaven. If we loose it on earth, it's loosed in heaven.

Glory to God. Thank You, Jesus. Hallelujah. Glory to Your name.

Something more God wanted me to say. He wanted me back in the Old Testament. Well, reluctantly I'll go on. I'll try and get back there. Here, praise the Lord, I've got it. Psalm 110. Psalm 110. This psalm is quoted more times in the New Testament than any other psalm in the Bible. This is it, praise God, Hallelujah.

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"The Lord said unto my Lord"— And you remember Jesus quoted this to the Pharisees and said, "How does David call the Messiah 'my Lord' if He's his Son?" So this is God the Father said to Jesus the Son, what? "Sit thou at My right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." That's where Jesus is now, at God's right hand. And what's God busy doing? Making all His enemies His footstool.

Now notice the next verse, "The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion." That's the assembled company of God's people. The word rod speaks of authority. It's the scepter of the ruler. "The scepter of the Lord Jesus Christ shall go forth in authority out of the assembled company of His people on earth. "The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies."

We know that the earth is full of forces and people that are opposed to the Lord Jesus Christ and these anti-Christian forces are getting stronger and stronger and more and more active and more and more blatant. But you know what's happening? The Lord is ruling in the midst of His enemies. Do you realize that, in a certain sense, God is more glorified by ruling now than He will be in the Millennium? Can you see that? There's really a more dramatic demonstration of the total authority of God over all opposing forces now than there will be then. Cause really there won't be any opposition in the Millennium, as I understand. The supremacy of God over all the forces of evil is demonstrated most effectively right now when the enemies of God are louder and noisier and more blatant than they've ever been.

Out of the midst of the assembled company of God's people is going forth divine authority to subdue the nations and bring their destinies into line with the purposes of God. To execute upon them the judgment written. Isn't that something? Doesn't that make it exciting to be a Christian?

> "Thy people [verse 3] shall be willing [freewill offerings] in the day of thy power, in the beauty of holiness from the womb of the morning."

See, this is what I was speaking about this morning. Spiritual holiness goes with spiritual revelation and the essence of authority is revelation.

The word rod speaks of authority but it also speaks of revelation. In the ark that was placed in the tabernacle were the Ten Commandments, the pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded. Now when they wanted to find out if God would use in the priestly ministry any other but the tribe of Levi and the house of Aaron, Moses said, "Get a rod from the head of every one of the twelve tribes. Get all your rods and put them before the Lord." And he said, "The one whose rod buds within 24 hours is the one whom God acknowledges." And only Aaron's rod budded. So the budding rod is a type of revelation that imparts authority.

Why could Elijah say there's not going to be rain or dew for three and a half years? Cause he had a revelation. When he prayed on Mount Carmel and called the fire down, after the prophets of Baal had leaped up and down on the altar all day and cut themselves until the blood gushed out, Elijah came and prayed a short prayer. He said, "Lord, let them know that I've done all these things according to Your Word."

When you have the revelation, you have the authority. And when God's people can receive the revelation, they can exercise the authority. And the rod of His power will go forth out of Zion.

All right. Let's go back to the New Testament. Romans 5:17. This message is quite different from what I intended it to be. But that may be all right. Romans 5:17:

> "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."

Who was the one man whose offense brought death? Adam. Who is the last Adam? Jesus Christ. And in this fifth chapter of Romans, Paul contrasts the results of Adam's disobedience and Christ's obedience. And he says in the 17thverse: "As a result of Adam's disobedience, death reigned over the human race." All men became subject to death because all have sinned. But he says, "Through Christ's obedience" and I want to read the words exactly,

> "...they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."

Both the results of sin and the results of obedience begin to be worked out in this life, not in the next life. As a result of Adam's sin, men are now under the slavery of sin and under the dominion of death. And as a result of Christ's obedience, believers now in this life begin to reign in life. We are born to rule. We are born to share the throne with

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Jesus Christ as believers. We shall reign in life, not in the next life. It's easy to believe that. But what matters is to believe that we shall reign now. We are now on the throne with Jesus Christ. We now exercise and share authority with Him. Turn to Revelation chapter 1 and verse 5, 6—the latter part of 5, the first part of 6:

> "Unto him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and [the] Father..."

And Revelation 5:10 the same thing:

> "And hast made us [and that's the redeemed] unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."

Notice it's the past tense. We have been made kings and priests. The literal translation and most of the modern versions say "a kingdom of priests." There are two concepts: the concept of the king, the concept of the priest. What is the office of the king? To rule. What is the office of the priest? To offer sacrifice and intercession. We have been made a kingdom of priests. We're not going to be, we are.

But this is what I want to explain and I hope God will make it clear. Our being kings depends on our being priests. We are a kingdom of priests. Only when we serve as priests do we begin to rule as kings. And that's why so many Christians have no concept of what it is to rule, because they've never begun to minister as priests. We are a kingdom of priests. If we will learn to offer the sacrifice of praise and worship and thanksgiving and to stand in intercession, then we'll begin to rule. We rule by prayer, if I can say in one short sentence. Our exercising kingly authority depends on our using priestly ministry. If we are not priests, we have no right to be kings. But God has made us kings and priests unto the Father. We are to reign in life. We are to send out the rod of divine authority right now in the midst of our enemies.

You know, I used to think: "If only the pressure would lift, I'd have a good time." Have you ever felt that way? You know what, the pressure doesn't lift. You know what you've got to learn? To have a good time in spite of the pressure. And that's when you're beginning to reign.

I love Psalm 23 because it says that "He anointeth my head with fresh oil and prepareth a table before me." Where? "In the presence of mine enemies." You know, nothing delights me more than to enjoy the Lord's blessing and know the enemy's all around. Licking his lips and wishing he can get some, but unable to touch me.

See, this is the reigning life. I repeat it: God is much more glorified by our reigning now than He will be by our reigning in the Millennium. Now is the time it matters. We are called to exercise authority. And we are called to exercise authority on the basis of our priestly ministry. That can be amplified in many ways, but let's say we rule by prayer, but our prayer must be God-given prayer. It must be prayer that's given by revelation. It must be prayer when God puts His words in our mouth. And then the prayer that I pray is just as effective as if God prayed it Himself.

Now I think I'd better just give you a few examples. Some of you've heard these before. And I'm preaching this because we're nearing an election. And all the preparations that go for an election. And I believe this is going to be a crucial election and a great deal will depend upon the results of it and I believe God's people should be equipped and prepared to exercise a decisive influence in this election. And not only in this election but all that follows. My wife has a wonderful ministry of prayer. People ask her, "How do you pray?" She says, "I just open my mouth wide and let the Lord fill it."

Now that sounds easier than it is. But I'm talking about Spirit-given prayer. Where you just turn over and say, "Holy Spirit, here I am. Pray through me." Now that's the kind of prayer that changes history. I'll give you a very simple example.

You may have heard me tell this before. But way about 4 or 5 or 6 years ago we were in Copenhagen, Denmark, at the end of October preparing to go to Britain for the whole month of November. Now November in Britain is a miserable month. It's gray, drizzly, cold, foggy. I mean, I'm British I know what the country's like. The last day of October in Copenhagen we were praying together in the morning, and my wife got launched in prayer and I heard her say these words, "Lord, give us fine weather all the time we're in Britain!" Well, I nearly fell out of the bed. When we'd finished I said, "You know what you prayed?" She said, "What did I pray?" I said, "You asked God to give us fine weather all the time we're in Britain." She didn't even remember praying it. But she prayed it by the Spirit. You know what happened? We arrived in Britain of the first of November, we left I think on the last day. The whole of November was like spring. Can you believe that? When the people came to see us off at the airport we said, "You better look out now, the weather will be changing!" That's

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inspired prayer. I have to be careful because I'll give you the wrong impression.

Some considerable number of years ago, Russia and China were an absolutely monolithic, political bloc. Atheistic, Christ-rejecting. That we can't deny; that's a simple fact. I'm not being critical, I'm just stating fact. Somehow it became borne in upon me that this tremendous monolithic coalition of atheistic powers could not but be a barrier to God's purposes in the earth. I think that's obvious. I mean you can spiritualize as much as you like but when you've said it all, it's plain. So I thought I ought to pray about this. And I didn't know how to pray, and the Lord gave me a prayer out of the psalms of David. You'll find in Psalm 55 verse 9. Psalm 55:9:

> "Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues: for I have seen violence and strife in the city."

You know what I prayed? Systematically, day by day, in a simple way. I said, "Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues." And what happened? Exactly what I said. The Lord divided them and turned their tongues one against another. So that Russia and China spend more time abusing each other than they have time left for abusing the United States. And there's no question Russia is much more concerned about the danger from China than the danger from America. See? It's what my wife says, there's a little button somewhere and if you can press it, everything happens. It wasn't a lot of long praying, it was just pressing the right button. "Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues."

Now, I think I'm going to take refuge behind my cassettes; if you've not many of you heard them, but they're there. I give quite a number of other examples I'm not going to get into them today because I want to go look to the future now.

There's another fact that the Bible reveals which is that there's a spiritual warfare going on in the heavenlies. Many Christians unfortunately are completely ignorant of this fact, but the devil isn't in hell. Did you know that? A lot of people talk as if the devil were in hell. It would be nice if he were, but he isn't. He's very much at liberty. He isn't on earth, he's in heaven. Isn't that right? Does that shock you? He's not in the heaven of God's dwelling; he's in some lower heaven between God's dwelling and earth. And there is a furious conflict going on in that realm. I'll just give you one Scripture only. And that's Ephesians 6:12. Are many of you familiar with that? I just like to have Scripture for what I say. Ephesians 6:12:

"For we wrestle not." I'll give you the "Prince version." That's the King James Version, I'll give you the Prince version.

> "Our wrestling match is not against flesh and blood but against rulerships in the realms of their authority, against the world rulers of the present darkness, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenlies. That's more or less a literal translation."

Our wrestling match is against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenlies. The whole battle is fought out in the heavenlies. Not on earth. On earth, we simply see the results of what is taking place in the heavenlies. It's the spiritual forces that are decisive. That's why Jeremiah settled the destiny of the nations. Not their kings, not their parliament, not their government, but Jeremiah. And the one who intervenes on the spiritual level effectively decides destiny. And it is our responsibility as Christians to intervene on that level. But we can't do it unless our eyes are opened to the fact that that's where the warfare is. That that's where we belong, and that our instruments and weapons are in the realm of the heavenlies.

I must give you one other Scripture, 2Corinthians 10. I'm trying to get through and I can't get on. Second Corinthians 10 verses—goodness me, I've got to leave for the airplane in about 10 min., verses 3, 4 and 5:

> "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal [they're not material], but [they are] mighty through God to the [casting] down of strongholds;) [whose strongholds? Obviously, Satan's, isn't it? Where are his strongholds? In the heavenlies.] casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God."

What is the supreme high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God? Satan's kingdom in the heavenlies. Who's to cast it down? We are. Why? Because we've got the weapons. That's where our warfare is. That's where the issues are going to be decided.

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Now, I'm going to come down to something very much on earth. And Jimmy Moore is here and he's the one through whom this happened. So, I'm glad he's here. And when he isn't here, I still tell it the same way. About 3 years ago when we were together in the Holiday Inn in Rustin and I was in a period of about 3 days of meetings there, which Jimmy and others would remember, he came out with what he believed that the Lord had revealed to him and he came out with it partly in the morning and he completed it in the afternoon. But essentially—and you can check me if I get anything wrong—essentially what he said was the Lord had shown him that there six centers of Satan's activity in the United States and six specific evil spiritual forces at work in each of those centers. Is that right? And he gave the cities and the activities. And I'll give them briefly, I think I can remember them accurately.

The first one was Reno, Nevada, and the activity was the break-up of the American home.

Number 2, Hollywood, California, the activity was sensuality.

Number 3, was New Orleans, Louisiana, and the activity was witchcraft, which is undoubtedly correct.

Number 4 was Chicago, Illinois, the activity was viciousness and violence.

Number 5 was Boston, Massachusetts, and the activity was false religion. You know that's the home of Christian Science, amongst other things.

And number 6 was Miami, Florida, the activity was political confusion.

Now why I'm saying this is because for us in that area of Florida, it has become dramatically clear that this is what's at issue right now. You see, both the political conventions this year are being held, where? Miami, Florida. What's the force at work? Political confusion. Who's going to do anything about it? The Christians, that's it.

Now I believe that this is a direct challenge to us. And I believe we've got to rise to the occasion. We've got to realize that if we will meet God's condition, if we will humble ourselves before Him, if we will return to Him, if we will stand before Him, if we will hear the Word at His mouth, we will not comprise with men, we will be faithful to what God shows us. If we'll be brought together in the name of Jesus in harmony in the Holy Spirit, that's Zion—the place of God's people gathering together around Christ by the Holy Spirit. "Out of Zion shall go forth the rod of His authority." We shall rule the earth. We shall bind the kings and the nobles with fetters. We shall decree a thing and it shall be established unto us. We shall be able to do as Elijah said, "From now on, Ahab, the rain falls at my decree." Don't you think God is looking for people like that?

Let me give you two examples out of the Old Testament and I'm going stop. Second Kings chapter 6. Second Kings chapter 6. Just one verse. There was one man at this time who was a prophet of the Lord, Elisha. The armies of Syria were making war against the northern kingdom of Israel. And every time Syrians invaded, Elisha sent a word to the King and said, "Don't go there, that's where the Syrian army is." And eventually the King of Syria said, "There must be a traitor in our midst because every time we go there they know we're coming." And one of his servants said, "No, lord, there's no traitor, it's just Elisha. He tells the king of Israel everything you say in your bedroom." "Well then," he said, "we'll fix this man Elisha."

So, you know, this would be a compliment to me if any nation would bother to send out all its armies for Brother Prince. I'd feel flattered. I might feel frightened, too, but I'd realize I'm obviously onto something. So the king said, "Don't bother with the armies. Get Elisha." So Elisha was in the city of Dothan and all the Syrian armies gathered around the city. And Elisha's servant went up to the rooftop early one morning, rubbed his eyes, looked out, rubbed his eyes again and went running down the staircase. He said, "My master Elisha, the city's surrounded with horses and chariots from Syria." And Elisha went up with him on the rooftop and he said, "Lord, open the young man's eyes." And the Lord opened the young man's eyes and it was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. One man can magnetize the forces of heaven. Isn't that something? The whole issue settled around Elisha.

Elisha said, "Lord, smite these men with blindness," and the whole army of Syria was smitten with blindness. "Take them off to the capital, hand them over to the king of Israel," and they did. That's not my point. My point is that chariots and horses of God centered around one man. Oh, that we could live in such a way that we magnetize heaven's hosts. Wouldn't that be something? And I believe it's possible.

The other Scripture I want to give you is in Ezekiel chapter 22. This is my last Scripture. Ezekiel 22. I feel I haven't preached; I've just dropped thoughts in your minds. Here is a picture of tremendous backsliding and wickedness. Ezekiel 22, beginning at verse 23:

> "And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, say unto her, Thou art

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> the land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation."

You see, it's the latter rain that cleanses the land. The land that is not rained upon is not cleansed. And then there's this awful picture of wickedness which we'll read quickly.

> "There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof ... [verse 26:] Her priests have violated my law. . . . [verse 27:] Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey.... [verse 28:] Her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar. . . . [verse 29:] The people of the land...."

If you'll go through it, it's the priests, the princes, the prophets and the people. The whole nation with its spiritual leaders turned away from God. And then God says in verse 30,

> "I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none."

Now listen to the next few words:

> "Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them..."

The implication is clear. If God could have found one man that would stand before Him, the land could have been saved. He says, "I sought for a man to stand in the gap and make up the hedge. I couldn't find one; therefore I have poured out upon them My indignation." One man could have changed the situation.

Now I said that was the last Scripture, but I'm giving you one more. And honestly with this I'm going to bow out. Second Chronicles chapter 7 and verse 14. Many of you know this verse. Here the responsibility for our land is placed upon us. Second Chronicles 7:14. If you find it difficult, remember, twice 7 is 14 that's how I always remember that reference. Second Chronicles 7:14:

> "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

It depends upon the people of God in any land whether that land is healed or not. If God's people in that land will meet God's requirements, God will heal the land. God's requirements are fourfold: We humble ourselves, we pray, we seek His face, and we turn from our wicked ways. God says if you will do four things, I will do three. Hear from heaven, forgive your sins, and heal your land.

Do you want the land healed? It rests with you. It is possible for the land to be healed. Do you know what I believe? I believe the land has begun to be healed. I believe the tide is turning. I believe there's a dramatic revolution is taking place. I was talking to a young man in a restaurant, he may be here. He was at the Explo in Dallas. He said the authorities of Dallas said, first of all, you know this young people's convention? It's the largest convention that's ever taken place in Dallas. And the police and others expressed their amazement that they had not had one single problem to face. And he said he was there in the street while some young people were witnessing to a policeman on the street corner and he saw the policeman kneel down in the street corner and receive Christ as his Savior.

Now God is healing the land. If we'll hold out, if we'll pray, if we'll fast, if we'll storm heaven, and if we'll turn from our wicked ways. The destiny of this nation is in our hands.

In our area of Florida, because of the fact that the conventions are being held in Miami, we have agreed amongst ourselves that every prayer group will take one day of fasting and prayer for divine intervention in the political situation in our area.

God bless you. See you in the Millennium.

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Sermon

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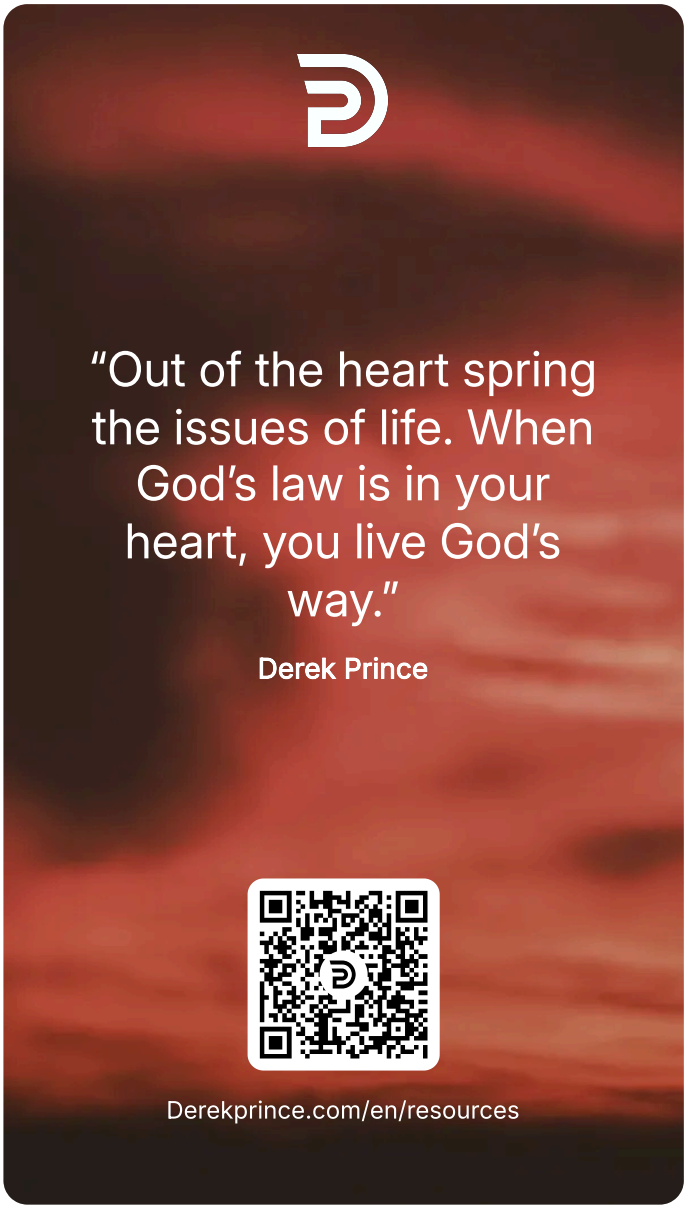

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