

The Language of Prophecy (Part 2)

The central focus in the first part of our meditation was to draw the attention of the Lord's people to the fact that God is carrying out an intensive work in the midst of the assemblies of His people. This work is essentially one of cleansing with a view to preparing His people for the glory that is to be revealed. He cleanses by the use of the Spirit of His word, when through the preaching and teaching of God's word, He draws the attention of His people to the fact that they should cleanse themselves.

There is a washing of the water by the word (Ephesians 5:25). But if the Lord's people will not hearken to His corrective ministry, then He would use hard agencies; He would use the instrument of judgement to get their attention. We know that ".judgement will begin in the house of God." (I Peter 4:17). Those who respond to divine dealings positively will be fitted to receive the glory, the unlimited anointing that is yet to be revealed upon the church. We can say with all authority that the church's finest hour is just about to break upon us.

Let us now pick up the meditation on "THE LANGUAGE OF PROPHECY (Part 2)". Remember that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

It is the testimony of Jesus that saves and keeps saving until we are perfected in His likeness and image. That being so, the prophetic word will take on greater and greater prominence among God's people at this time of the end. And, we know that the ministries in the church will begin to turn to prophetic subjects as God opens the door of understanding of His word. We begin by reading Revelation 1:1:

"The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He

sent
and signified it by His angel unto His servant John."

Please, take note of the word "signify". It is the word that tells us the book of Revelation will be generously sprinkled with signs, symbols, spiritual imageries, and figurative expressions. The purpose is not to mystify the message it carries, but, to bring it forth in such a dramatic manner that it leaves a lasting impression on those who open up to it. It is good in the sight of God, and, we trust it is safe for the Lord's people for this approach to be adopted.

We have found in the previous message that the 'SUN' stands for the Living word giving light and life unto His people. The 'MOON' stands for the Written word, both Old and New Testaments, in their capacity, when quickened to the understanding of the believer, to reflect the Living word. The 'STARS' stand for persons who have grown in the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. These ones being under the influence of the Living word and the Written word, exercise ruling functions in the midst of the Lord's people to bring them also to the same experiences, while they as sheep under the great shepherd continues to receive light from Him.

The 'BEAST', we said, represents Kingdom, and could represent prominent persons within the kingdom. The kingdom could either be political or religious. Then, the 'SEA' we saw represents the Nations of the unsaved world, in their restless and troubled state.

In this part, we will begin with the symbol of 'HEAVEN'. In Matthew 6:9, we find Jesus teaching His disciples how to pray. And He said, when you pray, say, ".Our Father who is in 'HEAVEN'.". Again, Psalm 115:16, says, ".the 'HEAVEN', even the 'HEAVENS' belong unto God, but the 'EARTH' has He given unto the children of men.". From these two scriptures, one usage of the word 'HEAVEN' is that it represents the sphere of the immortal God, the place of the dwelling of spirit

angels who are in the service of God. That 'HEAVEN', the place of the LORD God Almighty and the sphere of the existence of the spirit angels, is not to be found in the material world.

You remember that God made the material world out of the things that are in Him. Being the Self-Existent One, He could not possibly be living in the material world and deriving its existence from it.

God does not need oxygen or any form of sustenance from the material world. Rather, the material world is sustained by the word of His power. Therefore, the first usage of the word 'HEAVEN' is that it represents the abode of the Most High God, that realm of glory and power that sustains the material universe.

Again, in John 3:13, we see Jesus speaking to Nicodemus, saying ".no man has ever ascended unto 'HEAVEN', but He that came down from 'HEAVEN', even the Son of man which is in 'HEAVEN'.". Reading that verse several times over, you will understand Jesus was saying that, though He was physically present upon the earth in the days of His flesh, He was nevertheless in 'HEAVEN'. The reference in that passage is to the fact that He had access to heavenly power, glory, authority and majesty. Again, we notice that if that is true of Him, it could be true also of persons called unto salvation and fitted to receive the inheritance of the eternal kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Then, in Psalm 103:19, we are told that ".the Lord God has prepared His throne in the 'HEAVENS' (take note of the distinction between 'HEAVEN' and 'HEAVENS'), and that His kingdom ruleth over all.

Again in Daniel 4, a chapter penned by Nebuchadnezer after he had experienced God's judgement. While giving his testimony, in the seventeenth verse, he says, the things that happened to him did happen so that all of creation might know that the Most High God ruleth in the kingdoms of men.

In the twenty-sixth verse of the chapter, when Daniel was giving the interpretation, he said the thing that happened did happen to the intent that the living (that is, creation) might know that the 'HEAVENS' do rule. If you look at what Nebuchadnezer said in the

seventeenth verse, considered in the light of what Daniel said in the twenty-sixth verse, you will find that the Most High God who ruleth in the affairs of men, does so in His (or, by means of His) 'HEAVENS'. And, the context is quite clear. The judgement that came upon Nebuchadnezer was sourced by certain persons who, seeing certain abominations in the kingdom of Nebuchadnezer, prayed unto God and decreed judgement. We are told that the decree was of the 'holy watchers', and of the 'holy ones'. God's administration of His universe therefore, is done through what might be called the 'HEAVENS'.

The 'HEAVENS' in this connection stand for the realm of Spirit angels and the realm of the church. God does all that He does through His Spirit angels and through His church. In the Old Testament age, the Spirit angels occupied a realm of authority and power that was higher than that of men who sought God under that covenant, that is, the church of the Old Testament. But, in the New Testament, the church occupies a position of authority and power that is higher than that of Spirit angels. In fact, the Spirit angels wait upon the ministry of the church. In other words, the primary authority is in the hands of the church (Hebrews 1:5-14). So, when the Bible says, ".the 'HEAVENS' do rule.", the reference is to the fact that God's power and ruling functions is administered through agencies who could be Spirit angels or His people, the church. These are the 'HEAVENS', and they are said to be the 'holy ones', the 'holy watchers', who watch to promote the interest of God in His universe.

We have so far examined two meanings of the word 'HEAVEN'. First, we said heaven represent the place of God's dwelling , and the dwelling (realm) of Spirit angels in the administration of God, even though, even though, we know that God would have to humble Himself for His creatures (whether spirit or human) to see Him. When God appears in the form the angels can see, He is said to be an angel of the Lord.

The same is true when He comes in our visions and prophetic dreams.

What we see is only a manifestation of the Lord's presence. We also saw that the 'HEAVENS' stand for God's administration, the church and the Spirit angels who administer the interest of God.

Next, we note that the 'HEAVEN' could also be used to typify the firmament, which is the atmospheric heaven. For example, Psalm 103:13 says, ".as the 'HEAVENS' are higher than the 'EARTH' so is God's mercy great to them that fear Him.". The reference here is to the atmospheric 'HEAVEN'. This will mean the sky in its high reach compared to the 'EARTH' upon which we are standing.

Again, in II Corinthians 5, we find another usage of the word 'HEAVEN'. In verse 1, we read:

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the 'HEAVENS'."

When this verse of scripture is read in the context of the preceding three verses, we find that the 'HEAVENS' referred to there is the realm of the regenerated spirit of man. The reference there is not to the atmospheric 'HEAVENS' or to a geographical location above the planetary bodies, but to the sphere of the regenerated spirit where the Holy Spirit resides. This is clear. It says, ".if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved.". The reference here is to the physical body. We are told that if our physical, earthly (fleshly) body is destroyed in death, we have another body, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. This is clearly an invisible body, and that invisible body is located in our spirit realm.

Reading this preceding verses, you will come to understand that the descent of that invisible (divine) body (for it is contained within the physical body) occurs as the believer co-operate with the Lord Jesus Christ, receiving His word and submitting to His rule. So Paul says, ".in this physical, earthly tabernacle we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from 'HEAVEN'."

And he said that he was not seeking for this experience through the gateway of death, that is, to be unclothed, to give up the physical body in physical death, but that he might be clothed upon additionally. That is, he was desiring that what was mortal and incorruptible in his body might be swallowed up of the life that proceed from the 'HEAVEN' of his spirit nature.

The blue print of all things that are contained in the inheritance of the believer are entered into as the Holy Spirit makes Christ known and incorporate Christ in our nature. So Paul was speaking of two bodies that are realities in the believer. The first, our human body, which is earthly, and the other, our spirit body that is heavenly and is a reality in our regenerated spirit, which is here, called the heavens. And he was desiring that while yet alive, the power of Christ life would so work in him that death and mortality might be swallowed up by the life that comes from his spirit, that he might be clothed upon with a spirit body which is eternal. So, the word 'HEAVENS' could also be used for man's spirit. We move yet to another usage.

In Micah 6:2, we find the prophet reporting a controversy between God and His people. And, in proclaiming the Lord's word, he said, ".hear ye, O mountains, the Lord's controversy, ye strong foundations of the earth.". And lest we begin to think the prophet is out of his mind to be talking to mountains and rocks, he explains himself in the verses following showing to us that the mountains and the earth he was addressing were the Lord's people. Again, in Deuteronomy 32, Moses was preaching and said, ".give ear O 'HEAVENS' and hear O 'EARTH'.". We know that Moses was not speaking to the 'MOON' and 'STARS' or planetary bodies, but to the Lord's people, those whom by reason of divine dealings have been brought to the estate of spiritual leadership and those of the Lord's people who receive ministries from them. Moses was saying that these ones, His princes and His people, should hear and consider God's word.

Thus, the word 'HEAVENS' and 'EARTH' are sometimes used to represent God's people. The 'HEAVENS' would refer to the leadership over Israel, those who stand in the place of authority to administer the

day-to-day governance of the polity of Israel. These include the priests, the prophets, the king and princes. The 'EARTH' is then used in a positive sense to represent the generality of the Lord's people (outside the above classes). As we shall discover later, the word 'EARTH' can also be used to represent those of the Lord's people that are earthly-minded (that is using the word in a negative sense).

So, the word 'HEAVEN' can refer to spiritual leadership. Spiritual leadership can also be represented as mountain. For example, in Micah 6:2, that we read, the mountain in question is the spiritual leadership over Israel. Hence, in this context, both the mountains and the 'HEAVENS' speak of the same set of people.

We move to another usage of the word 'HEAVEN'. We are told in Ephesians 2:6 that the church is sitting in 'HEAVENLY' places in Christ Jesus. Thus, the present sphere of the church's ministry and the present sphere of the believer's daily living is in the 'HEAVENS'. This is the picture we find almost throughout the book of Revelation. So, when certain things are revealed as being in 'HEAVEN', the present sphere of the activities and ministry of the church is referred to.

Now, let us divert for some little time to talk about the 'EARTH'. Psalm 115:16 which we have referred to earlier on reveal that the 'EARTH' could stand for the habitable part of our world; the land mass. Again, the word 'EARTH', can stand for man's body. This should be clear. If the spirit stands for the 'HEAVENS', then the 'EARTH' could represent man's body. In Genesis 2:7, we are told God made man out of the dust of the 'EARTH'. So the human body, 'EARTHY' as it is, could be represented by the word 'EARTH'.

Again, the word 'EARTH' could represent the social order of the present world, the systems and order that operate in the present world. It is this social order, which finds expressions in the kingdoms of this world, that is being referred to in scriptures when it is said, ".the 'EARTH shall pass away.'" (Matthew 5:18).

Closely related to the above, the word 'EARTH' can be used to

represent the peoples that inhabit the world. For example, when it is said that the knowledge of the glory of God shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, it is talking of the tremendous blessings that the ministry of the perfected church shall bring upon the nations of the world. We know that the overcoming church will shepherd the nations to the pure worship of Jehovah. So, the word 'EARTH' could stand for persons within our world.

Finally, the word 'EARTH' could be a figure for apostasy. Putting it more appropriately, when believers are living like those who are not yet saved in their affections, desires, wills and emotions, they are said to be dwelling upon the 'EARTH'. There are two minds ruling in the church - the mind of the flesh which brings about death and death things, and, the mind of the Spirit which brings life and peace (Romans 8:1-7). Paul in Philippians 3:18, lamented that in the church of his day, there were those who conducted their affairs as enemies of the cross of Christ, ".whose God is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mind 'EARTHLY' things.". And in Colossians 3:5, we are told to mortify therefore our members that are upon the 'EARTH'. Again, in Revelation 3:10, we are shown that there is an hour of trial that shall come upon all them that dwell upon the 'EARTH'.

When these verses are read and considered together, it becomes clear that the word 'EARTH' could mean believers who are allowing the works of the flesh to gain prominence in their lives, men and women called to an 'HEAVENLY' course, who rather chose to follow an 'EARTHLY' course. When this is considered in the light of II Thessalonians 2, we find that it is in the time of spiritual declension, a time when there is a lowering of spiritual standards, a time of apostasy, that the antichrist makes itself manifest. And the antichrist is a

many-member body, as John revealed in I John 2, that is consisting of many persons.

So, we find that the word 'EARTH' could speak of a class of people who are saved but who do not allow Christ to rule over their lives.

So that, in the atmosphere that they sustain, in the large crowd that they maintain, it is possible for deception to overtake them. From this 'EARTH' class, we are told that a beast (a religious kingdom) shall emerge (Revelation 13:11).

We judge that we have said enough to assist any to do a more detailed study on these two great symbols, which are used frequently in the book of Revelation. The Lord bless you, the Lord cause His face to shine upon you, the Lord do you good. The Lord enable you to put to death, and the Lord enable us to put to death, whatever is 'EARTHLY' in our lives, for when the Lord comes to judge sin, He will judge sin wherever it is found, whether in the church, or out of it. And when we live our lives holy unto the Lord, we are able to sustain a spirit of discernment by which we are able to know what things are not in agreement with the Lord's mind.

Beloved Brethren, once again, We bless you in the name of the Lord Jesus, whose we are and whom we serve. By our next meeting, we will be considering "THE LANGUAGE OF PROPHECY (Part 3)". Don't give up, keep on praying.