

The series of meditation in the book of Revelation of Jesus Christ has brought us to the fourth chapter, an important turning point in its message. We shall be examining the first and second verses of Revelation 4. Our topic is "COME UP HITHER", a phrase in the passage of choice.

"After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven:
and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me, which said, come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven and one sat on the throne."

You will recall that John was the human instrument used of God to pen the book of Revelation of Jesus Christ. In the 10th verse of Revelation 1, we are told that John while in the Island of Patmos received visions from the Spirit of the living God concerning the day of Christ. Notice, he says, "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet." It is the same voice that is speaking here in Revelation 4 inviting him to "come up hither."

In Revelation 1:13, Jesus was seen in the midst of seven golden candlesticks dictating certain messages to John, which he sent to some named congregations of God's people. These representative churches are referred to in the figure of the seven candlesticks.

In the nineteenth verse of the first chapter, he was asked to write the things, which he "hath seen, the things which are, and the things which were to come hereafter." We may rightly infer from the above that the subject matter of the book of Revelation is entirely covered in that phrase: "the things which are, and the things which were to come hereafter."

We may therefore divide the book into two great divisions: chapters 1, 2 and 3 deal with the things, which are. From Revelation 4:1 up to the end of the book forms a second division and covers the things, which shall be hereafter.

That is, from chapter one through three, the Lord Jesus is speaking about things, which were then true of all the churches. John, by means of the gifts of the Holy Spirit was seeing and hearing the Lord Jesus. But, in chapter 4, with the second division setting in, we notice a change. John was asked to come up to a higher realm in the spirit, where he would be enabled to have a fuller view of the things of God. This required him to be entirely in the spirit. He was actually caught up to the spirit realm. He had an out-of-the-body experience.

Let us also notice a change in the position of the Lord Jesus as the vision unfolds. In the first three chapters, He is seen standing in the midst of the churches carrying out His mission. But here in Revelation 4, the Lord Jesus is shown as seated on His throne executing judgement. Thus the Lord, once standing, correcting the ills in the churches, encouraging and supporting her mission in propagating the gospel, was now shown as sitting to administer in judgement.

Recall that John said, "a door was open unto me in heaven and immediately, I became spirit." We have already observed that the phrase, "I became spirit" refers to John being caught up to the spirit realm. Compare this with what he says of himself in Revelation 1:10. John simply says, "I was in the spirit". The reference is to being under the anointing to operate in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. John remained essentially in the human estate. But here in chapter 4, the workings of his human faculties were suspended as it were. He was only alive to the spirit world.

We see a similar situation in the book of Zechariah. In the first

three chapters of that book, the prophet received a series of visions. He was in the normal realm of the operation of the gifts of the Spirit. However, in the next vision, he was virtually called into the spirit realm as was the case of Apostle John in Revelation chapter 4. In Zechariah 4:1, this state of affairs is described thus: ".and the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep." This observation is made in passing.

Now, let us come with John to the spirit realm, that heavenly position to which he was invited. What do we see? What were the things that John was shown?

First, from that heavenly position, he was shown two women, one is discussed in Revelation 12, and the other in Revelation 17. These two women are actually signifying two histories springing from the same holy beginning, two developments flowing from a common origin.

The two symbolic women speak of the same persons that the Lord had been addressing all along in Revelation chapters 2 and 3. Eight times in those two chapters the Lord Jesus Christ called His people to repent from certain named sins. Those who took on the path of obedience and hearkened to the word of repentance became as part of the first woman of Revelation 12. But those who treated His word with levity and walked on in habitual disobedience, rejecting the word of warning became as the second woman of Revelation 17.

Again, from the heavenly position, we see two cities. The first is discussed in Revelation 18, the great city; the second is described in Revelation 21, the holy city. That is, in the passage of time, what began as small congregations developed into what is spiritually called cities. Those in these congregations who were faithful to the Lord and His word, were by Him separated and built up to become of the holy city. In the same way, those who were habitually unfaithful to our heavenly bridegroom found themselves members of the great city, Babylon. It is the same today.

Those who hearkened to the voice of the Lord and allow His word to govern their lifestyles, ever following the Lord in all things are

being constituted members of the New Jerusalem, the holy city. Thus, the holy city here is speaking of the church in God's purpose. It is not merely what shall be in the future, when we get to heaven, rather, it is a setting forth of what is obtaining now on earth. The promises given to the Philadelphia church in Revelation 3:12 confirms this. Anyhow, we will be taking that thought in another meditation later in this writing.

So, we have the holy city, described in Revelation 21, and the great city, Babylon, described in Revelation 18, two histories (as we first observed) flowing from the same holy beginning.

Then again, we are shown two Lambs, the first we find in Revelation 14. All who partake of redemption that is in Christ Jesus are called upon to submit to a change in their nature. We are to be grown into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ in every respect. Thus, those who take on this heavenly course become as the Lamb in Revelation 14:1-5. While those who take an earthly course, who live in sin and to themselves become as the lamb described in Revelation 13:11-18.

We are told there was a beast coming up out of the earth. From out of the earth class, of the earthly-minded believers, there arises a lamb similar in structure to the Lamb of God, but manifestly different in character. This is clearly the case as we consider verse 11 in the context of the remaining verses in chapter 13. So there are two kinds of lambs; one in Revelation 13 and the other in Revelation 14.

Again, we see two kinds of minds represented in the midst of God's people. The heavenly-minded ones are said to constitute the heavenly class, simply called 'heavens'. While the earthly-minded are said to be of the earth class. In Revelation 12:12, we read, ".rejoice ye heavens, and them that dwell therein.". Of course, the heaven, as

we explained in the book, "Language of Prophecy", is not referring to the abode of the Most High God and of the spirit angels. It is rather, speaking of the realm of the overcoming church. Then, in the same verse, we read, ".woe to the inhabitants of the earth.". So two kinds of believers are to be revealed in this time of the end: the heavenly minded, and the earthly minded.

Again, we see two kinds of harvests, for, whether the Lord's people listen to His voice calling them to repentance and hearken to Him, or not, there would be a harvest of judgement and a harvest of full inheritance. There will be a reward of whatever lifestyle that the Lord's people choose. So, in Revelation 14, we are shown two kinds of harvests. The first harvest is of the overcoming church. The church receives the full inheritance of moral perfection and a glorification to the divine nature. The second harvest is of such persons who had their beginnings as children of God but who in the process of time became fully identified with the spirit of the present age, having allowed worldliness, materialism, and moral failures to take the hold of them. They come to doom and destruction.

Finally, we see two kinds of streets, one is mentioned in Revelation 11:8 while the other is seen in Revelation 21:21.

These several contrasting pictures we have taken note of were brought before John's view as from the fourth chapter of the book of Revelation. Jesus Christ was simply saying to John, ".if any of my people will not hearken to the voice of correction but go on in their own ways, their iniquities will remain with them. Those evil things will become fully developed in them in the passage of time. Their shame shall come up to such a level that they cannot escape the judgement of destruction coming upon wickedness."

It is our purpose in subsequent meditations in this writing to examine more fully these two sets of contrasting pictures. It is strange how persons who had their beginnings in God, veer off the

heavenly course in unfaithfulness. There is today a great falling away from the path of life among those who profess to be Spirit-filled believers. Whole congregations are heavily spotted with grievous marks of unfaithfulness. They hardly can pass for the kingdom that shall be revealed. The spirit of prophecy indicates that things will get worse among the disobedient. Let each one of us re-examine our lives and make such self-adjustments that lead to breaking free from the hold of evil.

Now, let us reflect much on the thought that the Lord Jesus Christ will deal compassionately with the penitent of His people. We must develop extreme sensitivity to the voice of the Spirit, eager to submit to His rule in our lives. Remember that there is absolutely nothing in the things that we read of in the later chapters of the book of the book of Revelation that does have their roots in those seven letters written to the churches (Revelation 2 and 3). For example, take the message of the Lord Jesus Christ to the church in Thyatira. There, we are told of the woman Jezebel. And you will recall that we used the historical figure Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, to illustrate the things that the Lord Jesus Christ was speaking to the church about. It is this same woman, refusing to repent who become of the woman of Revelation 17. This woman would represent a many-member-body, a group of persons submitting to the same kind of corrupting influences. Once set in motion, unfaithfulness in a spiritual movement turns it into a denomination. Denominationalism is the vehicle of travel in that great city, Babylon.

Quite often, when a word comes like this speaking very decisively of certain tendencies among the Lord's people, there is a question that is often asked: 'How can you regard the church of Jesus Christ as Babylon? Our answer is that the church of the Lord Jesus Christ is not Babylon. What ultimately becomes Babylon was once a church of Jesus Christ, a prospective bride of Christ. Unfaithfulness to Christ secured through a marriage to the world made her a harlot.

Those who have their beginnings in God, but only think and consider the favours of Christ's saving work, and will not have Him rule

over
their lives end up in destruction. In the process of time, they develop such characteristics that are alien to the christian faith.

Remember what we read in Jeremiah 2. Jesus was saying through the prophet Jeremiah to His people: "I have planted you a holy, noble vine, how have you become to me a degenerate vine?" This is a sad picture and we must all hold out against this evil in our lives and assemblies.

So, you find that it is not how we begin that matters, but knowing and submitting to the Lord Jesus Christ all the way. In Revelation 14 showing Jesus as a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, we are shown a host of other believers that have taken on His Lamb-like nature. These are said to have virgin hearts towards the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Revelation 17, these same people (the over-comers) are said to 'follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth'. They are "the called, the chosen and the faithful." Some must stand in this blessedness.

This estate is open to all that have known Jesus Christ in salvation. It is however possessed by those who tremble at His word. A broken heart and contrite spirit are of great value in the kingdom of God.

And, notice that the letters were written to the angels of the seven churches. Of course, John, a human person could not be writing a letter to spirit angels when he was in fact receiving the ministrations themselves from an angel sent from the presence of the Lord.

It is the human angels who were in charge of the various assemblies that the letters were addressed to. Each angel represents the plural leadership (many persons in the given assembly), who have been called to the estate of ministry. These servants of God were to receive the messages, internalise them, and then speak in ministry to the Lord's people, drawing their attention to His instructions and counsels.

Apostle John wrote the last five books in the Bible. It is interesting to note that John wrote the first of these five books after the great encounter with the Lord in the Island of Patmos.

It was after he had received the book of Revelation that the gospel and the three epistles of John were written.

Let us put it this way. John, having internalised the message in the Revelation, now wrote to the churches in plain words, bringing to focus the things that the Lord was saying to His people. For example, in I John 2, he says, ".love not the world, nor the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. The world passeth away, and the lusts thereof.

But, they that do the will of the Lord will abide forever."

We are at a time when human institutions are experiencing collapse whether in the religion, political, economic or social spheres.

And we know that the hour is come when the Lord will destroy all false foundations. His judgements have begun in the house of his friends.

In a matter of time it will become so evident not only to the discerning but to all.

Will you come with John to the heavenly realm? Will you hearken to the voice of the Lord saying to you, "come up hither?" We know that

as we seek the face of the Lord, He will open our understanding to things as they may be seen from the standpoint of the Highest, the living God. His glorious word will manifest to us that which is acceptable in His sight. The Lord keep you, the Lord bless you, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Beloved Brethren, here we will stop for now until some other time when the Lord in His mercies brings us your way again. Next meeting

by His grace, we will be considering the topic, "Two Kinds of Cities." We do earnestly covet your prayers especially as regards this great work of the harvest in this seventh prophetic day of the Lord. Stay blessed in Him.