

**COME UP  
HITHER**

## COME UP HITHER

The series of meditations 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 the 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 are 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 down to administer in judgement.

Recall that John said, "*a door was opened 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

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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 hearken 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 confirm this. Anyhow, we will be taking that thought in another meditation later in this book.

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 13:11-18, and the second, 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,

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in Revelation 14, we are shown two kinds of harvests. The first harvest is of the overcoming Church. This 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 book 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 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.

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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 ministration itself 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 religions, 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.



## TWO KINDS OF CITIES

In our meditation on ‘*Come up Hither*’, we were invited with Apostle John to come up to the heavenly position to see two separate developments emerging from the same holy beginning. A key to understanding these meditations is to have in mind that the seven letters John wrote to the churches relate directly to the developments we find in the book of Revelation as from the fourth chapter.

The things that Jesus said in the letters that were either commendations or condemnation form the main emphasis in these teachings. The Lord encourages us to take note of the things that give Him satisfaction. We are to cultivate these virtues. The Lord calls to repentance from those things that he condemns. Obedience leads to glory. Disobedience brings shame and destruction. From chapter four onwards we are able to trace the paths of obedience and disobedience. In two contrasting sets of word-pictures, we are shown what the history of obedience will lead to, and what things the course of disobedience brings.

So, in considering this subject: *Two kinds of Cities* recall that the first is the direct result of faithfulness. This City is discussed in Revelation 21. The other City develops from unfaithfulness and it is discussed in Revelation 18. The faithful class of believers is called the *holy city*, the *New Jerusalem*, while the unfaithful is called *Babylon, the great city*.

There are two common features in all seven letters Apostle John wrote to the churches. The first feature is that the letters are addressed to the churches, through the leadership in each of the church type. So God speaks to all his children in each of the letters. The second feature is that the promise is made to individuals who overcome. For example, in Revelation 2:7, we find the phrase “*to him that overcomes*”, not “*to them that overcome*”, but “*to him that overcomes*”. This brings to mind some important things that may be inferred from these two features:

1. God is concerned about the local assembly of his people. He is concerned about the local church.
2. But the emphasis in judgement is that we are judged as individuals, not as groups. "*To him that overcomes*". Each man stands alone before the judgement seat of Christ.

Now, why does God write to the whole church and then make promises to the individual who is overcoming? It is because the spiritual environments in which we are fellowshiping tend to have influence upon our walk with God. If the set-up is faulty, no matter how desirous the individual is to walk in faithfulness before God, being not helped by his environment, he might be greatly disadvantaged. In addition, the spiritual influences in the assembly will impact on him either for good or for evil.

So, the proper functioning of the local assembly is something the Lord emphasises on in the New Testament scriptures. In the book "*God's Pattern Church*", which will soon be in print, we are able to look into this matter fully. It examines God's mind for His church and the principles in the word that should inform how the local church operates. A great need of the hour is to have local assemblies of believers operating after the due order. What we see in the street of religion are mainly church organisations that are doing their own thing.

So, it is as individuals that we are judged. Our salvation and subsequent development into full Sonship is an individual matter. We cannot say this is what our church is doing, but rather this is what I perceive the Lord will have me do (follow). Our prayer is that all of the Lord's people, and particularly those who take leadership responsibilities in the various assemblies, should submit to the great changes God is calling for in this last hour. We must set aside the rule of the flesh and man's bylaws, and embrace the rule of the Spirit and of the Word.

Let's return our minds to the main stream of our meditation. Coming to our place on the heavenly watchtower we are made to see two kinds of cities. We would begin with the Holy City also referred to as the *New Jerusalem*. When we talk about the *New Jerusalem*, it is important for us

to understand that this city is not a natural sphere. When people take up discussions on the glories of the celestial realm, the abode of God, the heavens that our full-grown Spirits would operate in, the thought expressed is that Revelation 21 describes a physical sphere called heaven. So men have said that when you get to the heaven of God, the street is made of gold etc. The Holy City is a people. The beauties and glories revealed in Revelation chapter 21 relates to spiritual realities Christ is developing in His people who are obedient. In the term “City” as used throughout the book of Revelation, a body of people with clearly defined characteristics is meant. A reference to Revelation chapter 17:18 will confirm what has just been noted. The harlot woman is a City, Babylon. We read, “*And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the king's of the earth*”.

The woman is a city. This is important. When we come to Revelation 21:2, we find John saying in relation to the faithful city,

*And I John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

Here again, the city is said to be a woman, the bride. The Lamb’s wife is a city, the Holy City. The Lamb’s wife in the finished picture is the faithful church. And in verses 9 and 10, we still find an invitation to John saying “*Come up hither, and I will show you the bride, the lamb's wife*”. Verse 10 says he was carried to an exceedingly high mountain and from that position, he was shown the holy city, coming out of heaven from God.

So, it is important to know that the cities that we are talking about speak of a people, not the landmass, nor some physical, concrete structure, but a people. Now, you know that song, “*try a little kindness or show a little kindness, shine your light for everyone to see*”. At some point in the song, it says “*the city soul*” or “*the city of the soul*”. So, we are talking about the inward man. Our spiritual man is here presented in the figure of a city. And, of course, what is true for the individual is true for the whole assemblies of God's people. The individual believer is a city in the same way the church as a body is figured as a city. If we submit to

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God's dealings with us in Christ there is developed in us the graces of the spirit that are graphically described in Revelation 21.

Now, let us take note of something specific about each of the two cities. In Revelation 18, the emphasis in the description of the harlot system is on its greatness. It is called the *great city*. But when you come to Revelation 21, the emphasis in the description of the faithful city is on its holiness of character and life. It is called the *Holy City*. This is important.

We will like to take some few verses from Revelation 18, looking more closely at the Harlot City, Babylon. Our emphasis in this meditation will be on the unfaithful city. So, come with me to Revelation 18: 1-4.

*And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power: and the earth was lightened with his glory.*

*And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.*

*For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the Kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.*

*And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, come out of her, my people. that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*

We may want to sum up three things taken from Revelation 18 that describes the unfaithful city.

First of all, the city is called Babylon. What does Babylon mean? The root word is *Babel*. Babel means the *gate to God* or *an entrance into the things of God*. That which leads to God is Babel. Reading Genesis 11:9, you find that word Babel. The context is the story of the Tower of Babel.

Now, of course you understand what the tower of Babel was. It is not actually a physical tower that was being built which top was to reach to the sky. It suffices for our present purpose to note that Babel means the gate to God, an entrance to God. That which starts out as a means of leading people to God is Babel. But not everything we see comes out to be exactly what it is given to be.

Babylon means *confusion*. Considering this together with the meaning of the root word Babel, we come to understand what the word “*Babylon*” denotes. That which presents itself as God’s vessel professing to show the nations the way of the true worship of God is actually in opposition to divine interests. There is that which presents itself as *the gate to God* but which in essence leads away the unsuspecting from Him. This is confusion. Man’s city is built when God’s purposes are set aside.

A spiritual movement degenerates into a denomination when men usurp God’s authority in His church. In the bid to become *great*, many servants of God have dethroned Him in their lives. It is subtle in its workings but ambition is behind the many deviations from the path of truth of these men. By the very way things are conducted in many assemblies, God’s purposes are beclouded, and made vague. The sincere labours of the people are by men converted to serve their selfish interests. So, Babylon is confusion, while Babel, the root word from which it is derived means, *the gate to God*. This is the first important observation that we are making, drawn from Revelation 18.

The second is that this city is called *Babylon, the great*. Remember that there was once a Kingdom named Babylon, which existed about six hundred years before the first advent of Christ. This is the empire over which Nebuchadnezzar reigned. But, in saying the city is Babylon the great; there are two things that the scripture is alluding to.

The first is that there are certain things about this spiritual city that we can understand as we look again at the ancient Babylonian Empire. Of course, we know that Revelation 18 is not referring to a geographical location in Baghdad but to something spiritual. There is a parallel between that physical, historical city and this spiritual anti-type. Secondly, the word “*great*” is a reference to the fact that it is the one

thing that motivates the people. That is, the people of the city are driven by a lust for greatness. They want to be seen; they want to be great and reckoned as such. Babylon of old, its people and nobles were known for vanity. This also is true of spiritual Babylon.

God's word recommends a humble carriage for believers, more so, those who are ministers of His. Humility thrives on the ruins of self- life. The death-to-self message is the way of the cross. "*Take up your cross and follow me*", is the cry of the Master. But many see such an image as not satisfying their inward cravings.

So, the thirst for greatness, the thirst for fame, the thirst for popularity make people to go into all kinds of things in order to be seen and known of men to be great. This is in contrast to what we see of the faithful city. The telling characteristic of the faithful city is its holiness. Holiness first of all means separation from the world, and then the use to which that which is separated is put. So, the holy city is the city that is separate from the world and serving the Lord's purpose alone. In Numbers chapter 23:9, it is said of the Lord's people that they shall dwell alone, they shall not be reckoned among the nations. So, the church is supposed to stand alone, apart from the rest of the world, being God's means of ministering His salvation to the ends of the earth. This is important.

So, the thirst for greatness is a characteristic feature of the unfaithful city. Remember the words to the Laodecian church, "*I am rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing.*" The very description of these riches is spelt out in Revelation chapter 18:12ff. So, the thirst is for greatness. And sometimes, people resort to all kinds of evil things to become great. People build some great structures and great organisations. Quite often, the church is run like a multi-national company with the General Manager like a demigod, a tin god.

Achievements in Christendom are measured by how many branches and congregations a church has; how many vehicles and other assets, who were the first to use the television in ministry, to buy a private jet, which has the highest number of branches overseas and so on. But we know from a true understanding of the scriptures that God has not called us to

be like Nimrod who wanted to have all of the nations under his control (Genesis 10:8-12). God has not called us to be demigods. Rather, God has called us to be servants of His and to be in fellowship with one another. And no one ought to carry himself above the rest of his brethren. That is the second observation we are making concerning these few verses we have read.

The third observation is found in the third verse. A command is given saying, "*come out of her my people*". Since Babylon is not a physical location, but a spiritual condition, then it follows that some of God's people, especially at the time of the end, shall be found in such a state. These things so, each of us needs to examine the substance of this command. We must know what things in life and service the Lord reacts against and deliver ourselves from them. It will always come for deep repentance. Quite often it will include separation.

However, remember that Babylon is not physical location. In fact, in the New Testament, Paul writes and sends greetings to the church in Babylon. That, that Babylon referred to is today a city in Iraq, sixty-five kilometres from Baghdad only blinds our eyes to what God is saying to His people. A church was planted there many years' back, but the Babylon in Revelation 18 is not that physical city. God is not angry at some geographical location called Babylon. But there are certain elements which when found in an Assembly of God's people or in an individual identify such with the concept called Babylon.

The visible church system presents itself to the world as God's mouthpiece to proclaim his word to the people. But the very way things are carried on in many places is contrary to God's purpose. As we look to these elements, let us begin to earnestly search our spirits. To whatever extent these traits are found in us, to that same extent we should seek deliverance. May the Lord make us humble enough to turn from wickedness. May we allow God to do the work of perfection in us. It is written, "*He shall see the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied*". What a joy to become a satisfaction to so great a saviour. So, these are the three elements.

Now, we go straight to Revelation 21 to make a similar survey. Three things are set out in the chapter that helps us to understand its main lessons. First, the walls of the city are described. Secondly, the gate to the city is described. Thirdly, the city itself is described, the prominent feature being its street. In the wall, the emphasis is on character, those attributes of character that are found in Jesus. Then, in the garnishing of the foundations of the wall, the emphasis is on the attributes of wisdom; the wisdom that was found so fully developed in Jesus. And when talking of wisdom, we mean wisdom with all its critical faculties, as including prudence, knowledge, understanding and such other things.

Coming to the gates! Notice that the word ‘*gates*’ is plural. The *gates* of the city speaks of ministries raised up within the church that makes possible for there to be an admission of some into the things of God and a locking out of others from the things of God. They who enter in by the gates ultimately find their lives becoming more and more like God. Those who are kept back do not meet the required standard. Christ fully manifested in us is the righteousness of the law fulfilled. This is the standard.

In Revelation 21:24-27 we read concerning the faithful city

*And the nations of them, which are saved, shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

In closing, let us observe that ‘*city*’ in scriptures also denotes administration, government. Remember Psalm 48:1,2 “*great is the Lord and greatly to be praised, in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, the sides of the north, the city of the great king*”. So the word “*city*” should bring to our mind government, administration. Here in



Psalm 48:1-2, it is shown the joy, peace and gladness, which the administration of God's kingdom shall bring, upon the nations of the earth. In the picture of the unfaithful city (Babylon the great), we are shown how there is developed over the course of time, a false administration which claims to represent God but patterns itself more and more like the secular world. In the picture of the faithful city, the holy city, we are shown the gradual emergence of a true spiritual administration (government) that patterns itself more and more according to the provisions in God's word.

These are the things we are seeing in a contrast. And, we have run through in order to give us a general introduction. When you see the detailed description of the faithful city in Revelation 21, you will know that the Lord Jesus Christ wants to carry out such great work in our lives. In the main, the local assemblies of God's people are just playing church. When we consider any one aspect of the great work the Lord wants to do in our lives it is seen how far removed from the finished picture we are at the moment. The Christian calling is a serious business. We need to humble ourselves to be thoroughly focused on him at all times. Thank God, here and there we see the springing up of a new hunger for God among his people. Truly, the restoration has begun. May the Lord bless and keep you, and make His face to shine upon you.

## TWO KINDS OF STREETS

In this meditation, we will be discussing two kinds of streets. Our text is drawn from Revelation 21:21 and Revelation 11:8. The first of these two verses deals with the *street of pure gold*; the second is a reference to the *street of the great city*. The two kinds of streets are thus introduced to us in this manner.

To begin, let us take a reading of the two verses and then proceed to discuss our subject.

*And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. (Revelation 21:21)*

*And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. (Revelation 11:8)*

You will recall that when we came to Revelation 4:1 in our meditation, we answered to that invitation to come up hither. And from a heavenly viewpoint, we are made to see two sets of contrasting pictures. We saw two kinds of women, two kinds of cities (the great city and the holy city). Then we saw two kinds of Lambs, the first given to us in Revelation 13, and the other in Revelation 14. Next we find two kinds of streets.

There is a divine purpose behind bringing before us the spiritual realities symbolised by these pictures. God encourages His people to a life of faithfulness. Faithfulness brightens and enables the believer to overcome in all things. The future glories associated with faithfulness are graphically illustrated in one set of pictures. To understand what lies ahead of a consistent walk with God will provoke the believer to live a life that is well pleasing in the sight of God, despite all difficulties. In the same vein the Lord warns against unfaithfulness. Unfaithfulness

results from habitual disobedience. The prospects of the terrible judgements that will ultimately attend those who choose the evil course are enough warnings to dissuade any from settling for unfaithfulness. The allurements that captivate a soul are also painted in very sharp pictures. It is impossible to miss what the Lord is emphasising in all of these.

So, let us search out what is indicated in the first kind of street. Now, you will notice, if you are curious enough, that Revelation 21:21 said the *street of the city was of pure gold*. Not the *streets*, but the *street*. Remember that we are talking of the heavenly Jerusalem. The plural form of the word “*street*” will make more sense, naturally speaking, if a city is being described. We know that the smallest cities have more than one street. This observation forces us to look more closely at this verse of scripture to discover to ourselves what the divine intention is. God’s domain is certainly ultra glorious. However, it is not what is being described here.

We know that the saints of God in every generation have rejoiced in their spirits as they read through Revelation chapter 21. They understood this chapter in a literal way, imagining as physical structures what is described in it. However, this passage of scriptures relates to the spiritual realities of our glorious inheritance in Christ.

Gold is made up of earth. Though precious it is nevertheless corruptible. And we know that our heavenly inheritance is not corruptible. The apostle Peter tells us very clearly that God has begotten us *again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven*.

*Gold* as used in our passage is symbolic. When the context so allows, *gold* may be seen as typifying divine things. Now a street is essentially a carriageway for human and vehicular traffic.

So, the street of gold is a divine street, a divine carriageway. It is designed to be a thoroughfare for God and man. When properly constructed it will serve this stated purpose conveniently.

Let us look at a few incidences in scriptures to firm up this conviction. When John the Baptist came into the scene just before the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ began, he said, *“I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight”*. So, *the way, paths*, are figures of the street the Lord travels on to meet the people. They also stand for the pathway the Lord’s people take in their journey to meet with Him. This highway, this carriageway, is something constructed in the heart of man. You will recall that when John the Baptist said *“prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his path straight. Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain*, he was preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. So all of these activities were to take place in the hearts of men.

So, the street of this holy city is made of gold. It is the street that the believer must travel upon to come to life.

Turn with me in your Bible to Matthew 7, we will be taking the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> verses. We are going to show that we are travelling in one or the other of the two kinds of streets.

*Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be who go in thereat:*

*Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Matthew 7:13,14*

So, there is the broad way and there is the narrow way. The narrow way from the human viewpoint may seem difficult and calls for self-denials. But it is the pathway to glory, honour, immortality and life. Heaven’s view of the narrow way is most gratifying: *a street of pure gold transparent as glass*.

Come with me to Luke 3. We are still looking at the street of pure gold. Remember that gold in scriptures is used to symbolise the divine nature. Jesus calls the street that we must travel in to crystallise the divine nature

the narrow way. We want to see how John described this street. On it the Lord travels to meet his people in blessings. The Redeemed also travels on it to meet with the Lord in fellowship and worship. Luke 3:1-4

*Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Ceaser, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.*

*And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;*

*As it is written in the book of the words of E-sai as the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord (or prepare ye the street of the Lord. The Lord is coming but prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.*

It was something the people were to understand and respond to. So, the summary of the ministry of John the Baptist is given to us here in few words. He was also to turn the hearts of the Fathers to the children, the hearts of the children to the fathers, and these ones made just to the pure worship of the Living God (Malachi 4:6).

So, the activities we are about to read from verse 4 of Luke 3 relate to transformation that will take place in the sphere of our hearts. Just as in the natural terrain, a path may have valleys, hills, mountain ranges, rough and crooked places, so we are shown in this figurative language that this is the same way man's heart is. If God is going to get something across to his people, the difficulties His people may experience in receiving that word relate to their heart conditions. Remember the parable of the Sower. He went forth sowing. And the work was made easy or difficult depending on the terrain in which the word of God (the seed) was sown (Luke 8:5-15). Coming back to verse 4 of Luke 3, we read,

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*As it is written in the book of the words of E-sai as the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his path straight. Every valley shall be filled...*

In a normal road construction, if there is a depression, approved soil material is taken to fill it to the desired level. So the first figure, 'valley', is descriptive of discouragement and despondency. We are further told,

*Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth.  
And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.*

Here then is the description of how the street of pure gold is put together. It has to do with overcoming moral vices. What things to overcome are listed in various scriptures one of which is Galatians 5:19-21. II Corinthians 6:14-7:1 is another good passage. Note the two-fold description of that which must be set aside: filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit. Remember that from Revelation 3:12, we know that participation in the New Jerusalem is a promise made to the overcomer. Or putting it more correctly, as we overcome, increasingly, there is found in our lives the glorious virtues seen in the heavenly bride, the New Jerusalem.

In our passage, Luke 3:1-5, we have seen that the valley will stand for depression, discouragement and all such attitudes. If we allow life circumstances to overwhelm us, we become discouraged and are not able to give ourselves to times of devotion and fellowship with God. That is the valley condition. It will be filled with strength and hope when the heart is turned to God in steadfast faith. Faith is nourished in the environment of God's word and Spirit. We come to this means of grace as we seek Him in prayers and worship being careful to submit to His lordship in all things.

Depressions, fears, worries, are more a mark of the carnal minded than of the spiritual. It is when the believer does not see or understand God

clearly that he lives in depression. What the carnal mind focuses upon may be factual, drawn from witnesses of the five senses. However, the report of the word of God transcends the witness of the senses. Worry and fears are spiritually filthy things that must be cleansed from our hearts. An individual that allows the Lord to carry out in him a whole lot of cleansing and purification inevitably has a life of faith that is robust.

He says "*fear thou not for I am with thee, be not dismayed for I am thy God*" (Isaiah 41:10). When we fear, we are saying in effect that He is not our God. When we live in discouragement and despondency, we are saying the Lord is not with us.

So, every valley shall be filled. If the Lord's people are going to concentrate on the things that belong to their perfection, they must learn not to give their strength to brooding over some misfortunes or hard circumstances. They are rather required to lift up their hearts unto the Lord in faith. And the Lord who desires them to come to Him in this manner will fill their valleys.

Next he says; *every mountain shall be brought low*. The mountain either of difficulties or of pride may obscure the things of God or hinder our having a proper view of God. We are into serious business with the Lord when we understand that He must have His way in our lives. There is no way other than what is presented to us in our passage (Luke 3:1-5). Do we desire to be the lamb's wife, the holy city? Then God's street must be built for the city to appear ultimately in us.

What has been said in the foregoing may be easily deduced from a faithful consideration of the divine thought expressed in Isaiah 62:8-12. In the Lord's economy, it takes the street of the Lord to be in place for the city of God to be constructed. **FIRST A STREET, THEN A CITY.**

So, we are told every mountain and every hill shall be brought low. And the crooked places shall be made straight. Ordinarily, something crooked (a crooked way) is difficult to traverse. The reference is to dishonesty, pretentious living, and hypocrisy. And sometimes when you look at some believers, you may not be able to tell where they are heading for. While one footstep is pointing to the east, the other seem pointed to the north. You cannot tell where they are going by looking at

the footprints. The Lord will have us maintain a holy attitude, a pure spirit in following him. It would then be clear to us and to others what our tomorrow would be. So it says the crooked places shall be made straight. This agrees with what is said of the street of the holy city. It is as transparent glass (Revelation 21:21). You can see through. A believer who is upright, sincere and properly focused in his walk with God is a delight. Looking at his life, you can see the government of God and the rule of heaven. Dishonesty is a mark of the beast, not of the believer in Christ Jesus.

And he says the rough places shall be made smooth. A rough personality is inimical to gospel interest. Spirituality is all about developing a smooth personality. Men on a spiritual pilgrimage to the celestial city have enough hassles to cope with in the world. They would be better assisted when they meet with fellow pilgrims endowed with such graces of the spirit as are indicated in Colossians 3:10-17. Distemper, quick-temper, fierce anger, aggressive temperament are rough attributes. And of course these are things that combine to give domineering posture to an individual. You know, when we have rough edges, people cannot come to us or else they are pricked. In preparing the way of the Lord, we need to make the rough places smooth. A smooth personality is one over whom Jesus is Lord. Such is taking on the sweet, lamb-like nature of our Redeemer. So, that is the street of gold.

It is a street in as much as we travel thereon to meet with the Lord and God journeys thereon to meet with us. The Lord's way leads on to divinity. Will you crystallise the divine nature; then you must walk in the footsteps of Jesus. We must walk as he walked. We must follow the narrow way that leads to life.

What this narrow way means in essence warrants a further study. For our present purpose, we consider the foregoing adequate. Now let's get introduced to the other kind of street.

You will recall in the reading of Mathew 7:13, we are told that broad is the way that leads to destruction. Many persons are travelling along that way. Let us turn to Revelation 11:8 and Revelation 20:9. In the second passage, it is said of certain persons that they went up the breadth of the



earth. The phrase “*breadth of the earth*” is misleading since the original Greek word carries the idea of a street. They went on “*the street of the earth*”. So, there is a “*street of the earth*”, and then there is a “*street of heaven*”.

Men still in flesh and blood can choose one or the other of these two streets to travel upon. As a man lays his bed so he shall lie on it. Cast in the heart of man is some kind of street. As he becomes more and more consistent in the way he lives his life, it becomes evident what kind of street is in the making. A street of mud or street of gold, on which of these is your journeying?

Now come with me to Revelation 11:8. We are told that certain dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city. What is the great city? The great city is Babylon. Greatness is something that is behind much of what is done in the city of man. Babylonian set-ups are always described by the word “*great*”. In contrast what things motivate the Lord’s people in their devotion and service is such that please God. Men who love Him desire to be holy even as he is holy. “*Holiness becometh thy house O Lord my God*” is a familiar phrase in the Psalms. They are satisfied with whatever gives God pleasure. God makes them holy; they become of that holy city.

Sodom and Egypt in history are known for lewdness and every thing vile. The city called great is characterised by moral depravity. Unrestrained passion and evil lust thrive in such an environment. The street of earth, of the great city is laid upon the foundations of sin and uncleanness. Men are grown in the works of the flesh and excusing in them the vilest affection. The sad thing about this situation as set forth in our passage is that it is all happening in the street of religion. Those described once had their beginning in God.

The warnings in scriptures are mainly addressed to the Lord’s people. A noble vine may degenerate into something wild. In Jeremiah’s day he had to contend with the spiritual declension of the children of Israel. Things got so bad that the Lord sacked that entire nation, sending them to captivity. These things are written for our admonition. And in Revelation 18, the possibility of a whole lot of deviation from the way of

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truth is again brought before our view. This calls for continuous self-examination. Let us read the first four verses.

*And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power: and the earth was lighted with his glory.*

*And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.*

*For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies*

*And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*

A careful study of these four verses will reveal Babylon as the ultimate end of a course of unfaithfulness. A congregation of people once of the Lord may degenerate to what is here called Babylon. *It becomes a habitation of devils, and a hold of every foul spirit and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.*

Quite often, failures are blamed upon Satan, devils and demons. But the truth is that except there is found in a person's life the things that attract the activities of these evil entities, they never find an entrance. And that is why the key to true deliverance is repenting from those things that provide an entrance to evil spirits. So, there is no where in scriptures that God blames the devil for the fall of any individual.

When he rebukes and judge sin, God does so showing that the individuals themselves have say in the matter. They could possibly deliver themselves from the ugly situation. So, to say that this great city has these characteristics is to say that those travelling on the street of this great city also have certain character traits that attract these demonic

spirits. Galatians 5:19-21 lists character traits which when found in an individual pictures him as travelling on the street of the great city, the broad way that leads to destruction.

The Bible says “*there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof is destruction*”. And, remember the emphasis in all of these meditations is that there is a word the Lord is speaking to his people. We are called, saved, washed, cleansed from our sins and his Spirit comes to dwell in us. But if in the passage of time any gives up the life of following after God, allowing the growth in him of moral vices he is assuredly travelling on this “*street of the great city*”.

Now let's turn to Galatians 5:19-21.

*Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, emulation, wrath, strife, sedition, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, revelling, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*

So, these character traits found in part or wholly in an individual identify him as travelling on the street of the great city. We have taken this discussion in a simplified manner, and the question you and I need to answer is “*what street are you and I travelling on?*” Are we travelling on the street of gold, clear as crystal, transparent as glass, or are we travelling on the street of the great city, the broad way that leads to destruction? May the Lord help us to answer appropriately. The journey on the one leads to life while the journey on the other leads to destruction.

In closing, we shall identify the things which, if found in the believer, shows him as preparing always to walk in and along the street of pure gold. We can call walking in the narrow way a life of consecration. What is consecration? Mathew 16:24 calls us to a life of consecration. There are two elements involved in the life of consecration. There, it says, “*except a man denies himself and take up his cross and follow me, he is not worthy of me*”. So, negatively, the life of consecration requires

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a man to practice self-denial. And positively, the life of consecration requires a man to *follow the lamb whithersoever he goeth*.

A full consideration of what the life of consecration entails is to be taken in another meditation. For now, it is sufficient to ask us, "*on what street are you travelling?*" "*on what street am I travelling?*". The Bible says "*God is not mocked for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting*".

May we allow the Spirit of the Lord to assist us choose the one and reject the other, to love righteousness and hate iniquity, and to follow on. It is narrow, not many persons are found on it, but the Lord our God shall help us. What seem to us to be narrow is from the divine standpoint, a street of gold. Before you come to that celestial glory, learn to travel on the pathway that accords to that glory, in Jesus name. Amen.

## THE TWO KINDS OF LAMBS

In this message, we shall be examining two kinds of lambs: the lamb upon mount Zion (Revelation 14:1-5) and the beast out of the earth, in the shape of a lamb (Revelation 13:11ff). Recall that from a heavenly viewpoint to which we were invited (Revelation 4:1), we are able to see two sets of contrasting pictures/imageries. They set forth two distinctive histories emerging from the same holy beginning. The seven typical churches were to feed these two streams according to the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of her members. The one in faithfulness moving on approvingly under God to more and more of His glory, and, the other in unfaithfulness, sliding down into more and more degeneration.

The first lamb we would be discussing in this message is that described as a beast out of the earth. This beast-lamb represents a body of persons who are members of the seven typical churches of Revelation 2 and 3 that did not hearken to the warnings of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the second part of this meditation, we would be looking at the second kind of lamb which according to Revelation 14:1 is seen standing upon mount Zion. A reading of this verse of scripture will show that a reference is made to other lambs in the same order. In Revelation 14:1, John said,

*“And I looked and lo, a lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand other lambs, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads”.*

The phrase ‘*other lambs*’ is read as included in that verse, because we are told these persons carry the father’s name upon their foreheads. Thus, we understand that if the principal figure Christ, is shown as a lamb, then, those who are arising in his image and likeness can also be pictured as lambs.

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So, we have two kinds of lambs, representing two distinct classes of persons who profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The characteristic difference between the two classes is related to the matter of faithfulness or unfaithfulness.

Our specific burden is to focus on the first of these two lambs with a view to calling us out of those things that answer to unfaithfulness. When any believer's life is x-rayed, there would be discovered things that are not approved in the sight of God. No one has attained to moral and spiritual perfection. Our path to victory, among other things, consists of rooting out of our members, things that answer to carnality (Colossians 3:1-5). It is when a believer is not living in response to the need to watch over his life daily that there develops in the course of time the things shown in Revelation 13:11-18.

In the language of prophecy, we said a beast represents a kingdom, and, when it is shown as springing out from the earth, in contrast to the sea, it speaks of a religious kingdom. In a sense, this religious kingdom can simply be called Christendom. Christendom as generally understood is a reference to the church world. Here, it is given the specific meaning of that arm of the church that is living in rebellion and disobedience to Christ. It is thoroughly organised and on the whole has all the characteristics of a kingdom. Christendom is set in opposition to the kingdom of Christ. The great irony is that the world of mankind is made to see this alternate kingdom as the kingdom of Christ. Christendom professes to be of Christ. The orthodox visible church systems have long gone into apostasy and in the main they pose no serious problem to the Spirit filled believer. There is however an arm of the alternate kingdom that more fittingly satisfy this imagery of the beast out of the earth. Evangelicalism and Pentecostalism in growing unfaithfulness is this beast out of the earth at this time of the end.

There is however a faithful house in our world receiving and bearing the marks of Christ. The prophet Ezekiel calls it a house within a house. The Lord commands His faithful servants to show the house to the house (Ezekiel 43:10). Obedience to this command may be seen as resulting to the series of messages being ministered through this medium to His people. All has not gone altogether sour among the Evangelical and

Pentecostal assemblies. We believe that quite a number of the Lord's people will hearken to the voice of His command and break free from all rebellion and treachery.

Now, we said that if the beast coming out of the sea (the unregenerate world of mankind) is political, then that which is coming out of the earth (the saved, but earthly minded believers) must be religious. Earth, in this context, talks of the earthly minded among them who claim to belong to God and have Christ as their Lord and saviour. When a congregation of the Lord's people give themselves over to more and more of carnality, a system of things develop even in their religious services that agree with this description.

The beast coming out of the earth is said to have two horns. Horns in scriptures speak of power. In the natural, any animal having horns develops this feature before its birth. It is an innate characteristic. In the operations of this beast out of the earth, the horns play a dominant role. What things in a church set-up may answer to the symbolism of '*horns*'? The word and the Spirit are these things. The Word has to do with the teachings that constitute the belief system of the people. The Spirit is here used of the powers of spiritual control at work among the people.

We are further told that although it is shaped like a lamb it speaks like a dragon. These church organisations have an outward carriage that is harmless. What could be more harmless than a lamb? Thickly set in their own ways but professing to be mouthpieces of the Lord Jesus Christ they resist violently any sustained attempt to call them back to the path of righteousness, truth and faithfulness. Like a dragon they ferociously attack servants of the truth who draw attention to their hypocrisies, treacheries, iniquities and rebellion. When not in that mood, they appear like a lamb. We shall look at this bit at a more appropriate time, possibly in volume 2 of this series.

We have observed that the symbolism of a beast stands for organisations and kingdoms. It also represents prominent persons within such set-ups. For example in Daniel 7:23, we are told that the four beasts shown in Daniel 7:3 represents four kingdoms. But in the 17<sup>th</sup> verse, it is noted that "*these great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise*

*out of the earth*". So, prominent persons in a bestial kingdom may also be regarded as symbolic beasts.

Now, the next thing we discover in Revelation 13 is that this beast coming out of the earth, shaped like a lamb having two horns, but speaking like a dragon, has power to work miracles. It increasingly patterns its activities after the first beast (the beast from the sea). Since the first beast is political, it means this beast from the earth in patterning its activities after the first beast will take on more and more secularity in its operations.

The Romanish church system is, for all intent and purpose, a secular institution with a strong religious character. In the ancient world, it was usual for sovereign states to assign to its kings the status of a deity. The kings were the heads of their religious institutions and custodians of their pagan beliefs and practices. Combining state functions with the religious the kings and their immediate lieutenants exercised authoritarian control over their subjects. The Evangelical and Pentecostal assemblies, when unfaithful, are fast gravitating into the same mould as their harlot mother church. Their leaders are little gods over their little kingdoms but with no less vicious power as expressed in the word, '*dragon*'.

In closing, we want to draw attention to the one prominent characteristic of this beast from the earth, something that stands out above others. More verses are given to that one characteristic above any other in Revelation 13. This has to do with the image of the beast. We are told that the number of his name is 666 which men receive on their right hand or upon their forehead. In volume 2 of this series, we will be able to look into this in details. Of course, there are many conjectures as to what this number of his name means and what the image of the beast or the mark of the beast means. We will be able to take all of that in the second volume.

Now we come to Revelation 14, the passage that details the characteristics of the second kind of Lamb (the true lamb). We will take the several characteristics in turns. It is said that the 144,000 other lambs are virgins. The reference is not to physical marriage. These lamb-like saints have virgin-heart purity towards the Lord. They are not involved



in mixed worship. They worship the living God alone. This is quite something of importance since in our day so many are busy bowing the knees to human gods, president/founders and general overseers. Many are ready today to abandon their own thinking and take on the whims and caprices of their reverend pastors. And it is exactly this same thing we are to do in relation to Christ that men do in relation to men.

Next, we are told "*these follow the lamb withersoever he goeth*". God has purposed that the out-workings of redemption should be secured in the Lord Jesus Christ. He it is who has the blue Print of the Father's plan. He carries out the Father's purpose from one stage to another. As sheep of His pasture we are simply required to be thoroughly focused on Him, following in His footsteps. What ever the Lord is doing at any time determines the devotions and labours of His people, more so His servants.

We are told that *no guile is found in their month and that they had the father's name written on their foreheads*. In the first part, it is observed that these footsteps-of-Christ followers are given to Truth. In practical terms this means that they do not handle the word of God deceitfully. They also speak the truth in all material and interpersonal relationships. In the second part, there is revealed that these saints of God are taking up the nature of the Father progressively until fully sealed with the same. Read Revelation 7:1-4. The mark sealed on the foreheads of the 144,000 is actually set forth in Revelation 14 as the Father's name. So, those lambs have their characteristic marks that identify them as being faithful and true.

We said that the mark of the beast is either upon the hands or upon the forehead. And here in Revelation 14, we find that the mark of the faithful lamb is also upon the forehead. We shall show by other scriptures that it is also upon the hands. What the mark of the beast is and what things relate to it shall be discussed under the subject heading '*THE MARK OF THE BEAST*'. It is sufficient for the present time to challenge us unto a faithful walk with God. We can be sure that in the spirit realm we would be seen as becoming more and more like Christ. May the Lord bless you richly, in Jesus name.

## THE TWO KINDS OF WOMEN

In this meditation, we will be looking into the topic: *The Two Kinds of Women*. Recall that for some time now, we have been taking our discussion from the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. And, we are doing so in proclaiming the message that Jesus Christ is sending to his Church today. The principles of the relevant truth abound in all scriptures.

Now, there are two main divisions in the book of Revelation. We have said that over and over again. The first division deals with the Lord's inspection of the seven representative churches. In Revelation 1:11, you will find that in the vision God gave to the apostle John, seven representative churches, symbolised in seven golden candlesticks were shown, with the Lord Jesus Christ walking in the midst of these candlesticks, speaking to them concerning their conditions. That is covered in Revelation 1, 2 and 3. And in verses 19 and 20 of Revelation 1, we are shown that the book of Revelation would consist of the things, which are, and the things, which shall be hereafter. This is a very important observation and should be noted very carefully.

In the very first verse of Revelation 4, we are introduced into the second division of the book of Revelation, that is, the things, which shall be hereafter. We are called up in the spirit to ascend to a heavenly position to see things, as they shall be. Things as they shall be drawn from a consideration of the warnings the Lord had given to the churches in Revelation 1, 2 and 3, and the response he was calling from them. Those who faithfully respond to his warnings and turn in repentance and submission to his will come to a heavenly course. While those who live their lives, ruling themselves and not giving attention to the warnings of the Lord Jesus Christ take on an earthly course that leads to shame and dishonour.

And, in the recent few editions, we have been comparing the two kinds of developments issuing from that same congregation of God's people.

And, we have looked at the two kinds of cities, the two kinds of lambs and the two kinds of streets. In this meditation, we will be taking two kinds of women. Our consideration will be drawn from Revelation 12, for there we find the first kind of woman. She follows a faithful course, a life of repentance, and obedience to the Lord's call and warnings and receiving help from the Lord takes on a heavenly course. The second woman, the unfaithful woman is given to us in Revelation 17.

In this meditation, we will dwell measurably on the faithful woman. This will enable us to see things in clear perspective. Revelation 12: 1-5.

*And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:*

*And she being with child cries, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.*

*And there appeared another wonders in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.*

*And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.*

*And she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up to God, and to his throne.*

We begin our meditation by asking who this woman is. We begin to answer this by taking note of what this woman does not represent, so that we can better appreciate what she stands for in these scriptures.

First, it is generally believed that this woman is Mary. The consideration taken for this position is in verse 5. Verse 5 says "...and she brought forth a man child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron, and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne". Thus, identifying this child to be Jesus, it is commonly believed that the woman who gave birth

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to him must be Mary, the Virgin Mary, the Mary mentioned in the gospel as the wife of Joseph.

This will not be true, for, we know that Mary was a virgin and had not had any child prior to the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ (the human Jesus). But, in the seventeenth verse of this chapter, we are told that his woman in question had given birth to many children before the birthing of this man-child. Thus, the woman cannot be Mary. Let us read Revelation 12:17:

*And the dragon was wroth with the woman (that is the woman who brought forth the man-child), and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of god, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

So, here, we find that the woman have had many children before. “*The remnant of her seed*” means “*the remaining of her children*”. Thus, without doubt, we know the woman cannot be Mary.

Now, some suppose that this woman must be speaking of the fleshly Israel. And that since Jesus Christ came of the tribe of Judah, he is of Israel. Therefore, the woman is said to be a composite woman and stands for the church of the Old Testament. Again, this can be faulted, in two counts. First, we know that, the Lord Jesus Christ was the one who established the new covenant. We are told that the woman is standing upon the moon and clothed with the sun. The sun represents the New Testament in its capacity to give life to the Lord’s people when the Holy Spirit quickens it. Again, you will recall that Jesus Christ appeared to John the apostle in the isles of Patmos, about AD 95. And he was to write the things which were and the things which shall be hereafter, that is, things that were future to that date. If you will turn with me to Revelation 4, we will read what we have referred to several times in this edition. Revelation 4: 1

*After this I looked ...*

After what, one may ask? It is after events in the letters that the Lord Jesus Christ caused John to write to the seven churches have transpired. In that first episode, the Lord was concerned with discussing with John the failures, weaknesses or strength of those congregations that represented all of the Lord's people who were then physically alive. So, he says *after these, 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.*

So, from chapter 4 to the end of the book of Revelation, all the things that were shown were thing future to AD 95. For we know that the birthing of the man-child is something that takes place much later. That is important.

Now, let us go back to Revelation 12. If this woman is not Israel and she is not Mary, how do we explain verse 5, for verse 5 has an obvious reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. And, we answer in the affirmative that the man-child stands for Christ, but not Christ the head, but Christ the body. All scriptures speaks of Christ, for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy (Revelation 19:10) "*Ye search the scripture, for in them ye think you have eternal life, but they are they which testify of me*". (John 5:39). So, all scriptures speaks of Christ the head primarily, and then Christ the body.

Now, if you will turn with me to Revelation 2, you will find that the promise of rulership over the nations in the age to come is also made to the church. Revelation 2: 24-27.

*But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.*

*But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.*

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*And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:*

*And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.*

Notice the way verse 27 ends, "...even as I received of my Father". So Christ has this position of being the head over the kingdom of heaven. But those who overcome, who are brought into full grown Sonship, who have a part in the kingdom that is to be revealed, shall share with him in that ruler-ship function. So, verse 5 of Revelation 12 speaks of Christ, but not Christ the head, but Christ the body, those in the church who overcome and is brought into full union with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, let us come back to the matter of who this woman is. You will notice that at the beginning, we said that the Lord was interested in showing the apostle John, the future of those evil tendencies in his people when they are fully developed. He was saying to them several times in those seven letters, "*repent, repent from those things that are evil, a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, if you do not repent, this is the way things will be hereafter*". So the visible church systems, since John's day broke into two contrasting lines, the faithful taking on such characteristics we saw of the true city and of the true lamb. You will also find that the unfaithful becomes as the great city (Revelation 11:8) the street of the earth, and now the harlot woman (Revelation 17).

So, we are looking at two kinds of women, the one in Revelation 12, the faithful woman and the other in Revelation 17, and the harlot woman.

Now, let us come to the first five verses of Revelation 12 and attempt to give an exposition.

*And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.*

Now, this woman stands for the church. Somebody may ask, “*if this woman stand for the church, how then can we understand verse 17 which showed that the woman had given birth to some children prior to the birth of the of the man-child?*” We would answer that fully when discussing the characteristics of the seed, the triumphant seed that comes to the estate of the man-child, you will get an understanding. But, let us first agree that in scriptures that the woman is sometimes used to symbolise the church. Both man and woman are sometimes used to symbolise the church, but the woman as a symbol for the church is the more commonly understood figure. In Isaiah 54 for example, we are told “*Break forth O barren, thou that did not bear*”, and the seventeen verses of the chapter discusses things that pertain to the church in a prophetic language. In Ephesians 5, that is also very clear. The church is set forth as a woman in relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, she as bride and the Lord as bridegroom. In the closing verses of that chapter Paul tells us this is a mystery, Paul was teaching on the relationship between a man and his wife and ended up by saying “*this is a mystery, but I speak concerning the church and Christ*”.

So, we notice further that this woman was said to be pregnant. What made this woman pregnant? You will recall (*see Language of Prophecy*) that the moon, if the context so allows, is the word of God quickened to the understanding of the believer by the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The sun speaks of Christ as the living Word ministering and imparting life to the church. Galatians 4 helps us to know what makes this woman pregnant. Taking the history of Abraham, we are told that Abraham had two wives, the one was Sarah the rightful wife, and the other was Hagar. We are told that Abraham had a child of Hagar by the flesh. Hagar had Ishmael in the power of the flesh. It was a biological seed. But something curious was said of Sarah. It was said that Sarah gave birth to Isaac by the promise. Isaac was said to be a child of the promise. The ministration of the promises of the scripture, gives to church a burden for that which is indicated. This may be compared with a woman receiving seed in pregnancy. Now, the Lord makes us to see something of His will, as the promises are ministered. When we understand and desire them, we begin to long for their fulfilment in our lives. Consequently, we are pregnant with something. And, as we continue to seek the face of

the Lord and ponder over these promises, there comes a time when the pregnancy is fully developed and comes to full term.

Now, you will recall that in Christ's letters to the seven churches, certain promises are made. They are things that the Lord Jesus Christ was relying upon to secure an obedient response from His people. By deriving strength from these promises, the people were expected to break free from the things that were contrary to God. Later, we shall be able to talk more on these promises. We shall then be better positioned to understand what is meant here that the woman being with child travailing in birth and pained to be delivered. But these promises were made by Christ to provoke the listeners unto a faithful response. The promises do not speak of what we will receive when we go to heaven, when we share in the celestial glory of the Almighty God. Rather, the promises are indicative of things that the Lord will build into his people as they grow up into the fullness of Christ. With the seventh promise exempted, all others are to be fulfilled in the believer on this side of our walk with God, before we come into the fullness of life in him.

For example, the first promise says "to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God". The sixth promise says, "he that overcometh I will make a pillar in the temple of my God, he will no longer go out and I will write upon him the name of the city of my God which is New Jerusalem and I will write upon him my new name". Of course, we notice that in Revelation 14, that promise is fulfilled for the 144,000 other lambs that stand with the principal lamb (the Lord Jesus Christ) on mount Zion.

So, the promises are the things that provoke the woman to seek the Lord for a new life, a new level of grace and walk with him indicated in the promises.

We will be closing with what we promised we would do. What are the characteristics of the seed? In Genesis 22, a promise is made to Abraham. It is made to Abraham and his seed. Galatians 3:6 assures us that that seed is Christ. And verse 29 of the same chapter says it is Christ the head and Christ the body. It says, "if we be Abraham's seed, then we have put on Christ. What will be fulfilled, what will be worked into the



overcoming church when fully fulfilled in the believer makes him an overcomer. And, no power on earth, underneath the earth or anywhere can overcome such a one.

So, let us turn to Genesis 22. The reason why the remnant of the seed was messed up by the dragon was because they did not develop all of these characteristics to their full estate. Although they moved in the power, grace and glory of God, nevertheless, they fall short of that man-child life revealed in Revelation 12:5. So, come with me to Genesis 22:16.

*By myself have I sworn saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:*

*That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;*

*And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.*

There are three distinct characteristics when fully worked into the believer make him as a seed of Christ indeed, a full-grown seed. And, we just quickly name these three

- (1) First, the seed shall be as the stars of heaven and of the sand upon (not in the sea, but upon) the seashore, overcoming certain things.
- (2) The seed is to possess the gates of their enemies. Thus, it is a fighting and triumphant seed.
- (3) In the seed, all nations of the earth are to be blessed. It is a seed receiving capacity to minister the life of God unto others, bringing salvation, deliverance, healing etc.

These three characteristics, when fully developed in a people make them overcomers. Not one, not two, but all three. One of the weaknesses of

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the remnant of the woman's seed discussed in Revelation 12:17 is that they did not develop all three characteristics to their fullness.

The Lord bless you, the Lord cause his face to shine upon you. You can consider this meditation as just an introduction to Revelation 12. As the Lord leads us, we will take in fuller details several aspects of the message in this chapter. The Lord keeps you, in Jesus name. Amen.

## A WIFE GOING ASIDE

In this message, we will be continuing our discussion on two kinds of women, under the topic: *A Wife Going Aside*. This phrase – *a wife going aside* is found in Numbers 5:12-21. Accordingly, we will be reading three or four verses from Numbers 5, taking them as our starting text.

*And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man's wife go aside, and commit a trespass against him.*

*And a man lie with her carnally, and it be hid from the eyes of husband and be kept close, and she be defiled, and there be no witness against her, neither she be taken with the manner:*

*And the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled: or if the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of wife, and she be not defiled:*

*Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest ....*  
Numbers 5:11-15a.

Now, this is a provision in the Old Testament concerning the institution of marriage. It relates to the sanctity of the matrimonial bed. A woman (and the man also) takes certain vows as she enters into wedlock with her spouse. Essentially, it is a religious rite prescribed by the Lord through the instrumentality of Moses, used in ascertaining the fidelity or otherwise of a woman. It is used when for some reason the husband of the woman is in doubt of her faithfulness. It is interesting to note that this religious rite was used in Israel for over 2,500 years. The entire passage is interesting and it would be profitable for the reader to go through it once or twice. That will be sufficient to familiarise yourself with all the provisions. In another connection, we will be able to take an exposition of all verses beginning from the 11<sup>th</sup> verse of Numbers 5.

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But, for our present purpose, one or two things would be observed from a consideration of this passage.

In verse 29 of Numbers 5, we are told explicitly that this religious rite as described in the upper verses constitutes the law of jealousy. When a wife goes aside to another other than her husband there is a divine witness attesting to this. The woman's belly swells and her thighs shrink. What an unsightly figure she becomes! There is much to be seen in the judgements of the unfaithful woman. They have a strong bearing to what results in the judgement of an unfaithful ecclesia.

Let us look at this briefly. Three things happened to the guilty woman. Her belly swells, her thighs shrink and she becomes a curse among her people. The woman that is not guilty is given a special capacity to conceive seed and bring forth children.

It is important to note that this religious rite is administered on a woman only when the spirit of jealousy comes upon the husband, whether or not the wife is defiled. The true state of affairs comes out at the completion of the ceremony. It is even more curious to observe that in the case of an unfaithful wife, if the spirit of jealousy does not come upon the husband, he is accounted as sharing in the guilt of the wife. But if he is sensitive enough to feel uncomfortable about the wife he is approved even when the religious rite does not confirm her guilty. In this case, God would bless both man and wife. This looks a little bit queer, but we know and understand that all scriptures point to the Lord Jesus Christ. And this passage faithfully used by husbands year after year, for 2,500 years, actually points to Christ and the church. For we know that the relationship between Christ and the church is set forth in the scriptures under the figure of marriage. And, whatever we find here has a prophetic undertone.

Now, we will link up what we have been reading so far to the provisions in the book of Revelation. Our burden is to have an introductory consideration of the harlot woman of Revelation 17. It can be demonstrated that the book of Numbers has a special relation to the book of Revelation. And, of course, many persons are quite familiar with this situation. For examples the books of Joshua and Ephesians enjoy the

same relationship. Joshua 1:3 says ... *withersoever the soles of your feet shall tread upon, that have I given unto you for an inheritance...* That is the counterpart of Ephesians 1:3 ... *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who has blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.* There is thus a human responsibility involved in the enjoyment of these spiritual blessings as may be inferred from a consideration of Joshua 1:3.

Coming back to the main stream of our meditation, we are saying the book of Numbers has a special relationship with the book of Revelation. We are shown here that the Lord Jesus Christ takes special interest in those congregations that profess to have a relationship with him. He will test them for faithfulness now and again. He will do so, whether these assemblies are faithful or not. Note this carefully.

You will recall that in a previous meditation we examined the faithful wife. We looked at Revelation 12 as detailing a later development among the faithful class of believers. Revelations 17 does the same but showing the future state of unfaithful assemblies. What is interesting is that the persons who find themselves in either one or the other of these two classes were once in the same assemblies. As the tares are separated from the wheat, in the process of time, the tares are left in denominational bundles. The wheat class is assisted to come into the privileges and glories of the sign-woman of Revelation 12.

Now, our emphasis in the main is on *a wife going aside*. In what respect is this woman going aside? Or putting it more correctly, what things constitute the going aside of the woman? This composite figurative woman is said to be in relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

We answer (the above questions), by drawing our attention to the things we observed the penultimate chapter. In considering Revelation 12, we said that woman came to the exalted position as the seven great promises were being gradually fulfilled towards her. So then, we see the several elements in the glory of the sign-woman of Revelation 12 as contained in the seven great promises of Revelations 2 and 3.

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Taking a cue from this, it can be demonstrated that the infamy or shameful estate of the woman of Revelation 17 has its constituting elements in the things condemned by the Lord Jesus Christ in the letters to the churches.

Let us attempt to look more closely at these letters, focussing our attention on what is condemned. In the very first letter, at the 4<sup>th</sup> verse, we see Jesus saying to the woman, or the church in Ephesus:

*...Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love ...*

So, the first mark of unfaithfulness in the wife going aside is that she left her first love. We are not told that the woman lost her first love, but she left it. That is, there was loss of focus. She allowed herself to be distracted by other things that seemed to captivate her heart. This typical church is seen in busy activities. So much is commended in her zeal for outward service. But she has come to be doing these things routinely. Christian service is motivated by love. Heart affections are of great value in the sight of God. Probably, we should read the preceding two verses to help our understanding:

*...I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:*

*And hast borne, and hast patience and for my name's sake hast laboured, and has not fainted. Revelation 2:2-3*

Such were the credentials of this church in Ephesus. But she had deviated from the source-spring of all true service unto God. True devotion unto Christ, the place of personal devotion, was abandoned. The use of those instruments of devotion that the word of God reveals was not given special attention. They were busy involving themselves in some service but they did not know that the first important consideration in our walk with God is that we should have vital fellowship with him.

In Mark 3:12-15, we find Jesus selecting the twelve Apostles. The Lord's first objective for these men is *that they might be with him*. Even in the natural setting, a woman can be so hardworking in the home, and yet be lacking in the things that pertains to true companionship with the husband. Devotions to Christ rate higher than outward service. Salvation is first and foremost designed to meet the needs of God. He desires our fellowship and dwells in our worship. This then is the first duty of love. When the church is not properly focused upon Christ it may result in placing too little premium on ministering to the Father's pleasure in worship and fellowship. So this woman goes aside first in not being focussed on her husband. Something has distracted her. Some other things have taken her attention from the love of her husband.

Next, we go to the letter to the church in Pergamum. There we find two elements that we might use to discuss the issue of the wife going aside:

*...But I have a few things against thee because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. Revelation 2:24.*

Now, Balaam is a figure we are all familiar with. He taught or serves the Lord in the aspect of teaching or prophesying. But he does this for filthy gain. Both Peter and Jude addressed this matter in their epistles. That is, he laboured only where there is cash to pay for his services. And, we were told that even though he had awareness that God would not have him curse the children of Israel, because of lust for money, he taught Balak to cast a stumbling block on the path of the children of Israel. Applying this to our present meditation, we can say that this woman is found going aside in the matter of being distracted toward covetousness. In Colossians 3:5, covetousness is taken as idolatry. And we are told in Revelation 2 that Balaam taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel. It was to cause them to eat food sacrificed to idols and commit fornication. Idolatry is one area where the wife goes aside from the husband. Her heart is drawn away from the Lord because of covetousness. From experience, we know that when a believer is properly focussed upon Christ, he is sensitive to things cropping up in his

life that are evil. There is a work of the indwelling Spirit of Christ in this regard. Before things get out of the way, the Spirit of God witnesses it to the believer who has become acquainted with the voice of God.

When devotion is entered into under a sense of duty, and we do not wait long to come into real fellowship with the Lord, it is sure that the inward counsel of the Lord will not be discerned. When things are done from a merely religious viewpoint, then there can be no increase of Christ's consciousness, no increase of Christ's life within. And we know that, once our heart is turned towards God, we begin to enjoy those ministrations from the Spirit of God. So, in this element, the wife goes aside in the matter of covetousness, drawn to materialism, because of some perceived gains that she might get from it. This brings us to the next situation.

The third issue is committing fornication. The reference is to worldliness manifesting itself in unholy ties. We know that James says that ... *ye adulterers and adulteresses know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God...*? (James 4:4). And the sixth verse says that *don't you know that the spirit within you lusteth unto envy?* This reminds us of what we find in Numbers 5 ... *And if the spirit of jealousy comes upon the husband ...* Now, there can be devotions towards things, towards persons which ought to be exclusively reserved for Christ. Even in the natural, if a woman's heart is unusually drawn to another man, it provokes jealousy. If we go to the letter written to the church in Thyatira, there again we find this same thing under the figure of Jezebel. We are told that, that church (in Thyatira) was lured into committing fornication and eating food sacrificed unto idols by the whorish activities of that woman Jezebel.

That seems to go just the same way the letter to the church in Pergamum goes, but there is a difference. The difference is this. In the case of Balaam, we go to the New Testament to know what the Lord is pointing out, while in the case of Thyatira, under the figure of Jezebel, we go back to the Old Testament to see what the Spirit of the Lord is witnessing against. Here it is unholy ties and mixed worship. God wants to emphasise. Some servants of God, unusually blessed by the Lord's presence, get carried away. They turn themselves to demigods, and



make the people of God to worship them. Remember that Jesus said through the prophet Isaiah that He would not share His glory with another (Isaiah 42:8). So, in the matter of whom she reverences and worships, the wife could go aside. And, even in the natural, when a woman tends to give so much reverence to another, while at the same time she neglects to do her duties unto her husband, it is a mark of gross infidelity.

We will take the next thoughts and then bring this meditation to an end. The letter to the church in Sardis points to something that the Lord condemns. Let us read the first two verses to illustrate what in this passage answer to the wife going aside.

*...And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Revelation 3:1-2*

So, *dead formalism* is another indication that the wife is going aside. And again, we know that in a natural marriage, either viewed from the man's or the wife's perspective, it is the same. A man may give his wife all that she seems to need of physical things but starve her of love and companionship. The woman will certainly know that some thing is wrong, because the husband's affections are stayed from her.

In the same way the church in Sardis was given to too much labour but just little or nothing of real firepower. So, here it says, "*you have a name that you are living but you are actually dead*". The church services of many assemblies are cold and formal. It is some times so superficial that it will be safe to call it mere drama. Things are said and done with no real meaning. Nothing goes deep yet there is so much noise and funfair. Even in the natural, such things can be found in the home. A very careful observation may easily detect the superficial in a relationship. The woman seems to be about her duties, taking care of the children, doing this and that, but somewhere along the line, something is wrong. We are bound to crystallise the manifest presence of God in our church

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meetings. This is achieved through recourse to prayers and worship. Once our personal altar, our one-to-God fellowship suffers a loss, the effect is seen, not only in our character, but also in our services.

Last, in the letter to the church in Laodicea, we can find yet another element of the wife going aside. In the 15th - 17th verses of Revelation 3, we read the following words:

*...I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.*

*So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.*

*Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:*

...

Here is a reference to the fact that a wife can go aside in matters that pertain to false values. This church is quite conscious of her wealth and she thinks she no longer stand in need of any supplies from Christ. She said "*I am rich, increased with goods and have need of nothing*". Many get pompous and vain when they come to wealth. We know that whatever we see in the natural has its spiritual counterpart. The situation of the church in Laodicea is common place today.

Recall that we are told in Numbers 5 that the guilty woman will have a swollen stomach. That is, the excesses of such a church will be so evident even to the unbelieving public. Her sins and evil ways would become so obvious that all may see it. Many assemblies today are so out of place that even the unsaved know they have run out of acceptance with God. It says, the stomach will get swollen, and the thighs will shrink, and the woman will be a curse among her people.

Now, what we have simply done is to assist us to know that whatever the Lord will do in our day it is foreshadowed in some Old Testament scriptures. Just like the Hebrew may be constrained by the spirit of jealousy to drag his wife to the priest so the greater-than-man, our

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heavenly Bridegroom, will do with the churches. Any assembly of people professing to be serving Christ will not miss divine attention.

Just like the Hebrew man, moved by jealousy caused the wife to be inspected, so Jesus Christ is carrying out a divine inspection of all assemblies that go by His name. We all need to take out time to carry out self-examination now and again. There is a call to repentance that the Lord is sounding to all that have ear to hear Him. It is particularly disturbing that many assemblies pay no attention whatsoever to their condition. There is a need to go periodically before the Lord not only as individuals but also corporately. We would find the seven letters of Revelation chapters 2 and 3 very useful. In the mirror of these letters God's people are always made able to see their true state.

May the Lord burden His people further to give full attention to this important matter of habitually judging themselves in the light of the scriptures. May the Lord richly bless you, Amen.

## THE LADY OF THE KINGS

We will be taking a further meditation on the two kinds of women under the topic: The Lady of the Kings. ‘*The Lady of the Kings*’ is a phrase coined from a prophetic passage of scriptures found in Isaiah 47:5-9. It says,

*“Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called, THE LADY OF KINGDOMS.*

*I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand: thou didst show them no mercy; upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke.*

*And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it.*

*Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children:*

*But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceress, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments.*

Our main text is taken from Revelation 17 a passage of scripture that is somewhat parallel to that in Isaiah 47. It is to be remembered that every subject matter in scripture is examined by at least two or three writers. At the mouth of two or three witnesses, let every word be confirmed, Moses was inspired to say in Deuteronomy 17:6. Remember, we are talking about two kinds of women, the one who is faithful found in

Revelation 12, and the other, the unfaithful, harlot woman discussed in Revelation 17. We shall be concentrating however on the second. Under the topic “*The Lady of the Kings*”, we shall look into this mysterious woman. The change in phrasing from “*The Lady of Kingdoms*” to “*The Lady of the Kings*” is informed by the New Testament treatment of the subject, as we shall see later. Revelation 17:1-5 read as follows

*And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgement of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:*

*With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.*

*So he carried me away in the spirit into a wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.*

*And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:*

*And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.*

*... And here is the mind that has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sits. Rev 17:1-5.*

Now, sometimes in scriptures, the same word in the original language is translated by several words in the English Language, depending on the context. The word translated “*Kingdom*” in Isaiah 47:5, is in the Greek language “*Basilea*”. And, *Basilea* may be translated “*Kingdom*” or “*Kingdoms*”. It could also be rendered as “*King*” or “*Kings*”, and the reference could also be to the subject of the kingdom. So, the

geographical area in which the reign of a king is felt can be referred to as kingdom. Then, the subjects of the king together with the king can also be referred to as kingdom, and finally, the king can also be referred to as kingdom. So, from the one word “*Basilea*”, we have three levels of interpretation. In titling this message: *The Lady of the Kings*, we want to emphasize one element in the harlotry of this woman that stands above all others, particularly in our times. So, she is known as the lady of the kingdoms, the lady of the kings.

Recall that in the last Chapter we examined “*a wife going aside*”. The church of Jesus Christ is often set forth in scriptures as being the bride of Christ. In Ephesians 5 the church is seen as the wife of Christ. Maintaining the metaphor of the home, the unfaithfulness of the church to Christ is spiritual adultery. In the context of Numbers 5, we see the woman still in the home of her husband, having certain suspicious traits. The spirit of jealousy comes upon the husband and he begins the process of determining whether or not what is suspected is indeed infidelity. That was a middle-of-the-road position. From such an estate, that woman may be recovered.

But, the situation we meet in Revelation 17 is terminal, fully developed unfaithfulness that is incurable. This woman (in Revelation 17) has been thrown out of the house of her husband. The court had been sitting, and, the final judgement had been delivered. Recall to mind what is found in Revelation 17:1

*... And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, come hither I will shew unto thee the judgement of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters...*

So, the woman is here shown to have a judgmental sentence placed on her. The charges are not just being read, rather the charges have been established to be true, and, the judgements have been pronounced upon her. Actually, this passage goes through to the last verse, and, the subject matter is continued in Revelation 18.

Now, what are the things that this woman has been charged with, and how do we understand them in the light of Christendom, the church systems of our day?

First, we are told in verse 2 that this woman that sit upon many waters is one with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication. You will recall that fornication in spiritual symbolism simply means unholy ties. Why has this woman suddenly come into so much ties with the kings of the earth? Who are the kings of the earth with whom this woman has committed fornication? And, we answer straightforwardly that the term "*the kings of the earth*" is not primarily a reference to monarchical kings, (that is monarchies, political or traditional rulers of the present world). The term may include these (as there is so much of unholy romance between the church and the state). However, the primary reference is to financial kings.

This lady in her great lust for money courts the favour of anyone that has money. We know that the church systems today have built up much of its operations upon greed and avarice. As may be expected, the doctrines of these harlot church systems place great premium on money. That brings us to what is said in Revelation 17:9.

We are told in the ninth verse that the woman is sitting upon seven mountains. If we read verse 9 in the light of Micah 4 and Isaiah 2, mountains stand for ecclesiastical kingdoms. By transference of figure, the main doctrines on which these kingdoms are founded and built may be symbolically called mountains. Thus we are to understand that seven principal doctrines found and feed this kingdom of the harlot woman.

Let us take it more deliberately so as to have a clear understanding of the issues before us. Now, in verse 5, it is noted that this woman is the mother of harlots. That is, it is not just one church system that has this mark of harlotry but several. And each of these church harlot systems has at least one doctrine on which her erroneous practices are founded. Quite often the said doctrine or doctrines are a perversion of the doctrine of Christ. On the whole, there are seven erroneous doctrines or mountains on which the harlot systems are built.

The first of these perverted doctrines is the doctrine of tithe and offerings. Now, the word of God provides for the Lord's people to contribute willingly and abundantly to the proclamation of the gospel. And, Christ's teaching is quite clear on the principles of giving. In Matthew 6, for example, he talks about giving, praying and fasting, three practical issues that all believers must be involved in. But, we know that the doctrine of giving has been so perverted that the whole visible church systems, possibly with exception of a few, are hooked up to false emphasis that makes legitimate an unbridled lust for money.

Hosea is a book written to show God's love for a people who are regarded as his wife. Israel was Jehovah's wife. Isaiah 54:5 shows that clearly when it says of Israel, "*For Thy Maker is thy husband*". In Hosea, we are told that the prophet was to marry a woman given to harlotry in order to illustrate by his own life the experience that Jehovah was having with Israel. In the second chapter of Hosea 2, there, we find Israel under the figure of a woman, saying that, "*I will go after my lovers*". Note that the word "*lovers*" is in the plural form, ... *I will go after my lovers*. According to this passage, this odd decision was informed by her unbridled lust for money that was to be satisfied by these several husbands.

We know that the churches today have done so much havoc to the testimony of Christ by how she carries on in this matter of money. And so, anyone, any prominent name (a financial king) in the city of Benin, and in other cities of our country, will certainly have received from time to time invitation for a special Launching, or annual thanksgiving, or harvest etc. Should a financial king be successfully lured to stay back as a member after one such special occasion, he would undoubtedly be ordained a deacon or an elder within just three weeks. The title is used to entice him/her in order that they might continue to receive abundantly of his/her supplies. What a shame!

So, in the matter of money and in the perverted teachings on giving, we find a telling characteristic of this woman. The lust for money and the erroneous doctrinal backing is a mountain on which the harlot church system builds its kingdom. We may complete this evil picture by reminding the reader that she boasts herself of being possessed of so



great a power with God to bless all whom she desires to bless. She even has the power (as it is claimed) to admit any to the favours of God. And she is willing to give all of these blessings to those who identify with her by contributing generously to her many schemes. She is a lady of the kings, she is a freelancing bride, and all both small and great covet her favours. They allow themselves to be drained of some resources in order that the woman who professes to be God's ambassador on the earth may bless them. May the Lord help us to be delivered from this terrible wickedness, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe that all church systems, all and none excepted, should think deeply about this situation and begin to turn in great repentance, if perchance, the judgement that the Lord have already pronounced may be stayed back. (Joel 2:13,14)

We go to a second situation, and that has to do with *names, making a name, abominable titles, deifying the ministry*. Now, if you follow the reading carefully, you will notice something in verse 3.

*So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness:  
and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast,  
full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten  
horns.*

Now, constraint of time and space may not allow us to go verse by verse in an expository teaching of this passage (Revelation 17). This is adequately covered in our booklet, "*Heed the Call*". However, a few more things need be said before drawing the curtain on this meditation.

Genesis 11 tells us the beginning of Babylon. By an unwritten law, it is usual in scriptures for root principles to be found in a passage containing a subject matter in its first mention. And since Revelation 17 is all about Babylon, we may garner from Genesis 11 something of value relative to what we are examining. Recall that the 5<sup>th</sup> verse of Revelation 17 says one of the names on the forehead of this strange woman is Babylon, the Great. We are told that the compelling desire of the people in building the tower of Babylon (Babel) was that they might make a name for themselves. And, there has never being an era, a dispensation, in which

Light in the evening time

Come Up Hither

people are mad about names and titles as we have it in this age. And the church is foremost in creating all kinds of names and titles in order to elevate some men (funnily called the clergy) above others (sarcastically referred to as the laity). This is all done to exploit the masses. The New Testament teaches that the priesthood under Christ as head is of all believers. Class distinction is alien to New Testament teaching and practice.

Now, it is like washing dirty linen in the public. But, the situation has become so bad and quite a number of God's servants who were hitherto credible have become enmeshed in the mess. Nothing is left, no other means can be secured than to speak so openly and so decisively against this great treachery.

The most famous title today is Reverend Doctor. And there is a mad rush for this meaningless title. The usual approach for some is this: Read medicine in the University if blessed with academic ability and on graduation establishes a church. Then next, take on the title of a Reverend. What we now have is a Reverend Doctor gentleman! Rightly seen, even the name Reverend in the scriptural context should be properly reserved for the Lord Jesus Christ. Only God and his Christ are to be revered (held in awe, full adoration) according to the word of God (Psalms 111:9). And, of course we are not reducing the seriousness of this issue to just merely carrying a title. Our main emphasis is that there is usually a sick heart condition behind this rush for big names and titles.

There are all kinds of character traits that in essence sponsor the overthrow of God or the usurpation of His right in creation. Remember what we read earlier in II Thessalonians 2, how that some man will sit in the temple of God showing himself to be God. And, we showed clearly that this has no reference to a physical temple. Today, men make themselves gods in order to be feared and held in awe. And, the Nicolaitan spirit, the Laity-clergy distinction of this hour, which dates back to the thirteenth century, is not God-created. It does not have God's approval. For, the first three hundred years of the church history this evil plague was not known. God graciously made available to His church in that age highly anointed ministries. These ministries serve the body of

Christ in all humility and persevering love. So we are talking here about what the Bible refers to as *names of blasphemy*.

One day, some man will arise from within the church systems, and call himself God. Of course, there have been persons with spurious beginnings who have arisen and called themselves by such various names. But the main concern is for our constituency. We are understandably concerned about those who have known Jesus Christ in salvation and baptised in the Holy Spirit, but derailed along the line. The way all of this wickedness has crept into Pentecostalism gives every concerned heart reason to cry out unto God.

So, that is the second thing. First, an unbridled lust for money, second, an unbridled lust for title by means of which men impose themselves over their fellow brethren as lords over them. May the Lord help and deliver us from this domineering attitude. Check for this character trait in the home; how do you carry on? There is one Lord over all of God's creation; He is the Lord Jesus Christ. Every other man must have a healthy respect for the Lord's glory and of His sovereignty. We must keep a humble view of ourselves.

The third thing is shown in her doctrines. If you will come with me to the fourth verse, which I will read first as it is presented, and secondly in a slightly expanded form to bring out some salient points.

*... And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abomination and filthiness of her fornication...  
Revelation 17:4.*

I read again in a slightly expanded form

*... And the woman was arrayed in purple (that is, royal powers, showing herself to be an ecclesiastical kingdom which the people must submit to), and was also clothed in scarlet colour (she has assigned to her a priestly role).*

The word of God has said the believer is being made a priest and a king. And, of course, Paul tells us in I Corinthians 4 that the time of the reign of the church over the nations is in the millennium. But these have said they would rule now. So the scarlet colour is a reference to her priestly responsibility). It says further ... *and decked with gold and precious stones* (remember this woman says I am now rich, I am full of all that I desire and have need of nothing. But from the divine viewpoint, she is wretched, poor, miserable, blind and naked. Here, she is decked with the riches of the wealth she had obtained in an illicit manner).

I pray that the Lord will deliver all who read these lines from being supporters of systems that are no longer in the interest of God. This woman has been thrown out; she is no longer in her husband's house. She is now altogether free to practice her wickedness. She is no longer a wife going aside, she has been thrown out, and she is prospering in her new environment, sitting upon a beast, (how different from that woman in Revelation 12, clothed with the sun, standing on the moon, and, the crown of twelve stars on her head). She is in league with bestial powers, and functioning under the cover of the beast that in turn revels in her goodwill.

May the Lord deliver us; we cannot be passive watchers of events. We must speak against this wickedness, and the time to do so is now, for Babylon must fall, all pretentious in the church must fall, all treacheries against the Lord Jesus Christ must fall. All servants of God duly commissioned of God must seek the face of God and turn from wickedness. May the Lord deliver us, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But, the third element, which we are examining, is idolatry. To say that she is holding a cup (Revelation 17:4) means that she is ministering something. Remember in verse 2, we are told that the inhabitants of the earth are made drunk with the wine of her fornication. Her teachings, doctrines are here symbolised to us as wine. The wine of her fornication means that the teaching that goes on in these systems only makes it easy for the people to be drawn into worldliness and mix worship. The common people are made to believe in the rights of the clergy to exploit them. No wonder, the first verse says that this woman is sitting upon

many waters, and in verse 15 we are told that *...the waters which thou sawest are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues*. It can be shown that this influence of treachery in the name of religion is pervasive, having a universal hold on the minds and hearts of men. Men's minds have already being sensitised to worshipping fellow men and women. Many have lost their faculties of critical reasoning. People have become so dull under the influence by the age-long perverted teachings/doctrines of this harlot woman. The wine of her fornication is a reference to these erroneous doctrines in their capacity of causing men to loose the powers of sound judgement. To say that the woman is sitting upon many waters shows that multitudes have been engulfed in this wicked treachery. May the Lord deliver His people.

We know that of the seven principal errors, only three has been considered. This will be sufficient for our present purpose. We would want to assure you that the hour is come that all true believers must break free from things that no longer vitally and adequately represent the interest of God in the church. False religion, truly, is the opium of the people. May the Lord keep you, and bless you, may the Lord keep you agitated until sorting yourself out before God, and you break free from all things that are contrary to his will, in Jesus name.