



“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.” **Revelation 4:1**

This text is found in the last book of the Bible. The Book of Revelation was written by John, the youngest of the disciples. The date was about 96 A.D. All the apostles are now dead, including Paul. With the exception of John, they’ve all died a martyr’s death. It has been 26 years since Titus destroyed and left the ruins of the city of Jerusalem. History and tradition tell us that they tried to kill John by boiling him in oil, but he was miraculously saved and escaped death. When John wrote this book, he was on the Isle of Patmos.

Here is how one preacher described it: “The Isle of Patmos was a lonely little island that was a Roman penal colony. They solved how to keep prisoners by having them dig out a place

about 12 feet by 12 feet. Then they would dig a little further, making a big room at the bottom of a hole. A ladder would be put down when the prisoners were wanted, and there would be a call, “Come up hither.” At night the ladder was taken up, and no prisoner could escape.

Everyday for so long John heard, “John, come up hither,” and the ladder would be dropped.¹ But there came a day when John heard another voice. It was not the voice of a prison guard, but a great voice as of a trumpet saying, “*I am Alpha and Omega... the first and the last... And I turned to see the voice... One like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot,...His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow and His eyes were as a flame of fire; And His feet like unto fine brass...*” (Read Revelation 1:8-15).

So great was this sight that John fell at Jesus’ feet as dead. Jesus reassured him as to who He was and told him to write about the things he had seen and the things which shall be hereafter. Even though these messages were written to the seven churches of Asia, Dr. C. I. Scofield points out they have a four-fold application:

1. Local - to the churches actually addressed.
2. Admonitory - to all churches in all time as tests by which they may discern their true spiritual state in the sight of God.
3. Personal - in the exhortations to Him “that hath an ear” and in the promises, “to him that overcometh.”
4. Prophetic - as disclosing seven phases of the spiritual history of the church from, say, A.D. 96 to the end.²

Notice Revelation 4:1 begins with the phrase of our text, “...Come up hither and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.” In other words, I will show you things that will happen from about A.D. 96 until the end of time. Now notice this same language in Revelation 21, “... Come hither and I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife” (verse 9). Then He begins to show John the city: It has pure gold for its 12 gates, angels for its guards, saints for its citizens and Jesus for its King. Two things stand out to me as I read this chapter.

1. “Behold I make all things new” (verse 5).
2. “The former things are passed away” or will be NO MORE (verse 4).

Let’s look at some of those things which will be “no more.”

I. No More Pain (21:4)

Most of us have suffered pain to some degree. I believe this means physical pain or pain of the flesh. The Apostle Paul experienced this pain which he called a “*thorn in the flesh.*” Paul prayed to the Lord three times that it might depart from him. It did not happen, but the Lord assured him by saying, “...*My grace is sufficient for thee...*” (2 Corinthians 12:9). Even greater than the physical pain is the emotional pain.

Think for a moment about the **pain of sorrow**. Jesus suffered every kind of physical pain possible to inflict upon one’s body. But how much more was the emotional pain of sorrow, when He said, “*My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death...*” (Mark 14:34). Isaiah 53:4 tells us, “*Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows...*”

Secondly, there is the **pain of trouble**. None of us are exempt from trouble. I know there are preachers telling you, that if you give your life to Jesus, and have faith, you will be free from trouble. But Job 14:1 tells us, “*Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.*” Jesus said, “...*He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust*” (Matthew 5:45). Nahum 1:7 tells us what to do when trouble comes. “*The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.*”

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Thirdly, let me mention a word about the *pain of loneliness*. Someone reading this message just now is feeling this awful pain. A loved one has been unexpectedly taken from you and you feel all alone. Jesus knows about the pain of loneliness. The Lord spoke through Isaiah and said, “*I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me...*” (63:3). Hear Christ’s chilling call from the cross, “*...MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME*” (Matthew 27:46)? Jesus knows how to help you during your pain of loneliness.

II. No More Poverty

Revelation 7:16 says, “*They shall hunger no more...*” Jesus said to one of the churches, “*I know thy... poverty...*” (Revelation 2:9). I was born during the days of the great depression and I know what it is like to live on the edge of poverty. I can remember hiding from the other kids at school to eat my lunch, knowing they would make fun of me. I had already left home before we had electricity or plumbing. I graduated from high school in a hand-me-down suit. I can remember waking up on a winter’s morning with snow on the bed. The dipper would be frozen in the water bucket.

When Doris and I got married, we rented two rooms of a house. A flood came and we lost everything and we had to start over. I walked five miles to work everyday. There was no money to buy a car. That is why we continue to support feeding programs. No child in this world should have to go to bed hungry. But, thank God, one day there will be no more poverty.



III. No More Parting

Revelation 22:5 tells us, “*...They shall reign for ever and ever.*” Here we live in a world of separation. Death is a cruel enemy. It will take a loved one from us and never apologize. Shortly before I got saved, I lost a grandmother and a nephew at the same time. The oldest and the youngest member of the Evans Family were buried at the same funeral. This taught me that there is no certainty of life. We live in a land of parting!

Across the years, I’ve preached hundreds of funerals. Our family had a very close friend. She was a young lady only 27 years of age. My children loved her. She was killed suddenly in a train accident along with her 13 month old child. They were buried in the same casket. Yes, we live in a land of the parting.

I had a funeral of three children ages 3, 4 and 5. They were buried the same day. Those precious parents asked me the question, “Why?” I had no answer except, “*We live in a land of parting and no one knows when the end may come.*”

Parting Words of a Christian Martyr

During the latter quarter of the first century, Emperor worship tested the loyalty of every Roman citizen and slave. Once a year, every person was called upon to burn incense and publicly confess that “*Caeser is Lord.*” Polycarp, John’s successor was martyred in the mid second century. The authorities asked Polycarp, “For what harm is there in saying Lord Caesar, and to sacrifice, and thus save your life?” Polycarp was quiet for a long time, then replied, “I will not do it.”³

This great man of God suffered much for Christ’s sake as Eusebus, the church historian tells us. The Roman proconsul commanded him to swear allegiance to Caesar, saying, “Swear, and I will set thee at liberty, reproach Christ.” How courageous and magnificent was Polycarp’s reply! “Eighty and six years have I now served Christ, and He has never done me the least wrong; how, then, can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?”⁴ I expect to see Polycarp one day in that land where there will be no more parting!

The Parting of a Christian Missionary

That great Scottish missionary, David Livingstone spent more than 30 years in Africa mostly, in unexplored country. Shortly before he died, he said to his servants: “Build me a hut to die in. I am going home.” He was found dead kneeling at his bedside. His heart was removed and buried in Africa. His body was preserved in salt and carried by affectionate natives to the coast over 1,000 miles distance and ultimately buried with honors in Westminster Abbey.⁵ What a joy it will be to meet outstanding missionaries like David Livingstone in that land where we will part no more!

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IV. No More Preaching

In Luke 16:19-31, Jesus taught about the rich man and Lazarus. They both died. The rich man died and immediately was in hell. Lazarus died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man pleaded and begged Abraham to send Lazarus back from the dead to warn his five brothers lest they also come to this place of torments. But the reply to the rich man's request was this: *"They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them."* The rich man further argued, *"But if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent."* The reply was, *"If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one raised from the dead."* Just as God had a plan then, He has a plan now of reaching the lost. What is that plan? Let the Bible speak. I Corinthians 1:21 says, *"...It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."* I Corinthians 1:18 states, *"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."* Romans 1:16 further adds, *"For I am not ashamed of Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."* Mark 16:15-16 says, *"And he (Jesus) said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."* The Gospel being preached unto all the nations is one of the signs of Christ's coming. Matthew 24:14 states, *"And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."*

It is obvious today's church is not putting the emphasis on preaching. It did in previous times. Could this be partially the reason that Havner stated, "This generation loves everything but righteousness and fears everything but God?"⁶

The Sardis church had a name of being alive but God said it was dead. The Smyrna church thought it was poor but God said it was rich. The Laodicean church thought it was rich but God said it was poor. The Lord called it, "lukewarm." What is a lukewarm Christian? They are too cold to boil and too warm to freeze.

The church at Ephesus had left its first love. Do you remember your first love? A young man meets the girl of his dreams. He spends money he cannot afford. On my first date with Doris, I took her to a street carnival that had just come to town. I had just received my income tax refund of \$70. At that time, I was making \$25 per week. What I am trying to say, back then, \$70 was a lot of money! We came to this tent that had ducks riding along on a little track. You were given a gun to see how many ducks you could shoot and knock over. The more ducks you knocked over, the greater the prize. Do you want to know how much money I spent trying to win Doris a beautiful doll? You guessed it, \$70. But I remind you, I'm much more conservative now.

Do you remember how you loved Christ when you were first saved? When you could not do enough for Him? When you wanted to go to church every night? When someone would sing, you could hardly stay in your seat? When the preacher preached about Jesus you felt hot tears running down your cheeks? There is, sometimes, a reckless enthusiasm about a "first love." May God revive our hearts and may we renew that "first love" we had for Jesus. Not caring what others say or think but drawing closer *"...Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood"* (Revelation 1:5).

Footnotes:

1. Clyde Box, *Glimpses of Jesus*, (Tennessee: Sword of the Lord Publishers, 2002). p. 122.
2. Rev. C.I. Scofield, *The Scofield Reference Bible*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1909).
3. Baily Smith, *Taking Back the Gospel*, (Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 1999) p. 31
4. Herbert Lockyer, *Last Words of Saints and Sinner*, (Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1969). p. 152.
5. Ibid, p.62.
6. Vance Havner, *Messages on Revival*, (Michigan: Baker House, 1958) p. 24.



Dear Cal Ray & Staff:

God bless you all for your prayers and support of this ministry. You have won hundreds of souls with your materials you gave to us. One box went to Brother John in Kerela, India, a great soul winner! Another one went to a Preacher Kagarama in Kampola, Uganda. One box went to Brother Tomene in Nigeria. I gave a box to another brother doing who does work like we are doing. The materials and Bibles will win many souls and it will be charged to your account. Again, thanks for praying for me.

Brother John Elswick, Evangelist
The Gospel Broadcast Ministries

**Note from Editor: This dear friend is doing a remarkable job helping native pastors and evangelists all around the world. He has a heart of gold. He does it all by faith. He has so many materials to ship but often lacks funds for shipping. If the Lord lays his work on your heart, please help him financially to get the Gospel out.*