

Church History - Session 4 (Fullfillment (Cont'd))

by Edgar F. Parkyns

The sermon explores the concept of fulfilled prophecy and how it demonstrates God's hand in history, highlighting the changeover from the Old Testament to the New Testament and the significance of the Lamb and the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 34:22

Scripture: Psalm 96:1, John 1:29, John 20:22, Revelation 2:1, Revelation 4:11, Revelation 5:6, Revelation 5:9

Topics: "Jesus Christ", "Worship Revelation"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the vision of John in the book of Revelation. He describes how John saw heavenly figures and the glory of God on the throne. However, there was something missing that could satisfy John's heart and open up the future of the church. Then, John sees a lamb as it had been slain in the midst of the throne, symbolizing Jesus. The preacher emphasizes the significance of Jesus in the New Testament and how he is closer to believers than breathing or hands and feet. The sermon also highlights the importance of praising Jesus and having a new song in our hearts. The preacher further explains how the Old Testament and New Testament are connected, with Jesus being the central focus.

Transcript

It persecuted and killed many who loved the Lord. Or did Paul overlook all this and see instead something which has not yet arrived and will not last much more than seven years? That is quite a plain question. And I say that this modern concept of everything being in the future has only held for the last 130 years.

Before that, nobody believed it. It was introduced by a Jesuit with a view to confusing Protestants. I think he did very well.

It is a human failing to fail to recognise prophecy fulfilled in history. The Jews, for instance, are still waiting for Messiah's coming. They can't look back into history and see it happen.

It's still looking forward. Their leaders failed to examine that. Christ, they said, would come from Bethlehem, not Nazareth, and Jesus came from Nazareth.

They never troubled to find out, did they? They jumped to conclusions. The disciples failed to see that John the Baptist was the fulfilment of the Elijah prophecies. Perhaps you do too.

Referring the teachings of men to the statement of Christ? Jesus said Elijah is already come, and they have done to him whatsoever they listened. Then they understood that he referred to John the Baptist. The disciples failed to recognise prophecy fulfilled.

In Luke 24, you remember, they were surprised to find that the scriptures concerning Messiah had been fulfilled. They hadn't recognised it. They were very disappointed over what had happened.

They didn't know it was the fulfilment of prophecy. They were also unwisely over-interested in the future. Acts 1, 7 and 8. Lord wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? And Jesus didn't over-encourage their inquiry, but told them to get on with the job.

Prophecy's main service is to demonstrate God's hand in history. Not to make you all prognosticators. All right, let us look at the love letter, Revelation.

We saw last week that Revelation was written from the bridegroom to the bride, from Christ to the church with his father's authority. To show to his servants, the church, things which must shortly come to pass. We saw that not only were the messages to the seven churches given to the churches, but the whole visions of the later section of Revelation were also given to the churches, that the churches might benefit thereby.

What else did we see last week? We used the analogy of the bridegroom going ahead into the far west, and the bride following, and having his letter to describe and forewarn her of the dangers of the journey. We saw that that letter was written in a way that could not be easily understood, so that her enemies would not get hold of it and misuse it. And I suggest that Revelation has been given to the church from the Lord Jesus, to her, for her, to guide her through her sea of trouble, up to the time when she meets him.

It is written in code for more than one reason. One, so that the wise of this world could not understand. Two, so that the length of the apostasy, Mountless, would not discourage early generations of Christians.

If Paul had said, look here friends, there are a dozen or more centuries of apostasy in front of you, how would he have done? He was able to tell them of an apostasy, but he never gave it the appearance of great length. In fact, whenever Jesus talked about his second coming, he was so merciful to them that he never clearly indicated there would be a long, long delay, such as we have to look back on. He said, you stand as those who are ready, with your loins girded and your lamps trimmed, ready as those who watch for their Lord.

And so it is that every generation had to be, had to have the equal hope that Christ might come. This has also had a bearing on Revelation, because our Lord could not reveal plainly the long, long years of apostasy, persecution and suffering. It had to be revealed as something that might all happen in one lifetime.

Therefore, all, including the reign of Antichrist, is pictured as though happening in one generation, and it cannot be pictured any other way. In Revelation 4, verse 1, we read, And I will show thee things which must be hereafter. I want us to pause a moment to think of the word hereafter.

What does it mean? The Greek is *metatauta*, after these things. It does not mean in the dim and distant future. What was hereafter, to John, may very well have passed into history as far as we are concerned.

Can you understand that? Hereafter isn't a static word that remains forever and ever. Things that are hereafter for one generation, become history to another generation. That's quite plain.

For instance, in John 13 and verse 7, our Lord talking to Peter says, What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter. That doesn't mean when he gets to heaven, but it means later on, when the Holy Ghost came upon him, he would know. All right, so hereafter.

And I will show thee things which must be hereafter. So now, at last, we are beginning to be introduced to the prophetic, the foretelling section of Revelation. Nothing up to this point has been foretelling.

It's been the things that he saw, and the things that are. But now we're going to launch into the things which lay ahead of John's time. It's going to be in sign language.

The scale is difficult. The code signs are difficult, but they can be understood. Now some of you, dear brethren, drive long journeys with your wife, when often you come to the edge of one map, and you have to find another one.

And then, as the border of your map begins to approach, you say something like this, Honey, reach into a pocket and bring out the next map. I can't do it like you do it, but something like that anyway. Then when she brings out the next map, the first thing she has to do is to line them up, the old and the new map, so that you may find your place.

So you don't run off the one map into the sea, but you find a continuation of the particular through where you were on. Now it's most interesting to see how our Lord, in introducing John to this new tremendous series of visions, shows him the Old Testament map first. Before he shows him the New Testament map.

So have a look in Revelation 4, verse 2, And immediately I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne, and he that sat was to look upon like a Jasper into Saudi stone. There was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight unto an emerald. Now you know perfectly well, in your reading of the Old Testament, that you have met all that before, haven't you? In Ezekiel particularly.

Ezekiel chapter 1, and I think chapter 11 and elsewhere, you see the throne set in heaven, you see the rainbow, you see the glory of God, it's all there. So when John lifted up his eyes in this new heavenly realm, he could say to himself, well I'm seeing what Ezekiel saw. I know what I'm looking at.

I'm in heaven as Ezekiel saw it in the Old Testament. Reading out verse 4 at the moment, verse 5, Out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices, and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God. Once again you find that in Ezekiel's vision.

The lamps of fire moving up and down beneath the throne. And before the throne there was a sea of glass, like unto crystal. We'll find that in Ezekiel too.

Let me, if you just turn to Ezekiel 1, just for reference, you'll see where we are. Ezekiel 1, the crystal, is in verse 22. The lightness of the firmament above the heads of the living creature, whilst as the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above.

And there it is called firmament, there the sea in the New Testament vision. The four living creatures are there in Ezekiel. Isn't that right? Ezekiel chapter 1 and John sees them again in Revelation chapter 4. Here they are, verse 6 and 7. Four living creatures, full of eyes before and behind.

The first beast like a lion, the second like a calf, the third like the face of a man, the fourth like a flying eagle. Ezekiel's living creatures, you recognise that don't you? The colour of amber, the appearance of fire about the heavenly being, Ezekiel also saw that. But now I missed out verse 4 about the 4 and 20 elders, because that they are a little more difficult to find.

The number 24, Revelation is full of numbers, the number 24 is not a frequent number in scripture is it? 12s are common, 7s are common, 3s are common, 4s are common, but 24s are rare. And I suggest to you that 24 elders are quite easily located because of the rare use of the number 24. The use is very clear in one chronicle, chapters 24, 25 and 27.

Here David is giving the instructions for the worship in the Old Testament temple. It's not yet built, but he's describing how the singers and the other contributors will take their place in temple worship. And in chapter 24 you will see that the sons of Aaron are divided into 24 causes.

See that? Verse 18 will show you that. The 3 and 20th given to Lot gave to Deliah, and the 4 and 20th to Uzziah, that completes the list. 4 and 20 then is used in the divisions of the sons of Aaron in the worship of the temple.

Now in chapter 25 once again the sinners are divided. And you will see that from verse 9 to verse 31 there are again 24 divisions of sinners. Let me read verse 31 to save you looking all through those verses.

The 4 and 20th to Romantiaser, he and his sons and his brethren were 12. So there are 24 groups of sinners. Now then if you come to chapter 27 you'll find the 24s as thick as daisies in a field.

Do you have daisies in a field in your country? You're right, just as thick as that. Look at it. Chapter 27 verse 1, here are the chief fathers and captains in verse 1, 20 and 4,000.

In verse 2, 20 and 4,000. In verse 4, 20 and 4,000. In verse 5, 20 and 4,000.

In verse 7, 20 and 4,000. In verse 8, 20 and 4,000. What more do you want? All over the worship associated with the temple is the number 24.

Isn't that interesting? So you see 24 again the elders that John sees as belonging to the Old Testament order. And he sees them as the spirits of just men made perfect. That is before the throne.

The Old Testament order is consummated, brought to its completion. And he hears them singing a song. What kind of song is it? Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power.

For thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. You know that song, don't you? He heard the elders singing it. So you might as well sing it also.

Thou art worthy, Thou art worthy, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, glory and honor, glory and honor and power. For thou hast created, hast all things created. For thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are created.

Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor. All the Old Testament saints could sing that one. It's an Old Testament song.

It is the consummation of what Israel had to teach the world, that the Lord God created the heavens and earth for his own glory. In fact there's not a Christian in the chapter. And Jesus isn't there either.

There's not a Christian touch in the whole chapter. Beautiful as it is, it belongs to the Old Testament. From verse 1 to verse 11.

All Old Testament. John, I've shown you the old map. Now John, I want to bring to you the new map.

So that you will know exactly where you stand. And so we move into chapter 5, and significant changes begin to take place in heaven. First the book, the roll, sealed with seven seals, containing those secrets of the future that John longs to understand.

And then an angel who proclaimed with a loud voice, who is worthy to open the book and to the seals thereof. And no man in all this Old Testament scene was found worthy to open the book of New Testament revelation. One of the 24 elders, obviously a Jewish man, speaks to him as he weeps, as John weeps there, and says, weep not, behold the lion of the tribe of Judah.

That's a Jewish phrase, isn't it? Lion of the tribe of Judah. The root of David, another Old Testament phrase. This is how Messiah was looked at from the Old Testament point of view.

He hath prevailed to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof. And John who was weeping, he wasn't at home in all this scene, it was heaven truly. But he needed Jesus.

No wonder the poor man wept. Boy what a disappointing place heaven would have been to him without Jesus. And he had seen all these Old Testament figures there, in the heavenly glory, in the glory of God on the throne.

But there was, there wasn't that there which could satisfy his heart, meet his need, or open up the future of the church to him. So he turned to see this lion, and I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a lamb as it had been slain. Alleluia.

New Testament point of view. So the number one change is, the lamb as it had been slain, is in the midst of the throne. Number one.

Alleluia. My, I must never fill this heart. To see in symbolic form his Jesus there, and the symbolism used, was, referred him right back to the very first time he had met our Lord.

For John as a fisherman had been listening to John the Baptist, and no doubt had been baptized by him. And John had begun to speak about Jesus. And one day, as Jesus passed by, John, extending his prophetic finger, said, Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.

And that was enough to make John and his companion leave everything, and place Jesus first. Praise the Lord, the Lamb of God. And so now, in the midst of the glories of heaven, he sees Jesus as the Lamb.

Oh, what a wonderful truth it was. No wonder there was no more need to weep. Heaven was truly heaven to him.

Everything was changed. A lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns. Later on, John was to see the horns of Gentile power.

Terrifying. Cruel. But before ever he saw those symbols, he saw the horns of perfect power on the Lamb.

Jesus in full control of everything. Henceforth expecting till his foes be made his footstool. I don't think that you will actually see Jesus as a Lamb with seven horns.

Not really. This is the delightful symbolic language of vision. Praise the Lord.

You may do, but I would say that basically what John is seeing is the divine picturing of holy truths. I might almost say a divine cartoon. And I don't think that he'll have seven eyes either.

I'd be a bit puzzled if he had. But what tremendous symbolism is here. Seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

In chapter four we saw the seven spirits of God burning as lamps before the throne. Isn't that right? In chapter five we see the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. Change number two.

Jesus at the right hand of God, the Holy Spirit sent forth into all the earth. Isn't that what Peter said on the day of Pentecost? He being at the right hand of God exalted, hath shed forth this which ye do now see and hear. Isn't that plain? Now stamped out very clearly in vision form.

And the Holy Spirit is seen as sevenfold. Now I don't know all the reasons why he should be shown as sevenfold, but I can tell you the first and the most obvious one. And I think you can see it too.

There were seven churches and each church needed the Holy Spirit. And he was available to everyone. Hallelujah.

Moreover he came as the eyes of the Lamb. Somehow Jesus present at the throne of God is present in our assembly here now isn't he? How? By the Spirit. The eyes of the Lamb.

And if there are any other congregations met in his name and his Spirit, he is there too. By the Holy Ghost. The Lamb having the seven horns of absolute power.

The seven eyes indicating the Holy Spirit as we need him sent forth into all the earth to reach the needs of the seven churches. Sent forth as the eyes of the Lamb to search our hearts and try the reins. So that in Revelation chapter 2, whenever our Lord addresses a church, he first addresses them as from himself.

And he says, these things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, and who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. That is, it is Christ speaking. But when we come to the end of the exhortation, he says, he that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

Get that? The seven eyes of the Lamb reaching down to the seven churches. Seeing their successes, seeing their weaknesses, seeing their failures. Forgiving, exhorting, rebuking, loving.

What a perfect picture of the changeover from the Old Testament order of chapter 4 to the New Testament order of chapter 5. And then there is a third change. They drop the creation song and sing a new song. Thou art worthy, O wonderful.

In the earlier chapter they were praising the Father, now they are praising the Son. With equal praise. Hallelujah.

As then. We will finish there in drive-off, if all goes well. They won't have a leg to stand on.

Here is the Son receiving equal praise. Thou art worthy, just what they said to the Father, to take the book and to open the seals thereof. For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed men to God, out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation, and hast made them unto our God kings and priests, and they shall reign on the earth.

Now the King James hasn't got it quite like I read it. It says they have redeemed us to God. But that King James version was under the influence of only one of the many manuscripts.

All the other old manuscripts have it in third person. Thou hast redeemed men to God, and they shall reign on the earth. The four and twenty elders weren't singing about themselves.

The four living creatures weren't singing about themselves. Of course not. They were obviously in existence in Ezekiel's time.

No, they were singing about us. Thou art worthy, thou hast redeemed men to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation, and hast made them unto our God kings or kingdom of priests, and they shall reign on the earth. And as he listened, he heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures and the elders.

The number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing, and every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them heard I saying, Blessing and honour and glory and power unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four living creatures said Amen, and the four and twenty elders fell down to worship him, that they would for ever and ever. You may remember something very similar in Isaiah's vision of heaven, when he heard the same song that John heard all these years after.

They rest not day and night saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was and is and is to come. And John heard them say, The whole earth is full of his glory. Remember that in Isaiah chapter six.

Isaiah heard them saying that. The whole earth. Well, well, King Isaiah had just died of leprosy.

A feeble king, Jotham, was just coming to the throne. The Assyrians were pressing on the borders of the empire. Israel and Syria were hatching up a new plot to wipe out Judah.

He heard the living creatures cry, The whole earth is full of his glory. God was on the throne. Hallelujah.

And so, in this New Testament vision, John, seeing similar things, hearing similar voices, hear all creation saying, Glory and honor and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. Oh, tremendous song, when the church was going down into apostasy, when every kind of evil was taking root and beginning to grow in the era, in the arena of Christian experience, when darkness was beginning to overspread the earth. First of all, he saw, he was in the assurance, that not only was all power given to the Son, given to the Lamb.

Blessed thought that. All power given to the Lamb. Aren't you glad about that? I'm glad the dictator is a Lamb.

I'm glad the man who is destined to hold all power is the gentle one, the meek and lowly. And he always will be. Praise his name.

Yes, blessing and honor and glory be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. So in this verse, the praise to the Father and the praise to the Son are set side by side in one perfect balance. Praise God, isn't that wonderful? What a chapter.

Where are we then, John? The Old Testament order has been consummated. The New Testament order has begun. The Lamb is exalted to the Father's right hand.

He hasn't left there. Oh, no. Those expositors who say he left there at the beginning of chapter 4 are wrong.

The Bible says he's there. Hallelujah. See that? Yes, he's there at the right hand of God.

The Holy Spirit is shed forth into all the earth. And the new song of redemption is filling heaven and earth. Hallelujah.

And we're in it. We are in it. Is he not still there? Does he not still set to send forth the Holy Spirit? Is there not a new song in our hearts? Praise God.

We are right inside the book of Revelation. This is the key vision which opens all the avenues. It is to the church, for the church, concerning the church, and guides us in the troubles which will affect the church, while Jesus is still on the throne and the Holy Spirit is still available on the earth.

In other words, in the age which began in John's time and which continues to this present moment. So it is stamped with the divine signature. We know what the book is about.

Amen. I don't know if we should have a chorus about Jesus at Thou Art Worthy. Have you got one? Have anyone got a chorus like that? Do you know this one? Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals.

Let's try something tonight. For thou art slain, and by thy blood hast ransomed men for God. From every tribe and tongue, and kindred and nation, and they shall reign.

I don't know the rest of it. I'll try them in a minute. Some day and teach it to you maybe, when I get my accordions.

It's the Christian song. The other was the Old Testament song, the song of creation. Beautiful indeed.

But in chapter 5 is our song. You can make up your own theme to it if you like. But it's in praise of Jesus.

Hallelujah. Aren't you glad that our heaven is the place where Jesus dwells? And aren't you glad that by his seven eyes, by the Spirit sent forth, he is nearer to you than breathing, and closer than hands or feet? And he's put a new song in your heart. Amen.

Amen.

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