

THE MOVE OF GOD IN MAN

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LIVING STREAM MINISTRY

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by Witness Lee

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PREFACE

This book is composed of messages given by Brother Witness Lee in Anaheim, California, on March 27 through June 12, 1993.

CHAPTER ONE

IN HIS INCARNATION (1)

Scripture Reading: John 1:1, 14; 1 Tim. 3:16; Rom. 8:3; Isa. 9:6; Luke 1:35;
Matt. 1:20

OUTLINE

- I. The move of God in man being unprecedented in history:
 - A. Before incarnation God moving only with men and among men.
 - B. From incarnation God moving mainly in man.
- II. God's move with men and among men:
 - A. Being not the direct move to carry out His eternal economy for Christ and the church.
 - B. But the indirect move in His old creation for the preparation of His direct move in His new creation for His eternal economy.
- III. God's move in His incarnation—John 1:1, 14:
 - A. Coming from eternity into time.
 - B. Coming with His divinity to enter into humanity.
 - C. To mingle divinity with humanity into one entity, keeping the two elements distinguishable in the one entity and without producing a third element.
- IV. All the Divine Trinity participating in the incarnation:
 - A. Being the incarnation of Christ as God—1 Tim. 3:16; John 1:1, 14.
 - B. Being the incarnation of the Son of God—Rom. 8:3.
 - C. God the Father having participated in the incarnation—Isa. 9:6.
 - D. God the Spirit having joined the incarnation—Luke 1:35; Matt. 1:20.

In this series of messages we want to see the move of God in man, which is God's history in His union with man in the New Testament. In a previous series of messages entitled *The History of God in His Union with Man*, we have seen God's move in the Old Testament from Genesis through Leviticus. God moved with men and among men in the Old Testament, but He never moved in man.

When we touch this matter, we have to be careful because in the Old Testament we do have some hints concerning God's appearing to people. God

appeared to Abraham in Genesis 18 in the form of a man. One day Abraham was sitting at the entrance of his tent when three men came to him. Two of them were angels, and the other was Jehovah, the very God. Thus, in Genesis 18 not only God but also the angels appeared in the form of men. Abraham prepared water for Jehovah to wash His feet, and Sarah prepared a meal. This shows that God's appearing to man and God's relationship with man are very mysterious.

But in principle, we need to see that God did not move in man in the Old Testament; He moved only with men and among men. It was not until the age of the New Testament that God came to move on this earth in man. His first step to move in the New Testament age was to enter into man. God took a definite step to enter into man, and this laid a foundation for His move in man throughout the New Testament. God entered into the womb of a human virgin and stayed there for nine months to be born of that virgin. This was His move to enter into man as a foundation for His further move in man.

The Old Testament was a preparation for God's move in man in the New Testament. Strictly speaking, in the Old Testament God's move was among men and through men but not in man. When the New Testament age came, God's entire way changed. He was in the Old Testament working all the time with men and among men but outside of men. Samson is a good illustration of this. Samson was very strong and full of the power of God, but his personal life was a mess. This shows that God's move in the Old Testament was outside of man and not something of an inward life. The New Testament is different from the Old Testament in the one fact that God entered into man. God was born of man. Matthew 1:20 says that what was begotten in Mary was of the Holy Spirit. God was born in Mary. One day God came out of eternity with His divinity and entered into a human virgin's womb to be born there.

I have been studying the Bible for many years, and through my study I have come to the conclusion that there are ten main items in the eternal economy of God revealed in the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. The first five items are the steps of God's move, and the last five items are the issues of God's move. In the eternal economy of God in the New Testament, there are five steps and five issues of God's move in man.

The five steps are incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. These are the steps that God took in His move in man on this earth.

He was incarnated in man, and He lived in man. In incarnation He entered into the womb of Mary and remained there for nine months. After His birth He passed through a human living of thirty-three and a half years. Then He went to the cross to be crucified in man. Jesus was crucified on the cross as a man, but He was not just a man. He was God Himself. Then He was resurrected. He rose up from the dead in man and ascended to the heavens in man. These are the five steps of His move. The five issues of these steps are the church, the Body of Christ, the new man, the organism of the processed and consummated Triune God, and the New Jerusalem. These five steps and five issues cover the entire New Testament concerning the move of God in man. The first page of the New Testament is on incarnation, and the last page of the New Testament is on the New Jerusalem.

THE MOVE OF GOD IN MAN BEING UNPRECEDENTED IN HISTORY

The move of God in man is unprecedented in history. Before the time of God's incarnation in Matthew 1, there was not such a thing in history as God's move in man.

Before Incarnation God Moving Only with Men and among Men

Before His incarnation God moved only with men and among men in the Old Testament. The Old Testament has thirty-nine books. Most of these books are very long with many stories of God's move. What a move God had with men and among men in the Old Testament! When He created all the things in the heavens and on the earth, what a move that was! What a move it was when He created man! Then from Genesis 3 to Malachi there are many stories of God's move. But whatever God did in the Old Testament was just with men and among men. He never did anything by being in man. He never moved in man in the Old Testament.

From Incarnation God Moving Mainly in Man

Beginning from His incarnation, God moved mainly in man. In the New Testament whatever God did was mainly in man. The small preposition *in* may be considered as the greatest word in the New Testament. If you take this preposition away, the New Testament becomes empty. This is like taking the

switch away from an electrical appliance. Without the switch, it will not work, because the electricity cannot flow into it. The phrase *in Christ* is repeated frequently in the New Testament. If we were not in Christ and Christ were not in us, there would be no Christian life or church life.

GOD'S MOVE WITH MEN AND AMONG MEN

Being Not the Direct Move to Carry Out His Eternal Economy for Christ and the Church

God moved in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy with Moses. Then God moved in the books of Joshua, Judges, and Samuel. Then He moved to a certain extent with all the kings of Israel and the prophets. But that was not God's direct move to carry out His eternal economy for Christ and the church.

But the Indirect Move in His Old Creation for the Preparation of His Direct Move in His New Creation for His Eternal Economy

God's move with men and among men was just the indirect move in His old creation for the preparation of His direct move in His new creation for His eternal economy. This is why the church is not mentioned in the Old Testament. The church was a hidden mystery. God's eternal economy was never directly touched in the Old Testament. God's economy in the New Testament is absolutely unique. In the Old Testament you cannot see God's move for His eternal economy directly. God did a lot indirectly to prepare for the day when He could come to do the direct work.

The New Testament opens with the genealogy of Jesus Christ in Matthew 1, and His genealogy is of forty-two generations. Each generation was a preparation for Jesus' coming. We need to consider the Old Testament as a preparation for God's move in man in the New Testament. If God had not created the heavens and the earth with billions of items, how could man exist? The heavens are for the earth, the earth is for man's existence, and man's existence in the Old Testament was for the generations to bring forth Christ. Thus, we may say that the forty-two generations in Matthew 1 represent the entire Old Testament.

Fifty-seven years ago in 1936, I wrote a book entitled *Gleanings of the Genealogy of Christ*, and much of what I wrote there has been included in the footnotes of the Recovery Version. To write concerning the genealogy of Christ, you need to know the entire Old Testament. The genealogy of Christ in Matthew 1 is a brief abstract of the Old Testament, which in itself is the detailed genealogy of Christ. To understand the genealogy in Matthew, we need to trace the origin and history of every incident. We must not forget that the Old Testament was a preparation for the direct move of God in man in the New Testament.

GOD'S MOVE IN HIS INCARNATION

We need to see the great significance of God's move in His incarnation (John 1:1, 14). Many of those in Christianity today do not see this significance. When they think of Christ's birth, they may think only of the manger or of the pagan things associated with the celebration of Christmas. Today's Christianity has lost the genuine essence and genuine character of God's economy. It has become absolutely an outward, formal religion. We need to abandon our traditional, unscriptural concepts in order to see the pure revelation of the incarnated Triune God from the Holy Scriptures.

Coming from Eternity into Time

In God's incarnation He came from eternity into time. This is the first intrinsic significance we have to pick up. In eternity God was unlimited. With Him everything was eternal. But when the day of incarnation came, He came out of eternity and entered into time. Eternity has no limit. Time is limited. In eternity He could be everywhere, but in time He could not be in Nazareth when He was in Jerusalem. As a finite man, He was greatly limited.

In John 7 His brothers challenged Him by telling Him to manifest Himself to the world (vv. 3-4), but He told them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready" (v. 6). Although the Lord is the eternal, infinite, unlimited God, He lived here on earth as a man, being limited even in the matter of time. As the unlimited God, He entered into the limiting factor of time.

God created everything by speaking. He said, "Let there be light," and there was light (Gen. 1:3). But He was not incarnated in this instant way. Instead,

He came out of His eternity to enter into time and stay in a virgin's womb for nine months. This is very meaningful. We all know how difficult it is to make a believer of Christ spiritual, sanctified, victorious, and heavenly. God is omnipotent, and His power is unlimited. Why would He not produce millions of spiritual persons in an instant? In His New Testament economy God does not do things instantly. He does everything in the principle of incarnation. God's incarnation brought Him out of His eternity into the limit of time.

Coming with His Divinity to Enter into Humanity

God came out of eternity into time and with His divinity to enter into humanity. In the Old Testament the divine nature and essence never came into any human being. But one day the unique Divine Being, God, brought His divinity into the womb of Mary. From that day God put humanity upon Himself. He never had anything human before that time, but in His incarnation He entered into humanity and put on humanity as a part of His being. He was only divine in eternity, but through incarnation He became both divine and human.

To Mingle Divinity with Humanity into One Entity, Keeping the Two Elements Distinguishable in the One Entity and without Producing a Third Element

God's move in His incarnation was to mingle divinity with humanity into one entity, keeping the two elements distinguishable in the one entity without producing a third element. A heretical teaching in the past said that when divinity and humanity were mingled together, a third element was produced. *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* defines the word *mingle* in this way: "to bring or combine together or with something else so that the components remain distinguishable in the combination." Thus, in God's incarnation the elements of divinity and humanity were mingled into one entity, and the two elements remained distinguishable in the one entity without producing a third element.

The truth concerning divinity being mingled with humanity was present in the early days of the church with the church fathers. But because of the heretical and wrong teaching concerning mingling, few Christian teachers

have dared to touch it again. We have to see the pure truth in the Bible concerning the mingling of divinity with humanity as a great significance of God's move in His incarnation.

Such a divine thing is very spiritual and mysterious because it is invisible. But in the Old Testament there is the marvelous type of the meal offering to show us the mingling of divinity with humanity in the person of Jesus Christ. Leviticus 2:4-5 says that the meal offering was of "fine flour mingled with oil." The oil is a sign of the Holy Spirit, and the fine flour is a sign of humanity. The Holy Spirit mingles Himself with man to produce a meal offering that is good for food both to God and to His priests.

ALL THE DIVINE TRINITY PARTICIPATING IN THE INCARNATION

All the Divine Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—participated in the incarnation. Many Christians are accustomed to saying that the incarnation was merely the incarnation of Christ, but we must realize that this was the incarnation of Christ with the Divine Trinity.

Being the Incarnation of Christ as God

The incarnation was the incarnation of Christ as God. First Timothy 3:16 says that Christ was God manifested in the flesh. John 1:14 says that the Word became flesh. This was the incarnation of the Word. But verse 1 says that the Word was God, and God here is the complete God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. The incarnation was the incarnation of Christ, who is the embodiment of the Triune God (Col. 2:9). Therefore, the incarnation of Christ was the incarnation of the Triune God.

Being the Incarnation of the Son of God

God's incarnation was the incarnation of the Son of God (Rom. 8:3). In His essence God is one, but in His economical move God is three. This is why we do not say that God the Father accomplished redemption. We say that God the Son accomplished redemption. Acts 20:28, however, says that God obtained the church through "His own blood." Thus, the blood of Christ is the blood of God. This implies that the Lord Jesus is God. This shows that we have to be very careful when we talk about the Divine Trinity in His person

and in His work. The safest way is to just follow the Bible. Whatever the Bible says, we should say. The Bible reveals the economical aspect of the Divine Trinity, and it also reveals the essential aspect. Our redemption was accomplished by God the Son economically, but God the Father and God the Spirit also took part in this accomplishment. Whatever the Son did was with the Father and by the Spirit because the three are essentially one.

God the Father Having Participated in the Incarnation

God the Father participated in the incarnation. Isaiah 9:6 says that a Son is given to us. This was the incarnation. According to Isaiah 9:6, the Son given to us in incarnation is called the eternal Father. Is this One the Son or the Father? John 5:43a says that the Son came in the name of the Father. We need to consider what this means. If a person goes to the bank to cash a check signed by another person, he must go there in the name of that person. To go to the bank in the name of another person is to go there as that person. The Son coming in the name of the Father means that He came as the Father. This is equivalent to the Son being the Father; hence, He is called the Father in Isaiah 9:6.

In the Divine Trinity, the Son, the Father, and the Spirit are all one. The Son came, but the Son and the Father coinhere. To coinhere is to mutually indwell each other. The Son is in the Father, and the Father is in the Son (John 14:10). The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are really one. No one can divide Them. There is a distinction among Them, but there is no separation. In the Lord's prayer in John 17, He revealed that He and the Father are one (vv. 21-22). From all of this we can see that the Father participated in the incarnation.

God the Spirit Having Joined the Incarnation

God the Spirit also joined the incarnation. In Luke 1:35 the angel told Mary that the Holy Spirit would come upon her as the power for her to conceive the holy child. Matthew 1:18 and 20 tell us further that Mary "was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit" and that "that which has been begotten in her is of the Holy Spirit." This indicates that the divine essence out of the Holy Spirit had been begotten in Mary's womb before she delivered the child Jesus. The incarnation was of the Son of God, but it was carried out by the Spirit. The Spirit also participated in the incarnation.

Now we can see that the entire Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—was incarnated. All three participated in the incarnation. When we say “God’s move in man,” we mean the Triune God’s move in man, the move of the three of the Divine Trinity. God’s incarnation was the start of God’s direct move in man. The Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—came out of eternity with divinity to enter into a human being to be one with man, to make Himself a man, and to participate in man’s nature (Heb. 2:14a). This is great and is far beyond our natural thought and understanding. God came in a silent way, in a secret way, and even in a small way. He came in His Divine Trinity to enter into a human being and be born there. By this He made Himself one with man and a part of man. From the time of His incarnation, He began not only to be in man but also to be a man.

According to the New Testament record, God’s move on earth in man is always in the principle of incarnation. Our salvation is the move of God in man and is the move of God to be a part of man. If God had never become us in the sense of coming into us to be our very life, we could never have been saved. Every time a person is saved, the incarnation is repeated again. What is salvation, or regeneration? It is God coming into a man in His divinity to make Himself a part of that man and to make that man a part of Him. Salvation brings God into man and brings man into God. Salvation makes God man so that man may be made God (but not the Godhead). This is incarnation, and this principle of incarnation should be applied to our entire Christian life.

In the Christian life the husbands and the wives should love each other, but in their natural life they are not capable of doing this. What husband can love his wife, and what wife can love her husband? If a Christian husband really loves his wife, that is not him. This means that he is living in the principle of Galatians 2:20—“I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me.” For a husband to love his wife in this way is in the principle of incarnation. Unless God is made you and you are made God, you can never really love your wife. We have to realize that we can never be really humble. Real humility is in the principle of incarnation. If I am really humble, this means that God has made Himself me, and He has also made me Himself. This is the strong principle of incarnation, and this is God’s move. Without Christ making Himself us and without us being made Christ, we cannot be humble, and we cannot have any kind of Christian virtue. Every Christian virtue we have is a part of the incarnation. Every day as we live the

Christian life, the Triune God is being incarnated by being made us and by making us Him. God is being made man, and man is being made God. When a brother really loves his wife, at that time he is God in God's life and nature but not in His Godhead. In other words, God has been made him, and he has been made God. This is the move of God in man in the principle of incarnation.

CHAPTER TWO

IN HIS INCARNATION (2)

Scripture Reading: Matt. 1:21, 23; Rom. 8:3; 1 Pet. 1:18-20; Heb. 9:26, 28, 12; 2:14; 1 Tim. 1:15; 1 John 4:9

OUTLINE

- V. The issue of the incarnation:
 - A. Jesus—Jehovah our Savior—Matt. 1:21.
 - B. Emmanuel—God with us—v. 23.
 - C. The God-man—the complete God and the perfect man.
- VI. The purpose of the incarnation:
 - A. To bring God into man.
 - B. To make God man so that man may become God in life and nature but not in the Godhead.
 - C. To mingle God with man so that God and man may be one.
 - D. To accomplish God's redemption for man—Rom. 8:3; 1 Pet. 1:18-20; Heb. 9:26, 28, 12; 2:14.
 - E. To carry out God's salvation in man—1 Tim. 1:15.
 - F. To impart the divine life into man—1 John 4:9.

In this chapter we want to see the issue and the purpose of God's incarnation.

THE ISSUE OF THE INCARNATION

Jesus—Jehovah Our Savior

The first item that we need to see as the issue of the incarnation is Jesus—Jehovah our Savior (Matt. 1:21). The Hebrew equivalent of the name *Jesus* in the Old Testament is *Joshua*. In Hebrews 4 Joshua is set forth as a type of the Lord Jesus bringing the people of God into rest (vv. 8-9). The Old Testament Joshua is a type of the New Testament Jesus. We may say that Joshua is the shadow, and Jesus is the real man. A man's shadow is his type.

Joshua and *Jesus* both mean “Jehovah the Savior” or “the salvation of Jehovah.” Salvation is a person, and that person is divine. His name is Jehovah. Jehovah is our Savior, so He is our salvation. In the Old Testament there was a person who was called Jehovah the Savior. Then the real One came, whose name is Jehovah, the Triune God Himself. In the Old Testament God had the titles *Elohim* (Gen. 1:1) and *Jehovah* (2:4), and often these two titles were placed together as *Jehovah Elohim*, that is, the Lord God. *Elohim* means “the strong and faithful One.” Jehovah is the eternal I Am. In Exodus 3 Moses asked God what he should say to those who asked him the name of the One who sent him. God then told Moses that His name is “I Am” (v. 14). I Am is Jehovah. *Jehovah* means “To Be.” In the whole universe there is only One who is “To Be.” He is the self-existing and ever-existing One. His name is “I AM WHO I AM” (v. 14). He is the One who is, the One who exists. That is His name.

The day came when this One left His eternity and came into time. As the To Be in eternity, He entered into time to become a man. Before He was born, God through His angel charged the virgin Mary to call this man Jesus, Jehovah the Savior. Many people know the name Jesus, but they do not know who Jesus is. Jesus is God becoming a man to be our Savior.

We have to realize that even if we had not become fallen, we would still need to be saved. Man was created into a situation of needing salvation. His fall increased his need of salvation. When God created Adam, Adam was not sinful; he was innocently perfect. It seemed as if he had no need. But anything that is organic, that is of life, needs feeding. Even the plant life needs the sunshine, air, fertilizer, and water as the nutrients for its growth. These items are for feeding. The sunshine, air, fertilizer, and water are the salvation of the plant. If you take away these four things from any plant, the plant will die. All plants need this kind of salvation.

For Jehovah to be our Savior means that He is the One to meet our need. The entire Bible reveals that He is our sunshine (Psa. 84:11; Mal. 4:2), our air (John 20:22), our living water (4:10, 14), and our food (6:35). At the end of the Bible, the tree of life is the food, and the water of life is the drink within the New Jerusalem. In the New Jerusalem there will be no need of the physical sun, because God the divine light will be shining there (Rev. 21:23). Outside the New Jerusalem the nations will still have the sun, but in the New Jerusalem we will have our unique sun—God Himself. The sun, the air, the

water, and the food are the items of God being our Savior to save us. His saving us means that He supplies us with all that we need.

Because of the fall, sin came in, death came in, Satan came in, and the world came in. Even we ourselves became sin because our body became the flesh of sin, and our soul became the self. Because of these great negative things, we surely need a Savior. We need salvation. But today most Christians talk only about the need of being saved from the negative things. They do not see the positive aspect of God's salvation. Even if we had not been damaged by sin, death, Satan, and the world, and even if we did not have the flesh and a sinful nature, we would still need God as our sunshine, air, water, and food. We need to see that even if we had never become fallen, we would still need to be regenerated. According to the revelation in Genesis 1 and 2, before Adam fell, he needed the tree of life. Although Adam was sinless and pure before he fell, he still needed God as life, signified by the tree of life.

The first issue of God's move in man in His incarnation is that God became Jesus. He became Jehovah our Savior, Jehovah our salvation. Every day we need Jesus. Every day we need Him as our sunshine, our air, our water, and our food. When we experience Him as our Savior, we become vital believers. The problem with us is that we do not experience and enjoy Him as our Savior in a continual way.

In the morning we may become vital after spending some time with the Lord in prayer and in the Word. But in the afternoon we may become dead. We have to realize that we have a person in us whose name is Jehovah the Savior, Jehovah the salvation, Jesus. He is within us and is one with us. He is in us and we are in Him, but in order to enjoy Him continually, we must learn how to do everything according to the spirit. Romans 8:4 says that the righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in us, who walk according to the spirit. To walk means to have our life and to do everything. In our speaking, in our thinking, in our attitude, and in everything, we must live and walk not according to our American custom or habit but according to the spirit. Time after time I have to ask the Lord to forgive me when I do not walk according to the spirit.

Recently, I met an old acquaintance and his wife whom I have known for many years. Later, the wife wrote a letter to me, in which she apologized for being too loose in her talk with me. Before I received her letter, I also had

asked the Lord to forgive me for speaking something to her and her husband that was not according to the spirit. I am sharing this small incident to show how little of our time is spent walking according to the spirit. When we read the newspaper, do we read it according to the spirit? I have to restrict myself strongly whenever I read the newspaper. I need to read the newspaper because I need to know the world situation in order to take care of the Lord's interests. I need to know about the situation politically, diplomatically, and militarily in Taiwan because we have many churches there. I also need to know what is going on in Russia for the sake of the Lord's move there. I need to be informed about the world situation and then pray accordingly. But when we pick up the newspaper, we are tempted and attracted to look at many other things. When we look at the newspaper, do we look at it according to the spirit? Furthermore, when we buy a tie, do we do it according to the spirit? I am sharing this to show that we need to do everything according to the spirit.

After many years of being a Christian, I feel that the most difficult thing for us to do today on this earth is to walk according to the spirit. The word *spirit* in Romans 8:4 denotes our regenerated human spirit indwelt by and mingled with the Spirit, who is the processed and consummated God. We all have to admit that we are short of God in our experience and in our inward being. This is why we need to be filled with the Spirit. To be filled with the Spirit is to "pick up God," of whom we are short.

Since the Lord's recovery came to this country over thirty years ago, thousands of messages have been released through our ministry. Many of the saints in the recovery have received all the truths, yet they are short of the Spirit and of walking according to the spirit. Recently, we have been paying our attention to the vital groups, but according to our actual daily practice, we are not picking up God that much. This is why we need to have set times of prayer every day. We need to pray in the morning, and we should try to have another time of prayer during the day. We should make a decision that upon rising up early in the morning, we would not care for anything first except going to the Lord. We should also make a decision to go to the Lord in prayer at another time later in the day. This is a very difficult thing to do.

During our time with the Lord, we should not allow ourselves to be disturbed by the telephone or by someone coming to our door. If we were having a time with the Lord in prayer, and there was a knock on our door, would we go to answer it? We should have the attitude that when we are

having such a time with the Lord, we are absent because we are fully occupied by God. Since we are absent and occupied by God, we do not need to answer the door or the phone at that time. We need to realize that during our time of prayer, we are busy with our God. In this sense, we are not at home during this time. We should not be directed or controlled by the telephone or by people knocking on our door. During our time with the Lord, we are absent from everything and busy with Him, occupied by Him.

Our lack of vitality in the Spirit is because of our lack of prayer. Most of us have read Romans 8:4, but how many of us really practice walking according to the spirit? We surely love Jesus and desire to exalt Jesus, but do we have our daily life according to the spirit? In order to experience and enjoy Jesus, Jehovah our Savior, we must practice doing everything according to the spirit.

The first issue of the incarnation is Jesus. Jesus is our Savior, our salvation. He is not merely in heaven; He is within us as the processed, consummated Spirit. But do we have our daily life walking according to Him? In our walk, does He take the lead or do we? Does He direct our steps or do we? We have to admit that most of the time in our Christian life we are the boss. We are the ones taking the lead. Quite often in our experience, we have even fired Jesus.

The virgin Mary brought forth a child and was told by God to give Him the name Jesus. As Christians, we have received Him. We possess Him, and He is with us. He lives in us, and He is our life. We may even say that He is our person. But we have to admit that most of the time we do not take Him as our person. Instead, we take our self as our person. Most of the time He is the guest within us, and we are the host. Since the day we were saved, we put Him in a position as the guest within us instead of allowing Him to make His home within us.

If this brief fellowship could be used by the Lord to touch us, it will revolutionize us. The realization that we should walk according to the spirit will restrict us and revolutionize our Christian life and church life.

Emmanuel—God with Us

We may say that the second issue of the incarnation is Emmanuel—God with us (Matt. 1:23). Jesus was the name given by God, whereas Emmanuel, meaning “God with us,” was the name by which man called Him. This was a

fulfillment of a prophecy in Isaiah 7:14. God told Mary that she would bear a child whose name should be called Jesus. When Jesus came, people called Him Emmanuel, meaning “God with us.”

The issue of the incarnation should be that God is with us. Today we have to say that God is with us not only outwardly but also and even more inwardly. The incarnation should be a process in our Christian life. Every day we should have the experience and realization that God is with us. When we are with people, do we cause people to feel that God is with us? As long as we are walking according to the spirit, others will have the sensation that God is with us. Our life should be the issue of incarnation.

The God-man— the Complete God and the Perfect Man

The incarnation also issued in Jesus as the God-man, the complete God and the perfect man. Jesus was the God-man, living and walking on this earth for thirty-three and a half years. He is the complete God. This means that He is not merely God the Son but the Triune God—God the Father (Isa. 9:6), God the Son (Matt. 3:17), and God the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17). Colossians 2:9 says that all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily. He is the complete God, the entire God, the whole God, and the perfect man, the real man. This is the issue, the result, of God’s incarnation.

When we believed in Jesus, we received this God-man. Jesus Christ is the God-man, and we Christians are Christ-men. A Christian is a Christ-man, one who is one with Christ, having His life and nature in an organic union with Him, and who is living by Him, even living Him, in his daily life. A Christ-man is a God-man. As a man at work in an office, the people around you should have the realization that you are a man plus something—a man plus God. Our life should be such an issue of the incarnation. If it is not, the incarnation to us is merely a doctrine, a part of theology. The incarnation of the Triune God should not be just a doctrine as a part of theology to us. Our life must be a life of God’s incarnation. God today is incarnated in us.

THE PURPOSE OF THE INCARNATION

To Bring God into Man

The purpose of the incarnation was to bring God into man. God is in us (1 John 4:15), and we have to realize that the first step God took to get into us was to be incarnated. Furthermore, God was incarnated not only in Jesus but also in us. To be saved is to have God incarnated in you. This is because incarnation brings God into man. Before you were saved, you had nothing to do with God. But since the day you believed into the Lord Jesus, God was incarnated in you. This means that God came into you. In human history God never came into man until four thousand years after His creation of man. He was born into man to bring God into man. When God comes into a person through regeneration, the incarnation is repeated again.

To Make God Man So That Man May Become God in Life and Nature but Not in the Godhead

God in eternity past was God only, but in incarnation He was made man. He made Himself man so that man may become God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead. We may be able to say that we become like God in life and nature, but do we have the boldness to say that we become God in life and nature? We need to see that we have been born of God, and we are the sons of God. Have you not been born of man? Then are you not man? If you are not man, then what are you? In the same way, since we are born of God and are the sons of God, are we not God? You are whatever you have been born of. If you have been born of Chinese, you are Chinese. If you have been born of Caucasians, you are Caucasian. Since we are born of God, we may say and even we should say that we are God in life and nature but not in the Godhead.

The church fathers taught the truth concerning deification in the first four centuries. They pointed out clearly that deification means that the believers in Christ have been made God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead. He is the unique God for people to worship in His Godhead, but we are God only in life and in nature, not in the Godhead. We all have to be clear that today we are God-men. Others should be able to sense that we are men plus something else. They may not be able to pin down what we are, but they can sense that we have something more. Eventually, when we speak something concerning Christ, they all will realize that what we have as something more is Christ Himself, that is, God. This is the testimony of a God-man.

To Mingle God with Man

So That God and Man May Be One

The purpose of the incarnation was also to mingle God with man so that God and man may be one. We are not one with God merely by being in company with Him. This is why it is more meaningful to say that we and God are one. Instead of always saying that we are one with God, we should learn to say that we and God are one. But even to say that we and God are one is still not fully adequate. We have to say that we and God are one by being mingled together.

Because of the wrong teaching of Eutyches in the fifth century, most Christian teachers dare not to say that God and man are mingled together. The Eutychians denied the distinctness and coexistence of Christ's divinity and humanity, and they asserted that the two natures were merged into one, resulting in a third nature being produced (see *Concerning the Person of Christ*). But this teaching is in contradiction with the revelation of the holy Word. We need to see the wonderful truth in the Bible concerning the mingling of divinity with humanity. According to Leviticus 2:4, the fine flour mingled with oil as the meal offering is a type of Christ as the One who was a mingling of divinity with humanity. Although oil and flour were mingled into one, they were still two in nature; they were not merged into one to become a third nature.

The Lord Jesus told us that He is the vine and we are the branches (John 15:5). We were born of God to be the branches of Christ. We have been grafted into Christ (Rom. 11:24). Grafting is a matter of mingling. When the branches of one tree are grafted into another tree, the two become one not just by joining but by mingling. The two plants are mingled to become one plant. In other words, the two lives are mingled to become one life.

The meal offering in Leviticus 2:4 was made of fine flour mingled with oil. Two elements were mingled together to be one entity but without a third element being produced. The English word *mingled* means that two elements are combined together but that they remain distinguishable in their elements. The meal offering was of two elements—the element of oil and the element of fine flour. No third element was produced. The truth of mingling can also be seen in 1 Corinthians 6:17, which says that “he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” This indicates the mingling of the Lord as the Spirit with our spirit.

The divine Spirit dwells in our human spirit, and these two mingle together as one spirit.

To Accomplish God's Redemption for Man

Another purpose of the incarnation was to accomplish God's redemption for man (Rom. 8:3; 1 Pet. 1:18-20; Heb. 9:26, 28, 12; 2:14). God cannot apply His redemptive work to us without being one with us. He died a vicarious death for us so that His death could now become our death (Gal. 2:20a). The only way that this could be realized is by mingling. God is mingled with us, so now He is one with us. When He died on the cross, we died there with Him. Without our union with Him and without being joined to Him, His substitutionary death could not be applied to us. When we become one with Christ, whatever He has accomplished as our Substitute becomes ours.

To Carry Out God's Salvation in Man

The incarnation was also for the purpose of carrying out God's salvation in man (1 Tim. 1:15). We need not only God's redemption but also God's salvation. Redemption mostly deals with the negative things, and salvation is mostly to supply us with the positive things. For God to be our salvation, He needs to be one with us. Since He is one with us, His death was a vicarious death for our redemption. Also, His being everything to us as our life and nature means that He is our salvation. In order to be our salvation, He has to become one with us.

To Impart the Divine Life into Man

God was incarnated to impart the divine life into man. First John 4:9 says that "God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might have life and live through Him." God came to be a man so that we could have His divine life. If He had never been a man, He could not come into us, and we could not have Him as our divine life. Incarnation was for the impartation of the divine life into us.

CHAPTER THREE

IN HIS HUMAN LIVING

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 3:16; Phil. 2:7-8; John 3:17; Matt. 9:10-13; Luke 4:19-22a; Acts 10:38; Isa. 53:2; Luke 2:7, 12, 40, 52, 42, 46-47, 49; 3:23; Isa. 53:3; Matt. 13:55-57; Luke 4:28-30; Matt. 26:4, 16; 4:1, 11

OUTLINE

- I. God manifested in the flesh—1 Tim. 3:16:
 - A. Taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man—Phil. 2:7-8.
 - B. To express the eternal, infinite, invisible, glorious, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent God through the mortal, finite, visible, inglorious man, limited in power, knowledge, and presence:
 - 1. Divinity unveiled in humanity.
 - 2. The divine attributes shown in the human virtues.
 - 3. The divine life mingled with the human life to have one living without a third entity being produced.
 - C. In mercy, love, and grace and not in the condemnation of the law—John 3:17:
 - 1. Exhibiting that God desires mercy—Matt. 9:10-13.
 - 2. Proclaiming God's acceptable year of jubilee through the words of grace proceeding out of His mouth—Luke 4:19-22a.
 - D. Under the anointing of the Holy Spirit and the divine power with the presence of God—Acts 10:38:
 - 1. To declare the Triune God in doing good.
 - 2. To show people the power of God.
 - 3. To heal the people oppressed by the devil.
- II. In the stages of human life:
 - A. Growing up before Jehovah as a tender plant and as a root out of dry ground—Isa. 53:2.
 - B. In babyhood—Luke 2:7, 12:
 - 1. Wrapped in swaddling clothes.
 - 2. Lying in a manger.
 - C. In boyhood:

1. Growing in wisdom and stature, in the grace of God, and in favor with God and men—vv. 40, 52.
 2. Caring for the things of God at the age of twelve—vv. 42, 46-47, 49.
- D. In maturity:
1. To begin His ministry for God at the age of thirty—3:23.
 2. To be a man of sorrows, suffering the despising, rejection, and persecution of man—Isa. 53:3; Matt. 13:55-57; Luke 4:28-30; Matt. 26:4, 16.
 3. To be tempted by the devil:
 - a. Led by the Spirit—4:1.
 - b. Defeating the devil and being ministered to by the angels—v. 11.
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In this chapter we want to fellowship concerning Christ's human living. We may think that Christ's human living was a common thing, but it was altogether uncommon. This is because His human living was God's human living. He was a man, but He lived God. We Christians are men, but we should also be those who live Christ, who live God. To say that we live Christ, that we live God, means that we and Christ are one. When we say that we live *for* Christ, this indicates that Christ and we are two. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:15 that we need to live *to* Christ. Paul also says in Philippians 1:21, "To me, to live is Christ." Philippians 1 shows that to magnify Christ (v. 20) is to live Christ, not to live for Christ.

The Bible does show that we need to live for Christ and to live to Christ, but it also shows that we need to live Christ. To live for Christ is somewhat shallow, to live to Christ is deeper, and to live Christ is the deepest. When we say that we live Christ, this is new utterance to convey the divine facts in our spiritual culture. The language serves the facts in a culture. We need the spiritual, divine language to express the things in our spiritual culture. We need to speak as Paul spoke when he said that for him to live was Christ. We all need to be those who live Christ.

There was a human living on this earth not just by man but by God in man. This was God's living in humanity. In Christ's human living, the divine life was mingled with the human life. In the previous chapter on God's incarnation, we saw that the purpose of the incarnation was to mingle God with man so that God and man might be one. We can see the mingling of God

and man in the type of the meal offering (Lev. 2:4). Stanza 5 of *Hymns*, #86 says, “Thou as a man art tender, sweet, / Balanced in every way, complete, / Meal-offering to the Father meet; / Lord, I remember Thee!” In the meal offering, there were two elements. One element was the fine flour made of wheat. The other element was the olive oil. The meal offering was made of fine flour mingled with oil. The word *mingle* means to combine two elements together to be one entity without a third element being produced. The two elements are combined together, but they still remain distinguishable. God and man are mingled together as one, but they still remain distinguishable.

In His incarnation God entered into a virgin’s womb and stayed there for nine months. Then He was born to be a God-man and lived a human life within man for thirty-three and a half years. We have to pay our attention to His human living and fellowship about it because today we Christians are repeating His human living. Today God is moving in man, and He is living a human life in man.

We may have the boldness to say that Christ was God living a human life, but we would not say this about ourselves. Instead, we would say, “I am a man living a divine life.” Christ is God, we are men, and we live Christ. Thus, we would say that we are men living God’s life.

It seems that this is right, but we need to consider this from another angle. We are those who take Christ as our person. We all should say, “Christ is my person.” Our person is Christ, and Christ lives in us. He lives in our human life. When we take Christ as our person, we can say that “it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me” (Gal. 2:20a). This means that we are not living, but Christ is the One who is living. In this sense, we are Christ, and Christ is living a human life. Thus, we are Christ living a human life. Since Christ is God, we may say that we are God living a human life. Instead of saying, “I am a man living a divine life,” we should say, “I am God living a human life.”

We should not be the person in our Christian life. It is not we who are living a divine life, but it is Christ who is living a human life. If we say, “I am living a divine life,” we are the person living. Instead, we should say, “I am Christ living a human life.” The Christian life is Christ living a human life. It is not an American, a Chinese, or a Japanese living a divine life. The Americans, Chinese, and Japanese are all on the cross. They have been crucified. We do

not have many different kinds of people living in the church. We have only one person living—Christ. Christ, the very God, is here living a human life.

What is the Christian life? The Christian life is God living a human life. What is the church? The church is Christ living a human life. The church cannot come into existence and be built up by the miraculous gifts and miracles according to the Pentecostal movement. The church has only one way of being built up. That way is to have God living a human life. What builds the Christians up is God living a human life.

You may think that the Christian life is a matter of learning how to imitate Christ and that you need to bear your cross to follow Him. This is a natural thought. You have to be converted to realize that your Christian life is not you living. Your Christian life is God living. It is not you living a divine life but God living a human life. The proper Christians are those who have God in them living a human life. God is moving in them to be a husband, a wife, or the proper children of parents. The Christian life is God living a human life.

GOD MANIFESTED IN THE FLESH

First Timothy 3:16 says that God was manifested in the flesh. God being manifested in the flesh is God living a human life. We should not try to be angels, because God is not manifested in the angels but in the flesh. This means that God is living a human life.

Taking the Form of a Slave, Becoming in the Likeness of Men, and Being Found in Fashion as a Man

In Philippians 2:7-8 Paul says that the Lord Jesus took the form of a slave, became in the likeness of men, and was found in fashion as a man. Paul uses three particular words here: *form*, *likeness*, and *fashion*. We may think that these are synonyms, but each bears a particular significance. The form is the outward appearance, implying the reality within. We may use a horse as an illustration. The horse, of course, is in the form of the horse, having the outward appearance of a horse, but this form implies the reality of a horse. A false horse would have only the form of a horse but no inward reality. The form is the outward appearance, implying the inward reality. Christ existed in the form of God. The form of God is Christ's outward appearance, implying

the inward reality of Christ's deity. In His human living, Christ, who was in the form of God, took the form of a slave. He did not have just the appearance of a slave; He was really a slave, serving people as a slave.

Christ also had the human likeness. He became in the likeness of men (plural). *Men* means mankind. The likeness of men denotes the outward appearance of His humanity.

Christ was also found in fashion as a man. The fashion is the outward guise, the semblance. The likeness and the fashion are nearly the same, but likeness is general. The Lord Jesus became in the likeness of mankind in a general sense, but He was found in fashion as a man. The man Jesus had the likeness of men, and all the people were observing Him, inspecting Him, and watching over Him. As they observed Him, they talked about Him and wondered who He was. In their observance of Him they found Him in the fashion of a man. What Christ looked like in His humanity was found by men to be in fashion as a man. Thus, *fashion* is a more particular term than *likeness*. In Philippians Paul stresses that in form, in likeness, and in fashion Christ was a real man.

**To Express the Eternal, Infinite, Invisible, Glorious,
Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent God
through the Mortal, Finite, Visible, Inglorious Man,
Limited in Power, Knowledge, and Presence**

The Lord Jesus was a real, perfect man to express the complete God. He was God manifested in the flesh to express the eternal, infinite, invisible, glorious, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent God through the mortal, finite, visible, inglorious man, limited in power, knowledge, and presence. Mortal is versus eternal, finite is versus infinite, visible is versus invisible, and inglorious is versus glorious. God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and present everywhere, but man is limited in power, knowledge, and presence.

God can be in heaven and on earth at the same time. But when He became a man in time, He could be in only one place. When He was in Nazareth, He could not be in Jerusalem, because He became a limited man. In John 7 His brothers told Him to go into Judea and manifest Himself to the world (vv. 3-4), but the Lord said, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready" (v. 6). He was telling them that His time was limited. Although He was

the almighty God, as a man under persecution, the Lord was limited in relation to His activity. Although He was the eternal, infinite, unlimited God, He lived here on earth as a man, being limited even in the matter of time.

Divinity Unveiled in Humanity

It is wrong to say that humanity was unveiled in divinity. Rather, divinity was unveiled in humanity. If your Christian life is an unveiling of your humanity, that is wrong. If this is the case, you get the glory and the exaltation. You are the one manifested. The Christian life is a life of divinity unveiled in humanity.

The Divine Attributes Shown in the Human Virtues

In Christ's human living, the divine attributes were shown in the human virtues. When He loved people, that was a display of His human virtue, yet within that human virtue was the divine attribute as the reality. We can illustrate this by considering a glove and the hand within it. The glove may be likened to the human virtues, and the hand to the divine attributes. The real contents of the glove is the hand, just as the real contents of the human virtues of Christ are the divine attributes. God has many attributes. One attribute is love, another attribute is light, and another attribute is kindness. All these are His attributes, and they were lived out of the man Jesus as His virtues. All of God's attributes became the virtues of the man Jesus.

The Gospels show us the man Jesus loving people, but actually this was God's love expressed in Christ's love. The inward reality is the divine attribute and the outward appearance is the human virtue. First Peter 2:9 speaks of the virtues of our Lord, not His attributes. In His nature are the attributes, but in expression the attributes become the virtues. The attributes are of God, and the virtues are of the man Jesus.

The virtues of the man Jesus are filled, mingled, and saturated with the attributes of God. We should not love anyone without the inward attribute of God's love. Otherwise, our love for people is an empty love. It is a virtue in appearance, but there is no reality within it as an attribute.

The Divine Life Mingled with the Human Life to Have One Living without a Third Entity Being Produced

In Christ's human living, the divine life was mingled with the human life to have one kind of living without a third entity being produced. Christ's virtues were a mingling of divinity with humanity.

**In Mercy, Love, and Grace,
and Not in the Condemnation of the Law**

In His human living, Christ was God manifested in the flesh to express God in mercy, love, and grace and not in the condemnation of the law (John 3:17). Mercy is the source of God's love. Without God's mercy there is no source for God's love. This is because the ones whom God loves are pitiful. We are pitiful, yet He loved us because He is merciful to us. Mercy is the source of God's love, and grace is the instrument of God's love, so mercy, love, and grace are actually one thing.

Exhibiting That God Desires Mercy

The Lord Jesus told the Pharisees that God desires mercy and not sacrifice (Matt. 9:10-13). His human living exhibited that God desires mercy.

***Proclaiming
God's Acceptable Year of Jubilee***

A jubilee is the biggest release, the biggest liberation. In the Old Testament the Israelites could have only one jubilee every fifty years (Lev. 25:8-17). Fifty is a number of fullness in people's age. This indicates that the longer we live, the more we become bound and imprisoned. A newborn babe is not bound or imprisoned by anything. But as he gets older, he becomes more and more bound and imprisoned. This is why we need a jubilee. God is merciful, and God desires to bring His people into a jubilee, a time of liberation. When the jubilee comes, everyone—old and young, male and female, strong and weak—is released unconditionally and without exception. In His human living Christ proclaimed God's acceptable year of jubilee through the words of grace proceeding out of His mouth (Luke 4:19-22a).

**Under the Anointing of the Holy Spirit
and the Divine Power with the Presence of God**

Acts 10:38 says that Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power and that He went about doing good and healing all those who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. In His human living, He was the Son of God anointed with the Holy Spirit, and He was with the presence of God the Father. Here we can see the entire Divine Trinity moving in the man Jesus.

To Declare the Triune God in Doing Good

He declared the Triune God in doing good. The good things He did were a display of His virtues saturated with God's attributes to declare the Triune God under the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

To Show People the Power of God

He did many miracles under the anointing of the divine power to show people the power of God.

To Heal the People Oppressed by the Devil

He fought down the evil one to release his captives, healing the people oppressed by the devil. On the one hand, Christ in His humanity did many good things, expressing God's attributes in His virtues. On the other hand, He performed many miracles in power to defeat God's enemy and to release all the oppressed ones.

IN THE STAGES OF HUMAN LIFE

God was manifested in the flesh in the stages of human life.

Growing Up before Jehovah like a Tender Plant and like a Root out of Dry Ground

When He became a man, He was growing up before Jehovah like a tender plant and like a root out of dry ground (Isa. 53:2). He came out of a very poor family, and that poor family was the dry ground. He was a descendant of the royal family of David, but at His time David's royal family had become a poor family, the dry ground.

In Babyhood

God was manifested in the flesh in babyhood. Luke 2 tells us that Mary wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger (v. 7). The angel told the shepherds, “This will be the sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger” (v. 12). He was the unique One who was born in a manger. The manger was a particular, unique sign of the Man-Savior. A baby in a manger, signifying smallness in lowliness, was a sign of the Man-Savior’s life.

In Boyhood

Growing in Wisdom and Stature, in the Grace of God, and in Favor with God and Men

In His boyhood He grew in wisdom and stature, in the grace of God, and in favor with God and men (vv. 40, 52). *Wisdom* refers to the inner man, and *stature* refers to the physical body. The wisdom of the Savior’s deity (Col. 2:2-3) was revealed in proportion to the measure of His bodily growth. In His boyhood the grace of God was upon Him. As a boy, He needed the grace of God for His human life. He was filled with the wisdom of His deity and needed the grace of God in His humanity.

He advanced in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men. He was in favor with God because He was growing in the expression of God according to God’s desire. He was in favor with men because He was growing in human virtues, which were gracious to men. He was growing as a God-man before God and men.

Caring for the Things of God at the Age of Twelve

He also cared for the things of God at the age of twelve (Luke 2:42, 46-47, 49). The age of twelve is the age of a boy’s full growth. The boy Jesus was caring for the interest of God when He was twelve years old.

In Maturity

To Begin His Ministry for God at the Age of Thirty

In His maturity as a man at the age of thirty, He began His ministry for God (3:23). Thirty years of age is the full age for God's service (Num. 4:3, 35, 39-40, 43-44, 47-48). In the Old Testament a man entered into an apprenticeship for the priesthood at the age of twenty-five. He learned for five years and became mature at the age of thirty. The Lord Jesus became mature at the age of thirty to carry out His earthly ministry.

To Be a Man of Sorrows

From the time that He became a minister of God, He also became a man of sorrows, suffering the despising, rejection, and persecution of man (Isa. 53:3; Matt. 13:55-57; Luke 4:28-30; Matt. 26:4, 16). Throughout His whole life He was suffering, but especially in the last three and a half years.

To Be Tempted by the Devil

Led by the Spirit

After He became thirty years old, He was tempted by the devil, and this temptation was under the leading of the Spirit of God (4:1).

Defeating the Devil and Being Ministered to by the Angels

In that temptation He defeated the devil, and after that temptation He was ministered to by the angels (v. 11).

We can see the move of God in man as He passed through human living in the stages of human life. He was a real man in babyhood, in boyhood, and in His maturity as He ministered for God. His human living was a very particular living. It was the living of God in His move within man and through man. His living was God's living in a man, which should be our living today. The Christian living should be a living in which God lives a human life in His children.

CHAPTER FOUR

IN THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST (1)

Scripture Reading: Col. 1:22; Eph. 2:15-16; Col. 2:9; 1 Tim. 3:16; Acts 20:28; John 8:29; 16:32; 1:29; Heb. 9:26, 28; 1 Cor. 15:3; Heb. 9:12; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20a; Heb. 2:14; John 12:31; Gal. 6:14; Heb. 2:9; Col. 1:20; 2:14-15; John 12:24; 1 Cor. 10:17

OUTLINE

- I. God having participated in the crucifixion of Christ:
 - A. The crucifixion being the suffering of Christ in the flesh—Col. 1:22; Eph. 2:15-16.
 - B. Christ in His body of flesh being the embodiment of the Triune God—Col. 2:9.
 - C. The manifestation of Christ being God's manifestation in the flesh—1 Tim. 3:16.
 - D. Hence, the crucifixion of Christ being also God's crucifixion:
 - 1. The blood shed by Christ on the cross being God's own blood—Acts 20:28.
 - 2. In one of his hymns Charles Wesley says, "Amazing love! how can it be / That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?" and "'Tis mystery all! The Immortal dies!"—*Hymns*, #296
 - 3. God being one with Christ all the time—John 8:29; 16:32.
- II. The accomplishments of God in the crucifixion of Christ:
 - A. Taking away the sin of the world for God's eternal redemption—1:29; Heb. 9:26, 28; 1 Cor. 15:3; Heb. 9:12.
 - B. Dying for all of us—2 Cor. 5:14-15.
 - C. Crucifying our old man—Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20a.
 - D. Destroying the devil, who has the might of death—Heb. 2:14.
 - E. Judging and crucifying the world—John 12:31; Gal. 6:14.
 - F. Tasting death on behalf of everything and reconciling all things to God—Heb. 2:9; Col. 1:20.
 - G. Abolishing the law in ordinances and slaying the enmity between peoples—Eph. 2:15-16; Col. 2:14.

- H. Releasing the divine life for the producing of the believers to constitute the Body of Christ—John 12:24; 1 Cor. 10:17.
 - III. God's working during Christ's crucifixion:
 - A. Wiping out the handwriting in ordinances, which was against us, contrary to us, and nailing it to the cross—Col. 2:14.
 - B. Stripping off the rulers and the authorities and making a display of them openly, triumphing over them in the cross—v. 15.
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In this chapter we come to the third step of God's move in man. God first moved in man in incarnation. God was born into the womb of a virgin, and after nine months Jesus was born out of that virgin. A key verse concerning God's incarnation is Matthew 1:20, which says, "That which has been begotten in her is of the Holy Spirit." Something was not only conceived in the virgin Mary but also born into her. That was the first step that God took to move in man.

The second step of God's move in man was His human living on earth. People saw Jesus as a man living, walking, working, and ministering on the earth. No one can deny that in history there was such a man named Jesus. But while this man was living, walking, working, and ministering on the earth, another One lived there. In Jesus' living, God was living. In Jesus' walking, God was walking. In Jesus' working, God was working. In Jesus' ministering and serving, God was there. In the man Jesus was the very God. He was God manifested in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16).

In this chapter we want to see the third major step of the move of God in man, and this step was His move in the crucifixion of Christ. Christ was crucified, but in His crucifixion God was moving. The previous chapters concerning the move of God in man are entitled "In His Incarnation" and "In His Human Living." But I want us to notice that I did not entitle this chapter "In His Crucifixion" but "In the Crucifixion of Christ." We have to be careful by saying that God moved in the crucifixion of Christ. It is not safe to say directly "in His crucifixion," that is, in God's crucifixion. When we say "in the crucifixion of Christ," we are very safe. When we fellowship about the crucifixion of Christ, we need to see who Christ is. First, we have to see that Christ is the embodiment of God (Col. 2:9). Since this is the case, He was the very God manifested in the flesh.

At the end of John 10 the opposing Jews confronted the Lord Jesus. Verse 31 says that they were about to stone Him. Jesus said to them, “I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of these works are you stoning Me?” (v. 32). Then the Jews answered Him, “We are not stoning You for a good work, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a man, are making Yourself God” (v. 33). Throughout the centuries there have been great debates over the person of Christ. His person is related to the Divine Trinity because in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. This subject “In the Crucifixion of Christ” implies the Divine Trinity.

We should not say directly and initially that the crucifixion was God’s crucifixion. Instead, we should say that this was Christ’s crucifixion. When we are sharing the truth concerning the crucifixion, we need to take steps like that of a stairway. We should not jump from the top of a building to the ground floor. This is to commit suicide. Instead, we must have a stairway.

Without His Divine Trinity, God could not have moved in the crucifixion. Who can crucify God? Yet Charles Wesley says in one of his hymns, “Amazing love! how can it be / That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?” and “’Tis mystery all! The Immortal dies!” (*Hymns*, #296). Charles Wesley says that God died for him and that the Immortal died. This means that He who cannot die, died for us. No one could crucify God if He remained in His divinity, but Christ as the manifestation of God in the flesh was crucified. The Divine Trinity was involved there. The crucifixion of Christ was the death in which God moved in man. God moved in another’s crucifixion, but this other One was the embodiment of God. The first One moved in the second One’s death, and the second One was the embodiment of the first One. This is the stairway that we need in order to understand the crucifixion.

GOD HAVING PARTICIPATED IN THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST

God participated in the crucifixion of Christ. The very One by the name of Jesus Christ was crucified on the cross, but God participated in that crucifixion.

The Crucifixion Being the Suffering of Christ in the Flesh

The crucifixion was the suffering of Christ in the flesh (Col. 1:22; Eph. 2:15-16). This is the fact in history, and this is also the record in black and white in the Bible. Hallelujah for God's incarnation, for His human living, and for the crucifixion of Christ! In all these things God was moving in man.

Christ in His Body of Flesh

Being the Embodiment of the Triune God

The crucifixion was the crucifixion of Christ in the flesh. Then who was Christ in the flesh? Christ in His body of flesh was the embodiment of the Triune God (Col. 2:9). The Triune God is invisible, mysterious, and spiritual, but He was embodied. The invisible, divine, spiritual God got into a physical, visible body. The crucifixion was the crucifixion of Christ, yet Christ was the very embodiment of God.

The Manifestation of Christ

Being God's Manifestation in the Flesh

First Timothy 3:16 says that the great mystery of godliness is God manifested in the flesh. Christ was God manifested in the flesh. The manifestation of Christ was God's manifestation in the flesh.

Hence, the Crucifixion of Christ

Being Also God's Crucifixion

Since the manifestation of Christ was God's manifestation in the flesh, the crucifixion of Christ was also God's crucifixion. Since we can say and do say that God was manifested in the flesh, we also can say that God was crucified in the flesh.

The Blood Shed by Christ on the Cross

Being God's Own Blood

Paul says in Acts 20:28 that the blood that Christ shed on the cross was God's own blood. God bought, purchased, the church with His own blood, so the church is so dear, so beloved, in the feeling of God and in the eyes of God. This was the word spoken by Paul to the elders of Ephesus. He was impressing the elders from Ephesus that they should love the church,

considering the church very dear and beloved as God does. The church is so dear and beloved to God in His feeling, so He purchased the church with His own blood. The Bible in Acts 20:28 says that the divine God has human blood.

As we have pointed out, Charles Wesley wrote a very good hymn with a good melody, in which he spoke of the crucifixion of Christ. This is *Hymns*, #296 in our hymnal. A number of years ago I translated this hymn into Chinese. Charles Wesley had the boldness to say in this hymn that the immortal God died for us. I am so glad that he declared this truth and that it is printed in the hymnal.

God Being One with Christ All the Time

The crucifixion of Christ was also God's crucifixion because God was one with Christ all the time (John 8:29; 16:32). God never left Christ alone. When Christ was incarnated, God was incarnated. They coinhered. When Christ was living on this earth, God was living. When Christ was crucified, God was crucified. This is because They coinhere; that is, They mutually indwell each other. In the Gospels Christ told us repeatedly that the Father was in Him and that He was in the Father (John 10:38; 14:10-11, 20; 17:21). Thus, we may say that God died in Christ, so Christ's crucifixion became God's crucifixion. God died in man. God died not in His own death but in another One's death. God died in the Son's death.

THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF GOD IN THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST

Now we want to see the accomplishments of God in the crucifixion of Christ.

Taking Away the Sin of the World for God's Eternal Redemption

In the crucifixion of Christ, God took away the sin of the world for His eternal redemption (1:29; Heb. 9:26, 28; 1 Cor. 15:3; Heb. 9:12). *Sin* implies the singular *sin* and the plural *sins*. In John 1:29 *sin* is a total term, implying both the inward sin in our nature and the outward sins, trespasses, in our conduct.

Dying for All of Us

Christ also died for all of us (2 Cor. 5:14-15). He died not only for our sin but also for us, the persons.

Crucifying Our Old Man

Romans 6:6 says that our old man has been crucified with Christ, and in Galatians 2:20a Paul says, "I am crucified with Christ." *I* here refers to the old man. "I," the old man, have been crucified with Christ.

Destroying the Devil, Who Has the Might of Death

Hebrews 2:14 tells us clearly that Christ destroyed the devil, who has the might of death.

Judging and Crucifying the World

In John 12:31 we can see the judgment of the world through the death of Christ. Then Galatians 6:14 speaks of the crucifixion of the world.

Tasting Death on Behalf of Everything and Reconciling All Things to God

Hebrews 2:9 says that Christ tasted death on behalf of everything, and Colossians 1:20 says that through His death He reconciled all things to God.

Abolishing the Law in Ordinances and Slaying the Enmity between Peoples

In His crucifixion Christ abolished the law in ordinances and slew the enmity between peoples, especially between the Jews and the Gentiles (Eph. 2:15-16; Col. 2:14). The law comprises the Ten Commandments, the statutes, and the ordinances in the Old Testament. When a statute carries a judgment with it, it becomes an ordinance. Keeping the Sabbath is a statute, but this statute carries a judgment with it, so it is an ordinance. The children of Israel were required to keep the Sabbath. Otherwise, they would be stoned to death (Exo. 31:14-15; Num. 15:32-36). This judgment made keeping the Sabbath an ordinance. When judgment is added to statutes, they become ordinances.

When Christ was crucified on the cross, all the ordinances were nailed there (Col. 2:14).

Now we need to consider who died on the cross. Satan was destroyed on the cross. We believers died on the cross. You have to say, “Hallelujah, I died there, and my enemy Satan died there.” The world died there. Our sin died there. Who did not die there? You may say, “God!” But do not say this. In the crucifixion of Christ, God died in man. Satan and the fallen angels died there, God died there, man died there, the world died there, and the entire old creation died there (Heb. 2:9; Col. 1:20).

Releasing the Divine Life for the Producing of the Believers to Constitute the Body of Christ

In the above aspects of Christ’s death, He dealt with all the negative things. On the positive side, He released the divine life through His death for the producing of the believers to constitute the Body of Christ (John 12:24; 1 Cor. 10:17). All these things were accomplished by one death—the death of Christ in His crucifixion. God participated in that death, so God moved in that death in man.

The crucifixion was not only Christ’s work but also God’s move in man, so it is God’s history. God was merely God in eternity. Then one day He came out of eternity and entered into time, and He entered into humanity with His divinity. He was embodied in Christ, who died an all-inclusive death in His crucifixion. Actually, all world history is God’s history. All the world affairs are not only the history of man but also the history of God. It depends on the vision you have. If you have only physical sight, you see the world situation, the human history. If you have the spiritual sight, the spiritual view, you can see Someone working behind the world situation. When we look at human history with the world situation, we must have another view, the biblical view with the spiritual insight.

The crucifixion of Christ was a part of human history. According to human history, Jesus, a Jew and a Nazarene, was nailed on the cross by the Roman soldiers. But behind this visible scene there was an invisible scene. Who was there on the cross? God was there to bear the sin and sins of man. God was there to die for fallen mankind. God was there to crucify the old man, to destroy Satan, the power of death, to judge and crucify the world, and to taste

death on behalf of everything. Everything in the old creation is dying. Everything is decaying. Therefore, God tasted death on behalf of everything so that all things could be redeemed and reconciled to God. Also, on the cross the shell of His humanity was broken, and God released the divine life. God was working in the crucifixion of Christ.

Secular historians on earth cannot touch these things. They do not have this view. Even many Christians do not have a view to see that God accomplished seven items on the negative side plus one item on the positive side. In the positive aspect of the cross, God released Himself as the divine life. The cross was God's move and has become God's history.

GOD'S WORKING DURING CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION

Wiping Out the Handwriting in Ordinances, Which Was against Us, Which Was Contrary to Us, and Nailing It to the Cross

In the crucifixion of Christ, God wiped out the handwriting in ordinances, which was against us, which was contrary to us, and nailed it to the cross (Col. 2:14). While the Roman soldiers were nailing Christ on the cross, God was also nailing something there. Christ suffered the nailing, and God did the nailing. God nailed to the cross the law given through Moses.

At the time that Paul wrote his Epistle to the Colossians, all the Jewish people, all the Judaizers, and all the Colossian believers influenced by the Judaizers respected Moses and the angels to the uttermost because the law was ordained through angels and given through Moses (Gal. 3:19; Acts 7:38, 53). The Colossians even fell into the heresy of worshipping the angels (Col. 2:18). But while the Roman soldiers were nailing Christ on the cross, God was nailing the law on the cross. While the Lord Jesus was crucified on the cross, many women who had followed Him were looking on from a distance (Matt. 27:55-56). They saw only the Roman soldiers' nailing Him on the cross, but they did not see that God was also nailing the law there. The Bible tells us this.

Stripping Off the Rulers and the Authorities and Making a Display of Them Openly,

Triumphing over Them in the Cross

While God was doing His work to accomplish Christ's wonderful crucifixion, the evil angelic rulers and authorities in the air were making trouble. They came in to frustrate the crucifixion. But God stripped them off as someone would strip off a garment. God made a public show of them in the sense of an open shame and triumphed over them in the cross (Col. 2:15).

I hope that we can see how much God was doing on the cross. Christ was nailed on the cross for six hours. In these six hours God did two things outside of Christ. First, He nailed the law on the cross. The soldiers were busy nailing Christ on the cross, and God was also busy nailing the law there. Second, He stripped off all the bothering evil angels to clear up the atmosphere around the cross. On the cross God was stripping off all the evil angelic rulers and authorities so that the way and the atmosphere might be cleared for us to enter into the participation in Christ. That was God's move on the earth. That was God's move in man in the death of Christ. Thus, Christ's crucifixion is a part of God's history in man.

God's working during Christ's crucifixion to nail the law on the cross and to strip off the evil angelic rulers and authorities is revealed in Colossians 2 through the apostle Paul. Paul somehow knew these things, and we do not know how he came to know them. Paul did tell us that he had received a great and mysterious revelation (Eph. 3:4; 5:32). In 2 Corinthians 12 Paul says that he was caught away into Paradise and heard unspeakable words, which were not allowed for a man to speak (v. 4).

This universe is not just a universe of the physical history. Behind the physical history there is the spiritual history. Behind the visible scene there is an invisible scene. The people of this world know only the visible, not the invisible scene. But the Bible shows us both. Through the reading of the Bible we can see the visible scene in this universe, and we can also see the invisible scene behind the visible scene. In the invisible scene we see God's move, God's history, in man.

CHAPTER FIVE

IN THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST (2)

Scripture Reading: Col. 1:22; Eph. 2:15-16; Col. 2:9; 1 Tim. 3:16; Acts 20:28; John 8:29; 16:32; 1:29; Heb. 9:26, 28; 1 Cor. 15:3; Heb. 9:12; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20a; Heb. 2:14; John 12:31; Gal. 6:14; Heb. 2:9; Col. 1:20; 2:14-15; John 12:24; 1 Cor. 10:17

In this chapter we want to continue our fellowship concerning the crucifixion of Christ and answer a number of serious questions concerning this crucial part of the move of God in man.

THE DEATH OF CHRIST BEING THE DEATH OF GOD

First, we need to consider how we can say that the death of Christ was the death of God and how the Scriptures show us that Christ's death was God's death. We saw in the previous chapter that Christ was crucified in the flesh (Col. 1:22; Eph. 2:15-16) and that Christ in His body of flesh was the embodiment of the Triune God (Col. 2:9). Furthermore, the manifestation of Christ was the manifestation of God in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16). Therefore, the crucifixion of Christ was also God's crucifixion.

Acts 20:28 is a strong verse showing that the crucifixion of Christ was God's crucifixion. This verse says that God purchased the church with His own blood. In quoting the Bible to prove a point, it is always best to have two or three verses because this is a matter of testimony. The Bible presents a principle that two or three witnesses are required for a proper testimony (Deut. 19:15; 1 Tim. 5:19). Other scriptural evidence to show that Christ's death was really God's death are John 8:29 and 16:32. These verses show that God the Father was always one with the Son and never left Him alone. Also, 1 Timothy 3:16 says that Christ was God manifested in the flesh. Since the manifestation of Christ was the manifestation of God in the flesh, the crucifixion of Christ was also the crucifixion of God.

When the Lord appeared to Thomas in resurrection after His crucifixion, He said, "Bring your finger here and see My hands, and bring your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing." Thomas then

answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:27-28). The Lord’s death is referred to here, and the title *God* is ascribed to this One who had died. The man Jesus who died on the cross was the very God.

In Christ’s incarnation God was there. In His human living God was there. Colossians 2:9 says that all the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in Him bodily. The Triune God—not only the Son but also the Father and the Spirit—lived in the man Jesus. In the same principle, God died on the cross in the Son’s death.

There is another verse in the Bible, however, which says that God forsook Christ on the cross. Matthew 27:46 says, “About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” How can we reconcile this verse with the other verses in the Scriptures which show that Christ’s crucifixion was God’s crucifixion? At the very juncture when the Lord Jesus was going to give up His spirit, He cried, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” On the one hand, God never left the Son, but on the other hand, the Son cried out that God had forsaken Him.

In order to answer this question, we need to see the essential and economical aspects of the Divine Trinity. In the history of theology, the students of the Bible have seen two aspects of the Divine Trinity: the essential Trinity and the economical Trinity. The essential Trinity refers to the very intrinsic essence of the Trinity. In essence the three of the Trinity are one. The first dwells in the second, the second dwells in the third, and the third dwells in the first and the second. The three coinhere, dwell in each other, essentially. They are one and cannot be divided. But economically speaking, that is, according to God’s economy, God’s plan, and God’s accomplishing of His purpose, the three are distinct. If the three were not distinct, how could the first forsake the second?

Another picture of the economical Trinity can be seen at the Lord’s baptism. At the time of His baptism, the Father was in the heavens, the Son was in the water, and the Spirit was in the air like a dove. The Son in the water on the earth heard the Father in the heavens speaking (3:16-17). In this case the three of the Godhead were not only distinct; They were in three different locations.

In order to have a complete view of the Divine Trinity, we need to see His economical and essential aspects. In John 10:30 the Lord said, “I and the Father are one.” In John 14:11 the Son told the disciples, “I am in the Father and the Father is in Me.” Are They separated? No. They are one essentially. But when They act to carry out Their economy, to finish Their plan, to accomplish Their purpose, quite often They are distinct. At the Son’s baptism the Father was distinct from the Son, and the Son was distinct from the Father. The Gospels also show us that the Son prayed to the Father, and when He prayed, He lifted up His eyes to heaven (John 17:1). Here we see that the Father and the Son are distinct economically. Essentially speaking, the crucifixion of Christ was God’s crucifixion, but at the juncture when Christ gave up His spirit, God forsook Him. God was there essentially, but He forsook Him economically. We need to realize that the study of the Divine Trinity is an endless matter.

CHRIST DYING FOR EVERYTHING

Now we need to consider how we can prove that God in Christ died for everything. Christ’s death was not only for us sinners but also for everything, including all creation with the angels. Hebrews 2:9 says that Christ tasted death on behalf of everything. This means that He died for everything. The word *everything* is very strong in Greek. *Everyone* means every man, but Hebrews 2:9 says that Christ tasted death not for everyone but for everything. The Lord Jesus’ redemption was accomplished not only for people but for everything created by God.

Colossians 1:20 says, “Through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross—through Him, whether the things on the earth or the things in the heavens.” This is the second verse that proves Christ’s death was for all things. Not only the things on the earth but also the things in the heavens needed to be reconciled to God through Christ’s blood. God reconciled all things to Himself through Christ. Hebrews 2:9 and Colossians 1:20 show that Christ died for everything, for the whole creation.

Romans 8:21 says, “In hope that the creation itself will also be freed from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.” The whole creation needs to be freed from the slavery of corruption, so the whole creation needs Christ’s redemption. Everything in the old creation is corrupting, decaying, dying. Everything created in the whole universe needs

redemption. Eventually, the millennium will be a time of the restoration of all things. Restoration implies degradation, and degradation came from sin.

In the universe two rebellions brought in death, corruption, and degradation to the entire creation. One was the satanic rebellion, and the other was man's rebellion. Before man's rebellion there was a satanic rebellion, which contaminated the heavens. Satan's rebellion contaminated, made filthy, all the heavenly things. Such a contaminated, degraded universe can be restored only through Christ's redemption. Before the creation can be restored, it has to be redeemed. Christ died on the cross for all the items of the creation so that He could reconcile all these items back to God. Christ's redemption is a foundation laid for the upcoming restoration. When the restoration comes, the slavery of corruption will be over. Today the entire creation is under the slavery of corruption, so the entire creation is groaning. Everything is groaning because everything is under the slavery of corruption.

Hebrews 9:21-24 shows that Christ's blood was for the purification of all the heavenly things. The tabernacle and all things pertaining to it were sprinkled with and purified by the blood of goats and bulls. That was a figure showing that the heavenly things needed to be purified by the blood of better sacrifices, which are the sacrifices of Christ (7:27; 9:14, 28; 10:10, 12, 14). Christ offered Himself as the one sacrifice (9:14; 10:12). This one sacrifice, viewed from its various aspects, can be considered many sacrifices. Heaven and all things in heaven were defiled by the rebellion of Satan and the fallen angels, who followed Satan in his rebellion against God. So all the heavenly things needed to be purified. Christ accomplished this purification with His own blood when He entered into heaven itself.

Christ's tasting death on behalf of everything and reconciling all things to God is clearly typified by the redemption accomplished through Noah's ark, in which not only eight persons but also all living things created by God were saved (Gen. 7:13-23). Noah's ark saved not only eight people but also all the creatures.

Another type of Christ dying for all things is the veil in the temple being rent when the Lord died. When Christ died, the veil of the temple was split in two from top to bottom (Matt. 27:51). On the veil there were cherubim embroidered (Exo. 26:31). According to Ezekiel 1:5, 10 and 10:14-15, cherubim are living creatures. The cherubim on the veil, then, indicated the

living creatures. When the veil was rent, all the creatures were rent also. That means when Christ died on the cross, all the creatures died with Him.

GOD'S WORKING DURING CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION

Now we need to consider how we can prove that when Christ was suffering death on the cross, God was busy there. Colossians 2:14 says that when Christ was being crucified on the cross, God was wiping out the handwriting in ordinances, which was against us, which was contrary to us, nailing it to the cross. Verse 15 says that He also stripped off the rulers and the authorities and made a display of them openly, triumphing over them in the cross.

When Christ was suffering death on the cross, God was busy. He was busy in wiping out the handwriting in ordinances by nailing it to the cross. The handwriting in ordinances refers to the law. If you still love the law, what you love was nailed to the cross. Ephesians 2:15 says that Christ abolished in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances. While Christ was suffering in being nailed to the cross, God was also busy nailing the law there.

While Christ was being crucified, the evil angels came in to frustrate God, and there was a struggle between them. There was a group of evil angels who came to frustrate God from working on the cross, so God stripped them off and made a display of them openly. *Stripping off* in Colossians 2:15 also means “putting off,” as the putting off of the old man mentioned in 3:9. On the cross God was nailing the law, and He was putting off many evil angels. He was busy on the cross according to the invisible scene. This is the intrinsic significance and understanding of the Lord's death. We must have the spiritual eyes, the heavenly view, to see an invisible scene every day.

THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF GOD IN THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST

Now we need to ask what was accomplished on the cross. We have to answer this question intrinsically. First, Christ took away the sin of the world for God's eternal redemption. *Sin* in John 1:29 is a total term, including the sin within in our nature and the sins without in our conduct. Hebrews 9:26 says that Christ put away sin through the sacrifice of Himself, and then verse 28 says that He was offered once to bear the sins of many. These verses refer to sin (singular) and to sins (plural). Sin does have these two aspects: the

inward aspect, the sin in our nature, and the outward aspect, the sin in our conduct.

In our preaching of the gospel, to some extent, we should make this clear to our contacts. Even if you think you have no sins in your conduct, you are still sinful because in your nature you have sin. Sin is a factor of your constitution, your being. Your being, your person, has been constituted a sinner with sin. As an illustration, we call a certain drink orange juice because this juice is constituted with oranges. The orange is the essence, the nature, of this juice. In the same way, we are sinners by constitution, not by transgressions. In our constitution we are sinners. A newborn babe is a sinner because within him there is the constituting factor, the essence, of sin (Psa. 51:5). Sin is the essence of our natural constitution, so we are sinners.

Christ died on the cross not only for our transgressions, wrongdoings, mistakes, and offenses but also for our sinful nature. There is an element or essence in our constitution, in our being, that is the inward sin. We are not only sinners; we are sin. Christ died for us as such persons (2 Cor. 5:14-15). This is what I call the intrinsic significance and the intrinsic understanding of the death of Christ. We need to be brought into the intrinsic understanding of all the matters related to the death of Christ.

On the cross Christ died for all of us (vv. 14-15), He crucified our old man (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20a), and He destroyed the devil (Heb. 2:14). When we say that Christ destroyed the devil on the cross, someone may ask us how the devil can continue to work. First Peter 5:8 tells us that Satan, as a roaring lion, still walks about, seeking someone to devour. Christ did destroy Satan on the cross, but Satan still lives and acts.

In order to explain this, we can use what happens in a law court as an illustration. The verdict of the law court is one thing, but the execution of the verdict, the sentence, the judgment, is another thing. According to the verdict, someone may be condemned to death, but he is still living because there has not yet been an execution of the verdict, the judgment. Satan has been judged to be cast into the lake of fire. This is the verdict upon him. But the execution of this verdict, this judgment, is in the process of being carried out.

Today how do we apply God's judgment, God's verdict, upon His enemy? This depends on our spiritual condition and the spiritual degree of maturity

that we have. A person recently saved has not grown up and has not been perfected, or properly, spiritually educated, so he does not know anything about God's judgment, His verdict, upon Satan. But those who have been in the Lord for years know that Satan has been judged and that God has pronounced, or proclaimed, His verdict. Now in our spirit with a strong spiritual condition and situation, we can execute God's judgment over Satan. We can tell him, "Satan, you have been judged. The place where you should be is the lake of fire. Don't stay here." We have to execute God's judgment over Satan continually until the day that he is actually cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10). In order to fight the spiritual warfare in this way, we need much teaching, perfecting, and growth in the divine life. Although we are under Satan's attack, we are cooperating with the Lord to execute God's judgment upon him, and the Lord's recovery is still going on.

In His crucifixion Christ also judged and crucified the world (John 12:31). In Galatians 6:14 the apostle Paul says that the world was crucified to him and he to the world. In the eyes of the worldly people, including many of our relatives, our schoolmates, and our friends, we are finished. We are crucified. We do not count as being anything in their sight. To them we know only Jesus, God, and the Bible. This means that to the world we are crucified persons. The world is also crucified to us. We no longer have any interest in the world with its attractions and entertainment. Our unique interest is Christ Himself.

On the cross Christ also tasted death on behalf of everything and reconciled all things to God (Heb. 2:9; Col. 1:20). Furthermore, He abolished the law in ordinances and slew the enmity between peoples (Eph. 2:15-16). Finally, in the positive aspect of His death, He released the divine life for the producing of the believers to constitute the Body of Christ (John 12:24). We need to learn to know all these things concerning the crucifixion of Christ in an intrinsic way.

CHAPTER SIX

IN THE MOVE OF CHRIST DURING HIS BURIAL AND IN THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

Scripture Reading: 1 Pet. 3:18b-20a; Luke 23:46; Rom. 4:25b; Acts 13:33;
Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 15:45; Eph. 2:6a; 1 Pet. 1:3; Heb. 2:10; John 12:24; 1
Cor. 10:17; John 7:38-39; Acts 5:30-31; Eph. 1:20-23; Phil. 3:10; 2 Cor.
4:10

OUTLINE

- I. In the move of Christ during His burial—1 Pet. 3:18b:
 - A. The crucifixion of Christ having put Christ to death only in His flesh and not in His spirit (His spirit was committed into the hands of the Father at His expiration—Luke 23:46).
 - B. His spirit having been made alive, enlivened, with new power of life so that in this empowered spirit He made a proclamation to the fallen angels after His death in the flesh and before His resurrection—1 Pet. 3:19-20a.
- II. In the resurrection of Christ:
 - A. Proving that God's requirements were satisfied by the death of Christ for us, that we are justified by God because of Christ's death, and that in Christ, the resurrected One, we are accepted before God; and making the resurrected Christ live within us a life that can be justified by God and is always acceptable to God—Rom. 4:25b.
 - B. Begetting the incarnated Christ as God's firstborn Son—Acts 13:33; Rom. 8:29.
 - C. Making Christ, who was the last Adam in the flesh, the life-giving Spirit—1 Cor. 15:45.
 - D. Raising the believers up with Christ from the dead—Eph. 2:6a.
 - E. Regenerating all the believers in Christ as God's many sons—1 Pet. 1:3; Heb. 2:10; Rom. 8:29.
 - F. Releasing the divine life from the one grain broken through the death of Christ on the cross to produce many grains for the constitution of the Body of Christ—John 12:24; 1 Cor. 10:17.
 - G. Carrying out the flow of the Spirit—John 7:38-39.

- H. Forming the base of His move in the ascension of Christ for the formation of the church, the Body of Christ—Acts 5:30-31; Eph. 1:20-23.
 - I. Empowering the believers with the power of Christ's resurrection for the conformation to His death in the believers' Christian walk—Phil. 3:10.
 - J. Carrying out the effectiveness and killing of the death of Christ for the release of the divine life in resurrection—2 Cor. 4:10.
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In this chapter we want to see the move of God in man in the move of Christ during His burial and in the resurrection of Christ. When Christ was buried in the tomb physically, He went in His spirit to Hades, and there He was very busy. This is revealed in 1 Peter 3:18-20. Most readers of the New Testament do not pay adequate and proper attention to this portion of the Word. The first part of verse 18 says, "Christ also has suffered once for sins, the Righteous on behalf of the unrighteous, that He might bring you to God." We can understand this because we are in it and have experienced it, but in the next part of verse 18, something is mentioned that none of us can fully understand: "On the one hand being put to death in the flesh, but on the other, made alive in the Spirit." This verse tells us that two things took place at the same time. When Christ was crucified on the cross, on the one hand, He was killed physically, but on the other hand, He was made alive spiritually. The killing and the making alive were done at the same time. The Spirit here is not the Holy Spirit but the Spirit as the essence of Christ's divinity (Rom. 1:4; cf. John 4:24a). Furthermore, we have a spirit, a soul, and a body. As a man, Christ was the same. He had His personal spirit, soul, and body.

In John 10 the Lord revealed that He laid down His soulish life that we might have His divine life (vv. 15, 17-18, 10b, 28). He laid down His soulish life for us when He was being put to death for our redemption. But according to 1 Peter 3:18, at that time God made Him alive in the Spirit. To make alive means to renew and to empower. When Christ was crucified on the cross, on the one hand, physically, He was killed; on the other hand, He was made alive, empowered, renewed, in His Spirit.

Verse 19 says that in this empowered Spirit He went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison. Verse 20 shows that these spirits in prison are the ones who had formerly disobeyed when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared. While Noah was making the ark,

preparing the ark, these spirits disobeyed God. This gives us a hint to trace who these spirits are. After they disobeyed God, they were judged and imprisoned. Then they became the spirits in prison.

Genesis 6 gives us a record of Noah's time. At Noah's time the sons of God married the daughters of men (v. 2). One ancient manuscript of the Old Testament renders *the sons of God* as "the angels" in Genesis 6:2. In the Old Testament we are told clearly that the angels are called the sons of God (Job 1:6; 2:1). Furthermore, in Jude 6 and 7 there is strong proof that the sons of God mentioned in Genesis 6 were fallen angels. Brother Watchman Nee taught this truth based upon G. H. Pember's teaching in his book entitled *Earth's Earliest Ages*, where he strongly proves that the sons of God in Genesis 6 were fallen angels.

The fallen angels did not keep their original position but abandoned their own dwelling place, which is in heaven, to come to earth at Noah's time to commit fornication with the daughters of men. The evil marriage of the fallen angels with the daughters of men caused a mixture of the human race with the fallen spirits, producing persons who were giants (Nephilim—v. 4; Num. 13:33). This shows how evil the human race had become at Noah's time.

God had to destroy the whole generation of that age because the mixed marriage between the angels and human beings made the human race impure. God judged them with the flood. First Peter 3:20 says that only a few, eight souls, were brought safely through by the water of the great flood. All the rest were destroyed, including the descendants of that mixed marriage. Furthermore, these fallen angels were judged and imprisoned in gloomy pits, awaiting the judgment of the great day (2 Pet. 2:4-5). In Hades there is a section for the imprisonment of these spirits, the rebellious angels.

When Christ was crucified, on the one hand, His body was killed; on the other hand, God renewed, empowered, Him in the Spirit. In this empowered Spirit He went to Hades at the time of His burial to proclaim to these imprisoned spirits the victory achieved by God through His death on the cross.

We should not think that this is unimportant. If this were unimportant, Peter would not have included it in his short first Epistle of only five chapters. This portion in 1 Peter shows the victory that Christ accomplished on the

cross. It also shows us that even at the time that Christ was buried, He was busy to proclaim God's victory in Him to the rebellious angels. This was a part of God's move in Christ.

The Bible tells us clearly that in this universe there are the heavens, the earth, and Hades, which is underneath the earth (Eph. 4:9). Paul was brought to the third heaven and to Hades, and he received visions and revelations of these hidden regions (2 Cor. 12:2-4). When he was caught away into Paradise, the pleasant section of Hades (Luke 16:22-23, 25-26), he heard unspeakable words, which it is not allowed for a man to speak. Hades is divided into three sections. First, there is the section of fire for the unbelievers after they die (vv. 23-24). Second, there is the section that is called Paradise, where the spirits of the saved saints are. According to Luke 16, Abraham and a poor man named Lazarus are there (vv. 25-26). The Lord Jesus also went to Paradise after He was crucified on the cross. When He was on the cross, two criminals were being crucified with Him. He said to one of them, "Today you shall be with Me in Paradise" (23:43). On the day the Lord was crucified, He went to Hades (Acts 2:27), to Paradise. From there He also went to the third section of Hades, the section where the fallen, rebellious angels are imprisoned in gloomy pits, called Tartarus (2 Pet. 2:4). Christ went to these rebellious angels to proclaim God's victory accomplished through His death in the flesh on the cross. That was the victory of God in Christ's victory and was a part of God's move in man.

IN THE MOVE OF CHRIST DURING HIS BURIAL

The Crucifixion of Christ

Having Put Christ to Death

Only in His Flesh and Not in His Spirit

The crucifixion of Christ put Christ to death only in His flesh, in His body, and not in His spirit. His spirit was committed into the hands of the Father at His expiration (Luke 23:46). On the one hand, men killed Christ's body; on the other hand, Christ committed His spirit into the hands of God. God renewed and empowered Him in the Spirit. Then Christ entered into Hades to proclaim God's victory in Him on the cross to the imprisoned, rebellious angels. Before you and I heard about the crucifixion of Christ, those imprisoned angels had already heard it. The proclamation of Christ, of His

victory for God on the cross, was proclaimed to those rebellious angels as a shame to them.

His Spirit Having Been Made Alive, Enlivened, with New Power of Life

As we have seen, Christ was made alive, enlivened, with new power of life so that in His empowered Spirit He made a proclamation to the fallen angels after His death in the flesh and before His resurrection (1 Pet. 3:19-20a). He was put to death in the flesh, but His Spirit as the essence of His divinity never died. This is a part of the history of God's move in humanity.

We cannot fully understand these things, because they are a mystery. Even the things related to our physical body are mysterious and not able to be fully understood. In light of this, consider how much more difficult it is to understand the mysterious death and burial of Christ. Christ died in the flesh but still lives in His Spirit. In this renewed, empowered, and strengthened Spirit He went down to Hades, where the rebellious angels at Noah's time were imprisoned, to proclaim to them how God had achieved the victory through Him in His death.

IN THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

Proving That God's Requirements Were Satisfied by the Death of Christ for Us

The resurrection of Christ proves that God's requirements on us sinners were satisfied by the death of Christ for us. Christ's death has fulfilled the requirement of God's holiness, the requirement of God's righteousness, and the requirement of God's glory.

How do we know that God was satisfied by Christ's death for us? The proof is Christ's resurrection. After Christ's death, God raised up Christ and accepted Him. We are justified by God because of Christ's death, and in Christ, the resurrected One, we are accepted before Him. In Christ's resurrection God justified us and put the resurrected One into us as a sign of God's acceptance of us. He also makes the resurrected Christ live within us a life that can be justified by Him and that is always acceptable to Him.

Romans 4:25b says that Christ was raised for our justification. In His resurrection God justified us because Christ's death satisfied God's requirements. God's resurrection of Christ is a proof that Christ's death satisfied God. We can illustrate this by the payment of a loan. If we borrow money from someone, he possesses the receipt until the day the debt is paid. When the debt is paid, the receipt is given to us to prove that the lender is satisfied with the payment. The "receipt" of God's requirements being satisfied by the death of Christ and of our being justified is the resurrection of Christ.

This resurrected Christ has been put into us, first for our acceptance by God for our past and second for us to live a life that can be justified by God and always accepted by God for our present. The fact of resurrection takes care of our past. Our fall into sin brought us into a debt that we could not pay. Then Christ died for us and paid the price, so God released Christ to us in His resurrection. His resurrection released us from our debt. At the same time, Christ the person, the resurrected One, was put into us so that we may live a life that is always justified by God and accepted by God. This is a great part of God's move in man.

Do you know that you are a justified person? Before you were saved, you were not justified. You were condemned. But once you receive Christ, you receive Him as the resurrected One. In His resurrection you have the proof that God was satisfied, so God can and has to justify you. To justify you is to release you. You have been released from your debt. Also, this resurrected One enters into you to live in you so that you may live a life that is always justified by God and accepted by God. Therefore, the resurrection of Christ is for our justification, and our justification is for our past and for our present.

Begetting the Incarnated Christ as God's Firstborn Son

In resurrection the incarnated Christ was begotten as God's firstborn Son (Acts 13:33; Rom. 8:29). Christ was originally the only begotten Son of God without humanity. Then through His resurrection He became the firstborn Son of God with divinity and with humanity also. This was God's move in man to beget Christ as His firstborn Son in resurrection.

Making Christ, Who Was the Last Adam

in the Flesh, the Life-giving Spirit

In the resurrection of Christ, God also made Christ, who was the last Adam in the flesh, the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). Christ was a man in the flesh, but through resurrection God made Him the life-giving Spirit. Today Christ as the life-giving Spirit is within us (2 Tim. 4:22; Rom. 8:16).

Raising the Believers Up with Christ from the Dead

When Christ was resurrected, we all were raised up in His resurrection (Eph. 2:6a). God not only created the heavens and the earth but also moved in all these steps. But when most Christians read the Bible today, they do not care for these mysterious, invisible steps of God's move in man. This is why we have the burden to see how God moved in taking so many steps in Christ in humanity.

Regenerating All the Believers in Christ as God's Many Sons

In Christ's resurrection we all were regenerated in Christ to be God's many sons (1 Pet. 1:3; Heb. 2:10; Rom. 8:29). In God's eyes we all were regenerated in Christ's resurrection before we were born. Before we were generated, we were regenerated in Christ's resurrection about two thousand years ago. The fact of our regeneration took place almost two thousand years ago, but we experienced this fact when we were saved.

Releasing the Divine Life from the One Grain Broken through the Death of Christ on the Cross to Produce Many Grains for the Constitution of the Body of Christ

Christ was the one grain of wheat containing the divine life within His human shell. One day He was killed, and that killing on the cross broke His human shell to release the divine life within Him. This released divine life produced many grains by dispensing the divine life into His believers (John 12:24). All these many grains are the members of His organic Body (1 Cor. 10:17). This is a particular step of God's move in man.

Carrying Out the Flow of the Spirit

In John 7 the Lord told us that the Spirit would flow out of our innermost being as rivers of living water (vv. 38-39). The one flow of the Spirit becomes many rivers. The rivers of living water as the flow of the Spirit flow out of us in resurrection.

Forming the Base of His Move in the Ascension of Christ for the Formation of the Church, the Body of Christ

Resurrection formed the base of God's move in the ascension of Christ for the formation of the church, the Body of Christ (Acts 5:30-31; Eph. 1:20-23). Without resurrection Christ could never ascend to the heavens, so the resurrection laid the base for His ascension, in which He formed the church. He released His divine life to produce all the members of the Body of Christ, yet they could not be formed into the Body until He ascended into the heavens. It was in His ascension that He formed all the regenerated members, produced in His resurrection, into His one organic Body.

Empowering the Believers with the Power of Christ's Resurrection for the Conformation to His Death in the Believers' Christian Walk

God empowers the believers with the power of Christ's resurrection for the conformation to His death in the believers' Christian walk (Phil. 3:10). We should live a life of death so that we can be conformed to the image of Christ's death. But in ourselves we cannot do this. We need the power of Christ's resurrection. The husbands and wives are a constant and continual problem to each other. This is why there are so many separations and divorces today. But we have the power of Christ's resurrection that empowers us to be conformed to the death of Christ. The power comes not from us but from the resurrection of Christ.

Carrying Out the Effectiveness and Killing of the Death of Christ for the Release of the Divine Life in Resurrection

It is by the power of Christ's resurrection that we can be conformed to His death. Paul says that he was always bearing about in his body the putting to death of Jesus that the life of Jesus also might be manifested in his body (2 Cor. 4:10). Christ's death was always killing Paul. The killing of the cross results in the manifestation of the resurrection life. This daily killing is for the release of the divine life in resurrection.

These are all the aspects of God's move in Christ's resurrection in humanity. Today God is moving in us, the believers of Christ, in the resurrection of Christ.

CHAPTER SEVEN

IN OUR LIVING IN THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

Scripture Reading: John 11:25a; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17-18; Phil. 3:10; Rom. 8:4; Phil. 1:19b-21a; Gal. 5:16, 25; 2:20; Phil. 2:13; 1 Tim. 3:15b-16a

OUTLINE

- I. Christ being the resurrection—John 11:25a.
- II. The resurrection being the pneumatic Christ as the processed, consummated, compound, and life-giving Spirit, who is the consummation of the processed Triune God—1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17-18.
- III. The power of Christ's resurrection being the power of the consummated Spirit for us to be conformed to Christ's death—Phil. 3:10.
- IV. Our walking according to the spirit equaling our living the pneumatic Christ—Rom. 8:4; Phil. 1:19b-21a.
- V. To walk by the Spirit (Gal. 5:16, 25) and to walk according to the spirit (Rom. 8:4) being to be a person in Christ's resurrection.
- VI. To live by the Spirit being that not I as the natural man live but that Christ in His resurrection lives—Gal. 2:20.
- VII. This kind of living of ours in Christ's resurrection being altogether the move of God in man (Phil. 2:13), so it becoming the history of God in our daily life.
- VIII. This meaning that God lives in our living in order that we may becoming Him in all His attributes as our virtues for His manifestation—1 Tim. 3:15b-16a.

In this chapter we want to see the move of God in man in our living in the resurrection of Christ. In the resurrection of Christ, God moves in us, and this is God's move in man.

The resurrection of Christ is crucially related to us. Christ's resurrection was not for Himself, just as His death was not for Himself. His death and resurrection were altogether for us. If a man has no relation to Christ's death, he is fallen and will perish. Only the death of Christ saves us from our fall and from eternal perdition. Christ not only accomplished an all-inclusive death for

us but also completed an all-surpassing resurrection for us. Today many saved, regenerated Christians know to some extent how much the death of Christ is related to them. But we need to go further to see how the resurrection of Christ is related to us and how God moves in us in the resurrection of Christ.

A number of Christians know that the Christian life is something related to the Spirit, but few know that the Christian life is related to Christ's resurrection. Surely the Christian life is related to the Spirit, but we need to see that the Spirit is the reality of the resurrection of Christ. Without the Spirit we cannot have the resurrection of Christ today. God moves in man as the Spirit, and the Spirit is the reality of Christ's resurrection.

God's move in man is God's history. Our Christian life today should be a part of God's history in man. If your Christian life is not a part of God's history in man, you are a false Christian. You are not a genuine, spiritual, divine Christian. Our daily life should be a part of God's history in man.

We need to see that the Christian life is altogether a life in the resurrection of Christ. We should live a life in Christ's resurrection. The inner-life people stressed that the Christian life is a crucified life, but the Christian life is not only a life of death but also a life of resurrection. We are not only terminated persons but also resurrected persons. Galatians 2:20 says that it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. *No longer I* means crucifixion; *but it is Christ who lives in me* means resurrection. If Christ had never resurrected, He could not live in us. Actually, the inner-life people did not adequately stress the highest peak of the divine revelation. To speak of the Christian life being a crucified life is like being three thousand feet above sea level, but to speak of the Christian life being a life in resurrection is like being six thousand feet above sea level. Of course, if a person really lives a crucified life, this crucifixion will usher him to the goal. The goal of Christ's death is resurrection.

The Bible says that Christ died and after three days resurrected (Matt. 12:40; 16:21; 1 Cor. 15:4). These three days were not a full period of seventy-two hours. According to the Jewish calendar, the day begins in the evening at sunset. Genesis 1 says a number of times that the evening and the morning are one day.

We can see the period of time between the Lord's death and His resurrection by considering the final days of His life on this earth. John 13 tells us that the Lord washed the feet of the disciples just before He established His table. After He washed their feet, He gave a morsel to Judas and told him, "What you do, do quickly" (v. 27). Then Judas went to see the chief priests to betray the Lord. After that the Lord gave a long word of three chapters in John 14—16. This word was concluded by His prayer in John 17. Then He went to the Garden of Gethsemane. When He was there, Judas brought the chief priests, the Pharisees, and the soldiers to arrest Him (18:1-3). In the morning the Lord Jesus was sentenced to death by Pilate, and He was brought to Calvary to be crucified there. He died on the cross at the ninth hour, 3:00 P.M. (Matt. 27:45-50). He was buried in a new tomb for a full day and then resurrected early in the morning on the first day of the week (28:1-6). This shows that the period of time from His death to His resurrection was much less than a full three- day, seventy-two-hour, period of time.

John 20 tells us that He appeared to Mary early in the morning, and then in the evening He appeared to the disciples and breathed Himself into them as the life-giving Spirit (v. 22). He was away from the disciples a short time so that He could pass through death to usher Himself into resurrection. Therefore, when He breathed Himself into the disciples as the life-giving Spirit, that was to bring all the disciples out of death into His resurrection. After the breathing of the Spirit into them, they had the processed and consummated Triune God indwelling them as the all-inclusive, life-giving, and indwelling Spirit, who is the pneumatic Christ. Such a One is the resurrection.

Peter, John, and all the disciples had received something they did not know how to designate. What they received was the resurrection, and resurrection is the processed and consummated Triune God, the pneumatic Christ. Before His death and resurrection Christ had already declared, "I am the resurrection" (11:25a). Now, because the disciples were not accustomed to His indwelling, invisible presence, He stayed with them for forty days to train them to live by His invisible presence in resurrection.

Before the Lord's death, Peter had boasted that he would never deny the Lord (Matt. 26:33-35), but later he took the lead to deny Him (John 18:27). However, in John 20 when the Lord breathed Himself as the reality of

resurrection into the disciples, Peter was transformed from the oldness of death to the newness of resurrection. But even by the last chapter of the Gospel of John, Peter was not yet fully in resurrection. In John 21 the Lord was training Peter to live according to the new part of his being, the part of resurrection.

Right after John 21 there is Acts 1. In Acts 1 Peter was altogether in resurrection with the one hundred twenty, which included the sisters and the Lord's flesh brothers. They all had entered into resurrection. They could stay together and be blended together for ten days to pray in one accord (vv. 14-15). They were living, acting, staying, and praying together in resurrection. Then Peter stood up among them and began to expound the Bible (vv. 15-22). That was also something of transformation in resurrection. Of course, Peter was not absolutely transformed because transformation is not something once for all. In chapter 1 of Acts Peter was very good, but in Galatians 2 Paul speaks of Peter's hypocrisy by shrinking back from eating with the Gentile believers out of fear of those of the circumcision (vv. 11-14). This is an illustration of our need to live and remain in resurrection.

To stay in the full-time training you must be those who stay in resurrection. If you are out of resurrection, you are wasting your time. The purpose of the full-time training is to bring you into resurrection. Even when you take your meals in the dining area, you should be in resurrection. You should have a set time to partake of your meals together. You should be on time, sit down together, and offer a proper prayer to the Lord. Then all of you should eat at your designated tables to fellowship together. If you eat in this way in the training, your eating together is in resurrection.

Merely to come on time for the training classes does not in itself build up your character. Your character must be built up in resurrection, and character is built up mainly in the sundry things, the small things in your daily life. When you place a book on a desk, it should be placed there in a straight, orderly way, not in a haphazard way. If I do not leave a book on my desk in an orderly fashion, something within tells me to go back and adjust it. After working at a desk, some of us would leave the things on our desk in disarray and would not put our chair under the desk. This shows that we do not have a character that is built up in resurrection.

After the Lord fed the five thousand, He charged the disciples to gather the leftovers, and they filled twelve baskets full (John 6:12-13). He did not leave in excitement and forget about the leftovers lying all over the ground. Nobody took care of the leftovers, so the Lord and His disciples bore the responsibility to pick them up. That was a display of the Lord's character, a display of resurrection.

We can also see what kind of character the Lord Jesus had when He resurrected. After Christ resurrected, Peter and John entered into the tomb, and they saw the linen cloths lying there and "the handkerchief which had been over His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded up in one place apart" (20:6-7). All the things left in the tomb were a testimony to the Lord's resurrection. If these things had not been left there in a good order, it would have been difficult for Peter and John to believe (v. 8) that the Lord had not been taken away by someone but had risen by Himself.

If we were the ones who had been resurrected, we would have been very excited, leaving everything in the tomb a mess. Even though the Lord resurrected from the tomb, He still left everything in good order. He got up in resurrection and made His bed. His making of that bed in the tomb was a display of resurrection. I can testify that I cannot go away after rising in the morning without making my bed. After rising up, the first thing I do is to make my bed; then I am released.

Resurrection is the very living God who has been consummated to be the life-giving Spirit to live in us a life in order. Look at the universe God created. Everything is in good order. God has His divine character. I am sharing these things to impress us that resurrection should become our life. We should live in resurrection. When we live in the resurrection of Christ, the processed God is living in us, so that is a part of God's move in humanity. That becomes a part of the history of God living within man. Thus, our living becomes His history. This means that He has become us to make us Him. He and we, we and He, are mingled together. We two live one life, so we have one living and one history. Our story is His history, and His history is our daily life in resurrection. The move of God in man is in our living in the resurrection of Christ.

CHRIST IS THE RESURRECTION

Without this person, in the whole universe there is no resurrection. Christ is the resurrection (11:25a).

THE RESURRECTION BEING THE PNEUMATIC CHRIST

Hence, the resurrection is the pneumatic Christ as the processed, consummated, compounded, and life-giving Spirit, who is the consummation of the processed Triune God (1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17-18). The real resurrection is the consummated Triune God, the pneumatic Christ, the all-inclusive compounded Spirit.

THE POWER OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION BEING THE POWER OF THE CONSUMMATED SPIRIT FOR US TO BE CONFORMED TO CHRIST'S DEATH

To live a life conformed to Christ's death is not an easy job. Our natural life just cannot make it. It does not have this capacity. We need the power of Christ's resurrection, which is the power of the consummated Spirit. We need the consummation of the Triune God so that we may have the capacity and the power to live a life that is conformed to the death of Christ (Phil. 3:10).

OUR WALKING ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT EQUALING OUR LIVING THE PNEUMATIC CHRIST

Romans 8:4 says that we need to walk according to the spirit. To walk according to the spirit equals our living the pneumatic Christ (Phil. 1:19b-21a). Philippians 1:19 speaks of the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. The Spirit of Jesus Christ is the pneumatic Christ, the Christ in resurrection. The Spirit of Jesus Christ is the Spirit as the resurrection, and this Spirit has the bountiful supply that enables us to live Christ.

No one has the ability to live Christ by his own strength. To live as a sinner is easy. We were born sinners, so we spontaneously live as sinners. But in order to live Christ, we need another power. Electrical power is a good illustration of this. By electrical power a room can be made bright with light, and the volume of someone's speaking can be increased through a microphone. In the same way, we need an extra power so that we can have the capacity, the ability, to live Christ. This power is the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

who supports us with a bountiful supply, and the bountiful supply is the effectiveness of the power of Christ's resurrection.

In our Christian life we should be related to the resurrection of Christ every moment of every day. The life of modern cities today is an "electrical life." If the electricity stops, the cities are paralyzed. In recent years the electricity in New York was cut off, and everything stopped. Some people were held in the elevator with no way to go up or come down. Some were held on the subway. The life of a modern city is a life of electricity, and our Christian life is a life of spiritual electricity. Christ's resurrection to us is the spiritual electricity. Just as electricity is related to our daily life in every aspect, so Christ's resurrection as the spiritual electricity is related to our Christian life in every aspect.

**TO WALK BY THE SPIRIT AND
ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT BEING TO BE
A PERSON IN CHRIST'S RESURRECTION**

To walk by the Spirit (Gal. 5:16, 25) and to walk according to the spirit (Rom. 8:4) is to be a person in Christ's resurrection. Everything we do should not be in our natural life but in resurrection.

**TO LIVE BY THE SPIRIT BEING THAT
NOT I AS THE NATURAL MAN LIVE
BUT THAT CHRIST IN HIS RESURRECTION LIVES**

Galatians 2:20 says, "I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me." This verse shows that to live by the Spirit means that not I as the natural man live but that Christ in His resurrection lives. *No longer I* means that I died. *But it is Christ* means that now Christ as the resurrection lives in me.

**THIS KIND OF LIVING OF OURS
IN CHRIST'S RESURRECTION
BEING ALTOGETHER THE MOVE OF GOD IN MAN,
SO IT BECOMING THE HISTORY OF GOD IN OUR DAILY LIFE**

Philippians 2:13 says that God operates in us. God is operating all the time in us in the way of resurrection. It is only when we live in resurrection that God operates. If we do not live in resurrection, the operation of God in us is quenched. When we live, not in the natural life or in the fallen flesh but in the resurrection of Christ, God operates in us.

**THIS MEANING THAT GOD LIVES IN OUR LIVING
IN ORDER THAT WE MAY BECOME HIM
IN ALL HIS ATTRIBUTES
AS OUR VIRTUES FOR HIS MANIFESTATION**

If we do things in resurrection in a good order, many virtues will be exhibited, and those virtues are the expression of the divine attributes. Thus, what we do will be a manifestation of God in the flesh. First Timothy 3:15-16 says that God is manifested in man's flesh. This does not mean merely that God was manifested for a while in His incarnation. This means that all the time in the church life, God is manifested in the flesh. Even though we are in the flesh, we do not live by the flesh. We live in and by resurrection, so God lives in our living in order that we may become Him in all His attributes as our virtues for His manifestation.

When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He acted in the attributes of God to have His virtues expressed. That expression of His virtues was the manifestation of God in the flesh. Outwardly, people saw Him as Jesus from Nazareth, but He was God manifested in the flesh. We saw that after the feeding of the five thousand, there were many leftovers. If they would have been left there as a mess, this would have been a poor testimony. But after all the leftovers were picked up, everything was clean and in order. That was the virtue of the One who is resurrection. When the Lord left the things in the tomb in good order, this was also a testimony of His resurrection.

When we exercise our spirit to do things in good order, this is a display of our Christian virtues. These Christian virtues are expressions of the divine attributes and are the manifestation of God in the flesh. This is God's move, God's living in man, so this living becomes God's history.

CHAPTER EIGHT

IN THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST (1)

Scripture Reading: Acts 2:36; Rev. 1:5; Acts 5:31; Heb. 5:10; 7:3; 8:1-2, 6; 7:22; 1 John 2:1; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 5:4; 2:25; Eph. 1:20-22

OUTLINE

- I. In His ascension Christ being made:
 - A. Lord—the Lord of all, to possess all, after He brought His humanity into God in His resurrection—Acts 2:36.
 - B. Christ—God’s Anointed, to carry out God’s commission for the fulfillment of God’s eternal economy—v. 36.
 - C. Leader—Ruler of the kings (Rev. 1:5), to rule over the entire earth.
 - D. Savior—to save God’s chosen people through His sovereign rule over the earth in their environment—Acts 5:31.
 - E. The High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, without father, without mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life—Heb. 5:10; 7:3; 8:1.
 - F. The Minister of the new covenant—to minister all the riches of the bequests of the new testament—v. 2.
 - G. The Mediator of the better covenant—the Executor of the new testament bequeathed to us by His death—v. 6.
 - H. The surety of the better covenant—the guarantee and the pledge of the new covenant for its fulfillment—7:22.
 - I. The Advocate—the Paraclete, the Comforter, the Patron, the One who is at our side to help us, to take care of us and our case, to intercede for us, to give us counsel, and to console us—1 John 2:1.
 - J. The great Shepherd—the Chief Shepherd, to take care of God’s flock and be the Overseer of our souls—Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 5:4; 2:25.
 - K. The Head over all things to the church—Eph. 1:20-22.

In this chapter we want to see the move of God in man in the ascension of Christ. Most Christians pay their attention only to the ministry of the Lord on earth when He was in the flesh. His earthly ministry is basic and foundational. In those three and a half years the Lord laid a good foundation for God’s redemption, God’s salvation, God’s economy, and God’s building up of the

church, the Body of Christ. But we all know that once the foundation is laid, something needs to be built upon it.

Upon the foundation laid in the Lord's earthly ministry, all the additional works are to be done in His heavenly ministry. This heavenly ministry is the Lord's work in His ascension. When we use the term *ascension*, we are not just referring to His ascending but to His stay in His ascension. The term *ascension* covers the span from the ascending of the Lord to His descending for His second coming. At least approximately two thousand years are covered in the span of the Lord's ascension. Where is Christ today? Actually speaking, He is in ascension. To say that He is in the heavens is too shallow. We have to learn to say, "The Lord today is in His ascension."

When He was crucified on the earth, He stayed in His crucifixion for six hours, from 9:00 A.M. (Mark 15:25) to 3:00 P.M. (Matt. 27:45-46). In the first three hours He was persecuted by men for doing God's will. In the last three hours, beginning at 12:00 noon, He was judged by God to accomplish our redemption. He was in His crucifixion for six hours, but after His resurrection He ascended to enter into His ascension.

His ascension is a big realm of His work for building up. From His incarnation through His crucifixion, He only laid a foundation of God's plan. During that period of time there was no building up. Before Pentecost even the leading apostle, Peter, was not built in. He was saved and was with the Lord in the foundational work, but he was not in the building until the day of Pentecost, which was the beginning of Christ's move in His ascension.

In the beginning of Christ's move in ascension, He poured out Himself as the economical Spirit to start the building up of the church. That was the beginning of Christ's heavenly ministry in the building, not in the laying of the foundation. This building is still going on today and will continue until the end of the last seven years of this age, the end of the last week referred to in Daniel 9:24-27. The second half of these seven years will be the time of the great tribulation, at the end of which Christ will descend from the heavens to the earth. At that time His heavenly ministry in His ascension will be finished.

The Lord's work for His new creation is in three stages. The first stage was for about three and a half years while the Lord Jesus was on earth. We may include incarnation as a part of the Lord's work. At the Lord's crucifixion just

before He died, He said, “It is finished!” (John 19:30). At that time He finished the work of His all-inclusive death by which He accomplished redemption.

The second stage is the stage of His work from His ascension to His descension at His second coming. This is the age of grace for the building up of the church. This may be called the church age. Revelation 11 reveals that when the Lord descends in His second coming, He will take the earth with all the nations, making them a part of the eternal kingdom of God (v. 15). At the sounding of the seventh trumpet at the Lord’s second coming, not only will the great tribulation end, but also this age will close (16:17), the mystery of God will be finished (10:7), and another age, the age of the kingdom, the millennium, will begin.

The age of the kingdom, the millennium, beginning from His descending to take the earth, is the third stage. That thousand-year period will conclude God’s holy work for His new creation, and the New Jerusalem will be consummated. After the one thousand years God’s work in the age of the old creation to gain His new creation in full will be ultimately finished (21:5-6). Then the new age of the new heaven and new earth with the New Jerusalem will be for eternity. In that eternal age there will be no work, just rest. That will be an eternal Sabbath with no more work.

The entire age of grace is the time of the Lord’s ascension. He is in the heavens doing a lot, but today’s Christians do not pay adequate attention to this part of Christ’s ministry. Today He is both in the heavens seated at the right hand of God (Rom. 8:34) and in us (v. 10). This is very mysterious. He is in the heavens in ascension, and His presence within us is in the ascension. Today we are in ascension. We are not earthly persons but heavenly persons. Philippians 3:20 says that our commonwealth, or citizenship, is in the heavens. We are the heavenly citizens, so we all are in ascension (Eph. 2:6b).

Christ is in ascension both in the heavens and in us, and His heavenly ministry is working, is going on, at the same time in the heavens and in us. Christ as our High Priest is praying for us (Heb. 7:25). He is interceding for us both in the heavens and in us. Today He is always doing the same thing at the same time both in the heavens and in us. Television is a good illustration of this. If something is taking place in Hong Kong, we can see it on television at the same time here in the United States. Christ is working in the heavens, and

at the same time He is working in us according to the heavenly television. This is God's move in man in the ascension of Christ, so it is also God's history.

God's history is from eternity past to eternity future, and we have been included in His history. When we repented and confessed our sins at the beginning of our Christian life, God was involved. If God had not done anything, how could we have repented? Our repentance was motivated by His operation. He operated, He motivated, and then we repented. God's motivation plus our praying was our repentance. When we confessed our sins, God was there working. If God had not been working, we could not have confessed.

We were regenerated, but it was the Triune God who regenerated us. We were born of the Triune God, and from that day we became His children. A little child's life is wrapped up with his mother's life. The mother and the infant live together. The infant eats, and the mother feeds. Without the mother's feeding, how could the infant eat? Thus, we can say that the history of the mother is the history of the infant. In a similar way, the history of God is our history. Today most Christians see this history only from their side. They do not see it from God's side. They do not see that their history is one with God's history.

IN HIS ASCENSION CHRIST BEING MADE:

Now we want to see the statuses of Christ in His ascension. Because Christ is doing so much work, He has to be a person with certain statuses. If we are going to do anything, we need a status. Even a little child sent to a preschool becomes someone with a certain status. When he enters elementary school, he has another status. At each stage of his education, he arrives at another status. When he eventually gets a job, he has another status. At one time he may be a junior accountant, but after working for ten years, he becomes a senior accountant. Christ has many statuses, which He gained in His ascension. The New Testament gives us a clear record of the Lord's position for His ministry. With every position He has a status. In this chapter we want to point out eleven statuses of Christ in His ascension.

Lord—the Lord of All, to Possess All,

after He Brought His Humanity into God in His Resurrection

In His ascension Jesus was made Lord (Acts 2:36). He was made Lord of all to possess all after He brought His humanity into God in His resurrection. As God, He was the Lord already (Luke 1:43; John 11:21; 20:28), but He became flesh and put on something that was not the Lord. Humanity was not a part of His lordship. As a man, Jesus was made the Lord in ascension. Today a man in the heavens is the Lord. The Lord is the One to possess all and to govern all. Acts 10:36 says that Jesus is Lord of all. This indicates that He is the Lord of all peoples, both the Jews and the Gentiles. The Bible also shows that He is the Lord of everything, including the entire creation. He possesses all.

The Lord gave Israel the good land in the Old Testament, but Israel was not faithful to fully possess that land. Today there is a quarrel concerning whom the Golan Heights belongs to. We need to see that the Golan Heights belongs to the Lord. The whole earth is the Lord's (1 Cor. 10:26; Deut. 10:14; Psa. 24:1; 50:12). We may think that the land where our house is or where our meeting hall is, is our land. But it is the Lord's land. The whole earth with its fullness is the Lord's.

When I was younger, I preached the gospel sometimes by asking people, "Who is your Lord? To whom do you belong?" A teenager may think that he belongs to his parents, or a wife may feel that she belongs to her husband, but we should declare that we belong to the Lord Jesus. In human history, only Jesus is the Lord. Mohammed is not the Lord, nor is Buddha the Lord. Confucius is not the Lord. Jesus is the Lord. In His resurrection Jesus brought His human part into God, and He was made the Lord in His ascension.

Christ—God's Anointed, to Carry Out God's Commission for the Fulfillment of God's Eternal Economy

As God's sent and anointed One, Jesus was the Christ from the time that He was born (Luke 2:11; Matt. 1:16; John 1:41; Matt. 16:16). But after thirty-three and a half years, when He ascended to the heavens, God officially made Him the very Christ of God (Acts 2:36). When Christ entered into His ascension,

God officially made Him the Christ, the anointed One of God to carry out God's economy.

**Leader—Ruler of the Kings,
to Rule over the Entire Earth**

Acts 5:31 says that Christ was exalted to God's right hand as a Leader, and Revelation 1:5 says that He is the Ruler of the kings of the earth. Napoleon considered himself to be the leader of Europe. Eventually, however, he was exiled, and he acknowledged that Jesus was above him and belonged to a different class. He admitted that he founded his empire upon force as a mere man but that Jesus founded His empire upon love and was more than a man. Even Napoleon said that he was convinced of the divinity of Jesus Christ. The real Leader and Ruler of Europe and of the entire world is Jesus.

The entire earth today uses the same calendar. According to history, the one whose calendar you use is the one to whom you are in subjection. If any used the calendar of a certain king, he would have to be under the rule of that king. Today all the peoples on the entire earth are under Jesus Christ because they use His calendar. Even the atheistic countries use the calendar of Christ. When you use one's calendar, you admit you belong to that one. Now we are in the year 1993, but the globe has not existed for only 1993 years. It has existed for only 1993 years in the status of Jesus. Jesus' birth has become the landmark of the calendar of all the peoples on earth. He is the Ruler of the kings of the earth to rule over the entire earth. Revelation 19:16 says that Christ is the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

**Savior—to Save God's Chosen People
through His Sovereign Rule over the Earth
in Their Environment**

Acts 5:31 says that Jesus is not only the Leader but also the Savior to save God's chosen people through His sovereign rule over the earth in their environment. His being the Leader is related to His authority, and His being the Savior is related to His salvation. He rules sovereignly over the earth with His authority so that the environment might be fit for God's chosen people to receive His salvation (cf. 17:26-27; John 17:2). Without His being the Ruler, we could not have believed into Him to receive Him as our Savior.

I was born in China near the beginning of this century. For many years the people of China knew nothing about Jesus. If the world situation had not been under the Lord's ruling, the gospel could not have gone to China. The Lord in His sovereignty governs the whole earth to regulate everything for all His chosen people. Although I was chosen by the Lord before the foundation of the world, I was born in China. How could I hear the gospel? It was through the Lord's arrangement of the world situation.

Because of the Lord's sovereign arrangement of our environment to save us, we have become heavenly citizens. Our nationality is heavenly. The Lord is the Leader and the Ruler of the whole earth. Based upon this, He can be our Savior. Through His sovereign ruling, He arranged for us to be born at a certain time and at a certain place so that He could save us and make us His heavenly citizens. Many of us were born in different countries and at different times, but today we have become fellow citizens in the kingdom of God (Eph. 2:19). Our King, Christ, arranged everything for us to receive Him as our Savior.

**The High Priest according to the Order
of Melchizedek, without Father, without Mother,
without Genealogy, without Beginning
of Days or End of Life**

In His ascension Christ is the High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life (Heb. 5:10; 7:3; 8:1). As the eternal Son of God, as the perpetual High Priest, Christ has no genealogy (John 1:1). This is His divine aspect. But as the Son of Man, He does have a genealogy (Matt. 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38). His divinity as the Son of God constitutes Him as our eternal High Priest, so He can pray for us both in heaven and in us.

**The Minister of the New Covenant—
to Minister All the Riches of the Bequests
of the New Testament**

In His ascension Christ is the Minister of the new covenant (Heb. 8:2) to minister all the riches of the bequests of the new testament. A testament is a

legal, official agreement full of bequests. One bequest of the new testament is the forgiveness of sins. The following bequest is the giving of the divine life so that we may be born again to be God's sons. These are just two of the many bequests in the new testament. A bequest is an item of the promised things given according to the testament, the legal, official agreement. God's forgiving of our sins is His fulfilling of one of the bequests that Christ's death has bought for us. God gave us His life so that we could be born again. This is another fulfillment of a bequest in the new testament. All the items of the blessings of the new testament are bequests, and Christ is the Minister of the riches of these bequests.

**The Mediator of the Better Covenant—
the Executor of the New Testament
Bequeathed to Us by His Death**

Not only is Christ a Minister to minister the riches of all the bequests to us, but also He is the Mediator, the Executor, to execute all the bequests of the new testament bequeathed to us by His death (v. 6).

**The Surety of the Better Covenant—
the Guarantee and the Pledge
of the New Covenant for Its Fulfillment**

Christ is the surety of the better covenant (7:22). This means that He is the guarantee and the pledge of the new covenant for its fulfillment. The Lord is the Guarantor and also the guarantee of the new covenant. He is the surety, the pledge, that everything in this covenant will be fulfilled.

**The Advocate—the Paraclete, the Comforter, the Patron, the One
Who Is at Our Side
to Help Us, to Take Care of Us and Our Case,
to Intercede for Us, to Give Us Counsel,
and to Console Us**

In His ascension Christ is our Advocate (1 John 2:1). As the Advocate, He is the Paraclete, the Comforter, the Patron, the One who is at our side to help us, to take care of us and our case, to intercede for us, to give us counsel, and to

console us. He takes care of everything concerning us. The Greek word for *advocate* can also refer to one who offers legal aid like an attorney. Christ, of course, takes care of our case in every aspect. Today we have both the Lord Jesus in the heavens and the Spirit, the Comforter (John 14:16), within us as our Advocate, who takes care of our case.

**The Great Shepherd—the Chief Shepherd,
to Take Care of God’s Flock
and Be the Overseer of Our Souls**

Christ is the great Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd, to take care of God’s flock and be the Overseer of our souls (Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 5:4; 2:25). A shepherd of actual sheep cannot do anything to help the sheep in their souls. But today Christ shepherds us by overseeing our souls. Our soul is the part of our being that needs the most shepherding. Our body is troublesome, but the most troublesome part of our person is our soul. To deal with others in a proper way, we have to take care of their soul. If a husband cannot take care of his wife’s soul, he is a defeated husband. Our soul is our inner being, our real person. Our Lord, as the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls, shepherds us by caring for the welfare of our inner being and by exercising His oversight over the condition of our real person.

Christ’s shepherding of us is a part of God’s history. As the Advocate, He prays for us, and that is God’s praying, so that is God’s move in us as a part of God’s history. The move of God in Christ within us in His ascension is a part of God’s history in His union with man.

The Head over All Things to the Church

In addition to all the above items, Christ is also the Head over all things to the church (Eph. 1:20-22). Today it seems that in the universe there is no head. But, actually, Christ, the ascended Savior as the Lord of all in the universe, is the Head over all things to the church. His being the Head over all things is related to the church. So He is the Head of the church. Hence, He is quite qualified, quite capable, to take care of the church in every way to meet the church’s need in different situations. This is also a part of God’s move in Christ’s ascension.

CHAPTER NINE

IN THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST (2)

Scripture Reading: 1 John 3:24b; 4:13; Rom. 8:11; 2 Tim. 4:22; Phil. 2:13;
Heb. 13:21; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Pet. 5:10; Eph. 4:3-6, 12

OUTLINE

- II. God's move within us in the offices and ministries of Christ in all the above mentioned statuses:
 - A. Dwelling in us through His indwelling Spirit in the presence of Christ in our spirit—1 John 3:24b; 4:13; Rom. 8:11; 2 Tim. 4:22.
 - B. Operating in us both the willing and the working for His good pleasure—Phil. 2:13.
 - C. Perfecting us in every good work for the fulfilling of His will, doing in us that which is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ—Heb. 13:21.
 - D. Imparting all His riches into us for our enjoyment in His love through the grace of Christ and the fellowship of the Spirit—2 Cor. 13:14.
 - E. As the God of all grace, perfecting, establishing, strengthening, and grounding us so that we may participate in His eternal glory, into which He has called us in Christ—1 Pet. 5:10.
 - F. As the Father of all of us, being over all of us, through all of us, and in all of us for the constituting and building up of the Body of Christ in the oneness of His Divine Trinity—Eph. 4:3-6, 12.
- III. Such a move of God in Christ within us being also a part of God's history in His union with man.

In this chapter we want to see more concerning the move of God in man in the ascension of Christ. Christ today is ministering, is working, in His ascension. Ephesians 2:6 says that God raised us up together with Christ and “seated us together with Him in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.” We may have the thought that Ephesians 2:6 says that we are seated with Christ in the heavens, but it does not say this. It says that we are seated with Him in the heavenlies. Footnote 4 on Ephesians 2:6 in the Recovery Version says, “The heavenlies are the highest position, into which we have been saved in Christ.

In the book of Romans, Christ as our righteousness brought us into a state in which we are acceptable to God. In the book of Ephesians, Christ as our life has saved us into a position in which we are above all God's enemies. Here in the heavenly atmosphere, with a heavenly nature and a heavenly characteristic, we are a heavenly people." Christ today is ministering in the heavenlies. *The heavenlies* refers to His ascension. *The heavens* refers to a certain place, but His ascension does not denote any place. It is more significant that Christ today is ministering in His ascension in the heavenlies than in the heavens.

Today Christ ministers as the resurrection in His ascension. Actually, today Christ is in His ascension. He is in you and He is in me in His ascension as the resurrected One.

In this series of messages we are talking about God's move in man to write His own history. God today is writing His own autobiography in us. We may think that our Christian life is our autobiography, but actually it is God's writing of His autobiography. Christ today is ministering, working, and moving within us in His ascension.

His ascension gives Him the statuses for His move within man. In the previous chapter we saw that in His ascension He is the Lord, the Christ, the Leader, the Savior, the High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, the Minister of the new covenant, the Mediator of the better covenant, the surety of the better covenant, the Advocate, the great Shepherd, and the Head over all things to the church. Christ also has the status of a Prophet. In Acts 3:22-23 the apostle Peter quoted from Moses, who predicted in Deuteronomy 18 that God would raise up another Prophet, and this Prophet is Christ. Christ has the status of the Prophet, but He does not need to be in ascension to be qualified for this status. Actually, before His death when He was on the earth, He was a Prophet. For all the other eleven statuses of Christ mentioned previously, He needs the qualification of being in the heavens in ascension.

For Him to be the High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, He needs to be in ascension. For Him to be the Advocate, the Paraclete, He must be in ascension. For Him to be the Head over all things to the church, surely He must be in His ascension. Ephesians 1 says that He transcended to the heavenlies far above all (vv. 20-21). This is ascension. It was in His ascension that He was made Head over all things to the church. Christ today is in His

ascension. He is the Lord in ascension. He is the Christ in ascension. He is the King of kings, the Ruler of all the kings, in ascension. He is even the Savior in ascension. If He had never ascended, He could not be such a dynamic Savior today. Acts 2 tells us that He needs to be in ascension for Him to be the Lord and Christ (v. 36). Acts 5 tells us that He needs to be in ascension to be the Leader and the Savior (v. 31). His ascension qualifies Him. His ascension gives Him all these statuses and positions. Christ needs a position to minister as the High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. When we say that He ministers in the ascension, we mean that He ministers with all His qualifications, with all His statuses, and with all His posts, His offices.

The Bible tells us that Christ is not only in ascension but also in us (Col. 1:27). If He were working only in ascension, His work would have nothing to do with us, and His work could never be our story as a part of God's history in us. But today He is working within us. Because His work is within us, this work is related to our history. So this work is God's history in His union with man. He is working in His ascension within us. As the ascended One with many statuses and positions, He is moving within us.

We need to see this. Merely to learn this is not enough. I have been living in Anaheim for nineteen years, and I see Anaheim every day. If I were asked to tell you about Anaheim without ever having been here, I would have to learn a lot by exercising my mind. But now that I have seen Anaheim so much, I do not need to merely exercise my mind to speak about it. I can simply tell you what I have seen. I hope that we see something as a vision through these messages on the ascension of Christ.

In the whole universe there is such a scene into which Christ entered. He came down from the heavens in incarnation, and then He entered into His ascension. His being in ascension, in the heavenlies, is a great part of His dynamic salvation. He passed through incarnation, human living, and crucifixion, and then He reached resurrection. As the resurrection, He entered into His ascension. These steps were His move in man to carry out His dynamic salvation. Today God is still moving in His ascension. He is living, dwelling, staying, ministering, serving, working, moving, and acting in His ascension.

He is in His ascension within us. This is why Paul tells us that we are seated together with Christ in His ascension, which Paul calls "the heavenlies." The

very heavenlies referred to by Paul is the ascension. Within our being, there is something quite extraordinary. This extraordinary thing is a person, the ascended Christ. He came into us in His ascension. The Lord today is in our spirit in His ascension. In this ascension the Triune God moves in us, and this move becomes His history. It also becomes our history because we and He, He and we, are now mingled as one. We two have the same history.

Before a man and woman are married, they have two histories, but once they are married, they become a couple in a marriage life with one history. Today we and our God, the Triune God, are one, so He and we have one history. Otherwise, how could the Bible say that we live Christ (Phil. 1:21a), that we are the fullness of Christ (Eph. 1:23), and that we are the members, parts, of the counterpart of Christ? (5:25, 30). Your ears are members of your physical body, but actually your ears are you. In this sense, as the members of Christ's Body, we are Christ, and this Christ is in ascension. Christ is the embodiment of the Triune God, and we are parts of this embodiment in His ascension. Whenever we are gathered together into His name, Christ is there with all His members in ascension, and this is God's move within man. This is a part of His history. Whether we can present this message to our fellow believers depends upon whether we have seen something. Our seeing changes us inwardly, and this is transformation.

GOD'S MOVE WITHIN US IN THE OFFICES AND MINISTRIES OF CHRIST IN ALL OF HIS STATUSES

Now we want to see God's move within us in the offices and ministries of Christ in all His statuses.

Dwelling in Us through His Indwelling Spirit in the Presence of Christ in Our Spirit

In Christ's ascension God dwells in us through His indwelling Spirit in the presence of Christ in our spirit (1 John 3:24b; 4:13; Rom. 8:11; 2 Tim. 4:22). His dwelling in us is a great thing. Eventually, we have the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—dwelling in us. The Father is the Dweller, the Spirit is the instrument, and the Son is the very presence within us day by day. When we miss His presence; miss the consciousness of the instrument, the indwelling Spirit; and miss the consciousness of the Dweller, the Father, our

Christian life is a failure, a defeat. We should always have the presence of the Son with the consciousness of the Spirit as the instrument and the Father as the Dweller. Whenever we have the presence of Christ within us with a consciousness of the Spirit as the instrument and of the Father as the Dweller, the Triune God is moving in us to write His history, and that history is our story. This is God's subjective, intimate move within us, a move in which God is altogether involved with us and mingled with us, making Him and us one. This is the ministry of Christ in His ascension as the Spirit with His incarnation through His human living and under His crucifixion. This is God's move in man, and this is God's writing of His history.

Operating in Us Both the Willing and the Working for His Good Pleasure

In Christ's ascension God is operating in us both the willing within and the working without for His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13). He works within us for His good pleasure in our willing and in our working.

Perfecting Us in Every Good Work for the Fulfilling of His Will

I love the book of Hebrews because it is so rich in all the items of Christ's being. Hebrews 13:21 is the crucial verse of this book. This verse tells us that God is moving in us to perfect us in every good work for the fulfilling of His will, doing in us that which is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ.

Imparting All His Riches into Us for Our Enjoyment

While God is dwelling in us and operating in us to perfect us, He is dispensing, imparting, all His riches into us for our enjoyment in His love through the grace of Christ and the fellowship of the Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14). While He is working, He is imparting and dispensing Himself bit by bit in all His riches into our being. When He is imparting Himself into us, He is making Himself us so that we may become Him. Athanasius, one of the church fathers, said concerning Christ, "He was made man that we might be made God." God's move in man is to make man God in His life and nature but not in His Godhead. He is the unique God for people to worship in His

Godhead, but we are made God only in life and in nature, not in the Godhead. This is God's move within us to write His sweet and pleasant history.

As the God of All Grace

In Christ's ascension God moves within us as the God of all grace, perfecting, establishing, strengthening, and grounding us so that we may participate in His eternal glory, into which He has called us in Christ (1 Pet. 5:10). Even though Peter was only a fisherman without any kind of scholastic attainment, he was able to write such a marvelous word. Actually, however, the very God who was moving in Peter was the One who wrote this. Eventually, through God's move in us, we will participate in His eternal glory. The eternal glory will not come to us by accident. The coming glory is being built up today by God's move in us. He is now perfecting us to build up that glory. He is now establishing us to build up that glory. He is now strengthening us and grounding us to build up that glory. Eventually, that glory will be a building, the holy city, the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:10-11). The place where we should be is the divine glory, which is now being built up by God's perfecting, establishing, strengthening, and grounding. This is all God's move in us.

As the Father of All of Us, Being over All of Us, through All of Us, and in All of Us

God's move within us in the ascension of Christ is as the Father of all of us, being over all of us, through all of us, and in all of us for the constituting and building up of the Body of Christ in the oneness of His Divine Trinity (Eph. 4:3-6, 12). Ephesians 4:6 shows us that even the Father is triune because He is in three directions. *Over all* refers to the Father, *through all* to the Son, and *in all* to the Spirit. This is for the constituting and building up of the Body of Christ with the Spirit as the essence of the Body, with the Son as the element of the Body, and with the Father as the source of the Body. This is all God's move in us.

SUCH A MOVE OF GOD IN CHRIST WITHIN US BEING ALSO A PART OF GOD'S HISTORY IN HIS UNION WITH MAN

As we have seen, such a move of God in Christ within us in His offices and ministries in ascension is a part of God's history in His union with man.

CHAPTER TEN

IN THE BUILDING UP OF THE CHURCH

Scripture Reading: Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:11-12, 15-16; Col. 2:19; 1 Cor. 12:28, 18; Rom. 12:3; 1 Cor. 12:24, 6; 14:25

OUTLINE

- I. In Christ:
 - A. Christ building up His church—Matt. 16:18.
 - B. His giving some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, and some shepherds and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints unto the building up of the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:11-12.
 - C. His believers growing up in all things into Him, the Head; out from Him all the Body growing unto the building up of itself—vv. 15-16.
- II. By God:
 - A. Out from the Head all the Body growing with the growth of God—Col. 2:19.
 - B. God having placed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then works of power, then gifts of healing, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues—1 Cor. 12:28.
 - C. God having placed the members, each one of them, in the Body, even as He willed—v. 18.
 - D. God having apportioned to each a measure of faith—Rom. 12:3.
 - E. God having blended the Body together—1 Cor. 12:24.
 - F. The same God operating all things in all—v. 6.
 - G. God being among you (the church)—14:25.

In this chapter we will consider the move of God in man in the building up of the church. Such a subject may not seem to be very organic, but the building up of the church as the Body of Christ is altogether an organic matter within our being. In the building up of the Body of Christ, God moves intrinsically, not in an outward way.

When I was young, I was instructed that the term *the Body of Christ* was merely a metaphor signifying what the church is to Christ. I accepted this teaching at that time, but gradually, after many years, I found out that the

Body of Christ is not a metaphor; it is a great reality in the universe. Rather, our physical body is a metaphor portraying the Body of Christ. To know what the Body of Christ is, we must study our own body. I have learned a great deal about the Body of Christ by studying my own body over a number of years and through a number of illnesses.

IN CHRIST

Christ Building Up His Church

First, God's move in the building up of the Body of Christ is in Christ. According to Matthew 16:15-18, it is Christ who builds up His church. In verse 15 the Lord asked the disciples, "But you, who do you say that I am?" In verse 16 Peter responded by saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." The Lord then said to Peter, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in the heavens. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (vv. 17-18). *This rock* in verse 18 refers not only to Christ but also to the revelation concerning Christ that Peter received from the Father.

In verse 18 Christ said clearly that He would build up His church. However, we should not forget that Christ is not separate from God. Actually, Christ became the Builder of the church by being appointed, that is, commissioned, to do the building work. As the Christ of God, He was appointed and commissioned by God to be the Builder of the church. *The Christ* means "the anointed One." The anointed One is the appointed One, and the appointed One is the commissioned One. Christ has been anointed, appointed, and commissioned by God to build the church. So actually, it is God who builds up the church. God is the source of the building because God is the anointing One and the appointing One. He is the One who commissioned the Christ of God to build the church.

In one sense Christ builds the church, but in another sense He did not initiate this work. The initiation of the building up of the Body of Christ was from God. Therefore, God is the source. From this we can realize that to study the Bible is not an easy thing. In my speaking in the past, I stressed only the point of Christ building the church. However, in this chapter the stress is not on the building of the church by Christ but on the source, the initiation, of the

building. The source and initiation of the building of the church is not Christ but God. God initiated this matter. God anointed His Son to carry out His commission to build up the church. Thus, the building of the church by Christ is actually God's move.

In 1976 we built the meeting hall in Anaheim, California, in about nine months. One brother was appointed to purchase all the materials, and another brother was appointed as a kind of superintendent to oversee the entire project. All who worked on the building carried out the instructions of the superintendent without any opinion. This was one of the main reasons that the work progressed so quickly. On the one hand, the brother who served as superintendent built the meeting hall. He was appointed and commissioned for this. But on the other hand, the person who commissioned this brother was the one who built the hall. In the same way, Christ has been commissioned by God to build up the church. Christ builds the church only according to the Father's will, according to the Father's instruction. Thus, the building of the church is actually the move of God.

**Christ Giving Some Gifts (Persons)
for the Perfecting of the Saints
unto the Building Up of the Body of Christ**

Christ does not build the church directly with His own hand. Rather, He builds the church indirectly through the members of His Body (Eph. 4:11-12, 16). Ephesians 4 tells us that Christ as the ascended Head gave gifts to men for the building up of His Body (vv. 8, 11). Verses 11 and 12 say, "He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ." But even these gifted persons do not build up the church directly. Christ does not build the church directly, nor do the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers. The gifted persons perfect the saints unto the work of the ministry, that is, the work of building up the Body of Christ.

In building the meeting hall in Anaheim, the one who initiated the building did not do much actual building. Much of the direct building was done by eighty young brothers. The initiator gave the instructions and motivated the building work, but the eighty brothers actually did the work. In the same way,

it is not God, the Initiator, who builds the church directly; neither is it Christ, the anointed One, nor even the gifted persons given by Christ to the Body. The gifted persons perfect the saints as members of the Body to do the direct building work. Still, it is God in His Trinity who moves in these perfected members in their carrying out of the work of building. Thus, all the credit should still go to God.

**Christ's Believers Growing Up
in All Things into Him, the Head,
and out from Him All the Body Growing
unto the Building Up of Itself**

The believers of Christ grow up in all things into Him, the Head, and out from Him all the Body grows unto the building up of itself (vv. 15-16). Christ gave the gifted persons to the church for the perfecting of the saints unto the building work. But there is something more intrinsic than this: all the believers as members of the Body need to grow up. When we were building the meeting hall in Anaheim, the little children were not allowed to help, because it was too dangerous. They needed to grow so that they would have the strength to do the work. Likewise, in order to do the work of building up the church, we must grow. All the members of the Body must grow into Christ the Head in all things.

Then, out from the Head all the Body grows unto the building up of itself. After growing into the Head, we remain in Him to receive the bountiful supply from Him. Then we, the small members of the Body, build the church with the bountiful supply that we have received from the Head. Ephesians 4:16 says, "Out from whom all the Body...causes the growth of the Body." In the building up of the Body, growth is a crucial matter. First, we grow into Christ, the Head; then out from Him we receive the nourishment, the supply, to grow unto the building up of the Body of Christ.

All the small members are the direct builders of the church, yet they build the church with the very Christ who is the bountiful supply in them. Thus, the building is not only by Christ but also with Christ. The church is built by us with Christ as the building material. This is very intrinsic.

BY GOD

The church is built in Christ, and it is also built by God.

Out from the Head All the Body Growing with the Growth of God

Colossians 2:19, a verse similar to Ephesians 4:16, says, “Holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.” We grow into Christ, and out from Him we grow with the growth of God for the Body. Many believers have never heard that we are growing in Christ with the growth of God. This means that when we are growing, God is growing within us. We are growing in Christ, and God grows in us. Some versions have translated the phrase *the growth of God* as “the increase of God.” God is growing in us, and this growth is an increase of God within us. Eventually, the building material of the church is God Himself. To say that we build the church with Christ as the material is correct, but this is not as intrinsic as saying that we build the church with God as the building material.

God is growing, and His growing within us is actually His moving within us. This moving is God’s building. In the building up of the church God moves in such an intrinsic way. So, all the time we need to turn to our spirit, where God operates, where God increases, and where God grows to be the material of our building. We build by growing into Christ and by being out from Christ to grow with the Triune God.

The building up of the church depends on our inner situation. If our inner situation is wrong, there is no possibility of building the church. When our inner situation is right, at that time we are growing with the growth of God. By this growth and with this growth we build up the church. Thus, the building up of the church is God’s move within us.

We may consider that to build up the church we need to labor by visiting people and helping sinners to be saved, and thus that we must build up the church by ourselves and with ourselves. This kind of consideration is wrong. If we take this way, we will not see much result from our labor. We need to realize that when we go out to visit people, we must be growing into Christ and must be growing out from Christ in order to build with the growth of God. All our activities to go out and visit people should not be ours but should be God’s. God is growing in us. With this growth of God we first grow into Christ,

and then we grow out from Christ. Then we have the growing God within us as the very element and material for us to build up the church. Eventually, our building up of the church is God's move within us.

Some Christians consider that the way to build up the church is to have a capable pastor who is knowledgeable, eloquent, and very friendly. However, this concept is wrong. Whatever is built in that way is not the church; it is merely a social unit. When such a capable, eloquent, and knowledgeable one dies or resigns, after a short time that social unit may collapse. But the church that is built up by our growing with the growth of God into Christ and then out from Christ will remain forever and will consummate in the New Jerusalem. Whatever we build in this way will be a part of the New Jerusalem. This is not only our building; it is our building with God's building of the church by His growing within us.

For the building with the growth of God, we must deny ourselves, rejecting our natural life and our natural strength, and turn to our spirit to contact God continually, to give Him the freedom to move, to act, to work, and to grow. Then as we grow with God into Christ and out from Christ, we have something with which to build. This building up of the church is God's move in man.

**God Having Placed Some in the Church:
First Apostles, Second Prophets, Third Teachers;
Then Works of Power, Then Gifts of Healing, Helps,
Administrations, Various Kinds of Tongues**

According to 1 Corinthians 12:28, God has placed some in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then works of power, then gifts of healing, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. In Ephesians 4 it is Christ who gave the apostles, prophets, and teachers (v. 11), but in 1 Corinthians 12 it is God who placed these members in the church. Is it God who placed, or is it Christ who gave? Again, this involves the Trinity. Whatever God the Son did was the move of God the Father. While God the Son was giving the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers to the church, God the Father was placing all these gifted persons in the church within Christ's giving.

God Having Placed the Members, Each One of Them, in the Body, Even as He Willed

God has placed the members, each one of them (not only the gifted persons), in the Body, even as He willed (v. 18). You may say that you are a small member. But whether you are a large member or a small one, you have been placed by God. It is not up to you. You are where you are because God has willed and is still willing for it to be so. This is the reason that if we do not come to the church meetings, we do not have peace. We do not feel that we are where we should be. God has placed each member in the Body, even as He willed.

God Having Apportioned to Each a Measure of Faith

God has apportioned to each member of the Body a measure of faith (Rom. 12:3). Regardless of how small you are, be assured that you have a measure of faith. That faith was measured to you, that is, apportioned to you in a certain measure. No doubt Paul had a large measure of faith, and you have a smaller measure. Yet you still have a measure of faith. This was God's apportionment.

God Having Blended the Body Together

First Corinthians 12:24 says that God has blended the Body together. Because of our different characters, dispositions, intentions, and opinions, it is difficult for us to be blended. However, as long as we are in the church life, God blends us. The longer we remain in the church life, the more we will be blended. No one can resist God's blending. God is the most skillful One; therefore, God has a way to blend us. When God is blending, it is difficult for us to resist. This blending is not outward; it is altogether inward. God's blending is God's move in man.

The Same God Operating All Things in All

In the church as the Body of Christ, the same God operates all things in all. First Corinthians 12:6 says, "There are distinctions of operations, but the same God, who operates all things in all." Quite often I propose things to the elders and co-workers because of God's operation within me. God first is living; then He is moving and working within us every day. We all have

experienced God's living, moving, and working within us. This is God's operation. God is busier than we. He is working to blend us and to build up the Body of Christ.

God Being among You (the Church)

Eventually, God's moving in us in the building up of the church will have a consummation: whenever we come together, the strangers who come in will see and admit that God is among us (14:25). This is the outward speaking of the strangers. Actually, we not only have God among us, but we also have God within us. Even our meeting is God's moving in us. This is the building up of the church by God's moving in man. The entire history of the church is a part of the history of God moving in man.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

IN THE CONSUMMATION OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

Scripture Reading: Heb. 11:10; Gal. 4:26; Heb. 12:22; Rev. 3:12; 2:7; 20:4-6; Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:13; Col. 1:28b; Rev. 14:1-4, 14-16; 21:1-3, 9-23; 22:1-5

OUTLINE

- I. The New Jerusalem being the city with foundations, whose Architect and Builder is God and for which the Old Testament saints such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob eagerly waited—Heb. 11:10.
- II. The Jerusalem above, the mother of the New Testament believers—Gal. 4:26.
- III. The heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God, to which the New Testament believers come forward—Heb. 12:22.
- IV. The New Jerusalem, the city of God, descending out of heaven from God and appearing in the millennium—Rev. 3:12.
- V. The Paradise in the millennium—2:7.
- VI. The composition of all the overcomers of both the Old Testament and the New Testament up to the beginning of the thousand-year kingdom—20:4-6:
 - A. God moving in the overcomers by growing in them—Col. 2:19.
 - B. God making them mature to arrive at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ—Eph. 4:13; Col. 1:28b:
 1. The firstfruits before the great tribulation—Rev. 14:1-4.
 2. The harvest at the end of the great tribulation—vv. 14-16.
- VII. The New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth—21:1-3, 9-23; 22:1-5:
 - A. The eternal habitation of God constituted with the Triune God and God's redeemed people—21:3, 10-23.
 - B. The mingling of the processed and consummated Triune God with the regenerated and glorified tripartite men for the eternal manifestation and expression of the Triune God through His redeemed people.

- C. The greatest sign in the book of Revelation as an organism of the Triune God in eternity.
 - D. The Triune God's flow as the river of water of life to water, nourish, sustain, and maintain the entire city for eternity.
 - E. The move of God in the redeemed, regenerated, transformed, and glorified humanity as the ultimate consummated part of the move of God in man for eternity, thus to be a great part of God's history in His union with man.
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In Genesis 1 and 2 we are told that God created the heavens and the earth with man as the center. Zechariah 12:1 says that God stretched forth the heavens, laid the foundations of the earth, and formed the spirit of man within him. The heavens, the earth, and man are the three basic and outstanding elements of the entire universe. Then at the end of the Bible, in Revelation 21 and 22, we see the new heaven, the new earth, and the New Jerusalem. The new heaven is to replace the old heaven, the new earth is to replace the old earth, and the New Jerusalem, as the consummation of the new man, is to replace the old man.

The old heaven and old earth will be baptized through fire and will pass away to become the new heaven and new earth (2 Pet. 3:10-13), into which the New Jerusalem will come to be God's eternal expression. The book of Matthew speaks of three kinds of baptisms: the baptism of water by John the Baptist, of Spirit by the Lord Jesus, and of fire, the lake of fire, by the Lord Jesus, not as the Savior but as the Judge (3:11). Eventually, everything will go through fire. Peter tells us in his second Epistle that the elements in the universe will be baptized in fire. After going through fire, the old heaven and old earth will come out to be the new heaven and new earth. This is similar to our baptism. We were the old man, but after passing through baptism, we become the new man. Thus, the new heaven replaces the old heaven, the new earth replaces the old earth, and the new man replaces the old man. This new man, the new creation, eventually and consummately is the New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem is a new man.

Paul says in Galatians 6:15 that circumcision or uncircumcision means nothing; what matters is the new creation. The New Jerusalem will be the aggregate of God's new creation, and the new creation in the New Testament is also called the new man (Eph. 2:15; Col. 3:10). Eventually, the ultimate consummation of the corporate new man is the New Jerusalem. At the

beginning of the Bible, the heavens, the earth, and man are old, but at the end they all become new—the new heaven, the new earth, and the new man, who is the new creation, the New Jerusalem.

Now we need to consider how the old man can become the new man. How could the first man Adam in Genesis 1 and 2 become a corporate New Jerusalem in Revelation 21 and 22? The Bible shows us that God has two kinds of creations: the old creation and the new creation. God completed His work of the old creation with the heavens, the earth, and man in the first two chapters of Genesis. Then in Genesis 3 Satan came in to inject himself into God's creation, to contaminate God's creation. So beginning from chapter 3 of Genesis, the entire old creation of God became corrupted, contaminated, and fallen. This fallen creation needs to be redeemed.

However, the Bible shows that God's eternal purpose is not just to redeem, to bring back, to repossess, the fallen old creation but to regenerate man to make him the new creation. God's new-creation work started from the second half of Genesis 3. Man became contaminated and fallen, and in his fallen situation he did not know what to do. Then God came in to preach the gospel to Adam. The first gospel preaching was by God Himself to Adam in Genesis 3 concerning the seed of the woman (v. 15). The seed of the woman is Christ in the New Testament. Christ as the seed of the woman would come to redeem, to restore, man and also to germinate, to regenerate, man (Gal. 4:4-6). Surely this is the work of the new creation, so the work of God's new creation began from Genesis 3.

Thus, we can say that the work of God's new creation occupies the entire Bible except the first two chapters. The new-creation work of God began from Genesis 3, not from Matthew 1. God's new-creation work passes through four main ages: the age before law, from Adam to Moses; the age of law, from Moses to Christ; the age of grace, from Christ's first coming to His second coming; and the age of the kingdom of one thousand years. God's new-creation work started from Genesis 3 and passes through these four ages. In these four ages God does His best to get Himself into man in order to make the old man the new man. Thus, the portion of Scripture from Genesis 3 to the end of Revelation is on God's new creation.

God worked on the old creation but not for the old creation. God works on the old creation to have a new creation. A butterfly coming out of a cocoon is a

good example of this. The cocoon is the old creation. Eventually, the butterfly is the new creation. God works on the “cocoon,” the old creation, to get the “butterfly,” the new creation. From the time when God began to work on the cocoon, that was the beginning of God’s new-creation work. Eventually, God will get rid of the cocoon and will cause the butterfly to come out. This butterfly is the New Jerusalem.

Now we need to consider whether we are the new creation or the old creation. On the one hand, we are the new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). But when we lose our temper, that is a part of the old creation. Although we are the new creation, we are also being renewed and transformed to become the new creation in a fuller way. Much of our being is still in the old creation. None of us have fully come out of our cocoon, our old creation. Today we are the new creation, but we are still with the old creation.

Today God is growing in us, expanding in us. The more God grows, the more God expands, and the more the cocoon is reduced. John the Baptist said, “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30). The cocoon, the old I, should decrease, but the butterfly, Christ, must increase by God’s growing in us. God’s growing in us is God’s work. I am so thankful to the Lord that in the entire Bible there is a verse such as Colossians 2:19, which says that by holding the Head, the Body “grows with the growth of God.” God is growing within us. If He does not grow within us, we cannot grow.

Philippians 2:13 says that God is operating in us. What is the difference between God’s growing and God’s operating? We can illustrate this by considering young children. In order for children to grow, they need to move by running, jumping, and acting in many ways. It is not sufficient for them to eat and drink. In addition to this, they must operate. If there is no operation, there is no growth. This is why the schools have playgrounds where children can exercise, operate, for their proper development and growth. It is the same with us in the spiritual realm. If we do not exercise, operate, we cannot grow. The ones who exercise the most, grow the most.

In the New Testament one verse tells us that our God is growing in us. Another verse tells us that our God is operating in us. He is not lazy. The more He operates in us, the more He grows in us. We need to cooperate with God’s operation in us by exercising our spirit to function by speaking in the meetings. The best way for us to grow is to exercise our spirit to speak. God’s

growth in us depends upon His operation, and His operation is His work for His new creation.

We should not forget that God's work for the new creation began in Genesis 3. Eventually, both Adam and Abel became a part of God's new creation work, so they will be a part of the material for building up the New Jerusalem. God worked in Genesis with Adam, Abel, Enosh, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and that work was the work of God's new creation. The work of the New Jerusalem started from Adam and passed through the entire Old and New Testaments. The new-creation work of God began with Adam in Genesis 3. God was moving even then to work Himself into man.

God's new-creation work started from Genesis 3, but it was not realized in a full way until the New Testament. For God to work Himself into us, God needed to become a man. He had to come into man, making Himself a man. Matthew 1 says that the birth of Christ was directly of the Holy Spirit (vv. 18, 20), and Luke 1 says that John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb (v. 15). It was not until the New Testament age that the divine title *the Holy Spirit* was used. In Psalm 51:11 and Isaiah 63:10-11 the title of the Spirit should be translated "the Spirit of holiness." In the Old Testament the Spirit of God was working in the old creation (Gen. 1:2). Then the Spirit of Jehovah is seen in God's relationship with man (Judg. 6:34). But in the New Testament, God came to become a man. His whole Divine Being was brought into that little man Jesus. The Holy Spirit, mentioned in the conceptions of John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus, is for sanctifying humanity for Christ's incarnation (Luke 1:15, 35; Matt. 1:20; also see Luke 1:35, footnote 2, second paragraph—Recovery Version, for the difference in essence between the conception of John the Baptist and the conception of the Lord Jesus).

Now we need to consider how this little man, Jesus, could get into people. This is revealed in the Gospel of John. John 14 was the first part of the Lord's last message given to the disciples. In verse 10a He said, "I am in the Father and the Father is in Me." But at that time He was not yet in the disciples, so He prayed that the Father would give them another Comforter, that He might be with them forever (v. 16). The Lord said that when this Comforter would come, He would be in the disciples as the Spirit of reality (v. 17). Furthermore, He told them that on the day of resurrection they would know that He was in the Father, that they were in Him, and that He was in them (v. 20). Before

that time He was in the Father, and the Father was in Him, but He was not in the disciples. But in His resurrection He came into them as the Spirit of reality. This was God's dispensing of Himself into man for His new creation. It was for this purpose that He died and resurrected.

In John 14 the Lord's going was not for the purpose of going to heaven. He went through death and resurrection to the Father (vv. 12b, 28b) to bring humanity into divinity. The issue of His going was that He became a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b). In His resurrection He was begotten of God to be God's firstborn Son, and millions of believers were begotten to be the many sons of God as His many brothers (Rom. 8:29; Acts 13:33). At that time the Triune God had fully entered into man, and from that time the Triune God remains in man to operate in man for His growth in man. When He grows in us, His growth becomes our growth.

In His mercy He is operating within us to cause us to love Him so that He can grow within us. If it were not for His mercy, we would not be here. We are here loving Him. Whether we fail or succeed, He still grows in us. If we lose our temper, His operation causes us to have a full repentance. We may pray, "Lord, forgive me for losing my temper." This is a sign of His operation in us. Many times our growth in our failure is more than in our success.

We can consider David as an example of this. David committed a terrible sin with Bath-sheba, but was he more spiritual after that sin or before it? Surely he became more spiritual after his sin, his repentance, and his receiving of God's forgiveness. This does not mean that we should try to commit sin. But we need to realize that the Lord's mercy sustains us all the time. At times God may put His mercy aside to try us, to test us. Regardless of how we are, when God would do this, we cannot help but fail.

Peter was so strong to tell the Lord that even if all the others would be stumbled, he would never be stumbled (Matt. 26:33). He said that he was ready to go with the Lord both to prison and to death (Luke 22:33). Then the Lord said to him, "Peter, a rooster will not crow today until you deny three times that you know Me" (v. 34). The Lord had to put His mercy aside for a time so that Peter's natural strength and self-confidence could be dealt with. After Peter's failure he surely became more spiritual than before.

This illustrates how God today is moving in us to do a work for His building. His building is to be consummated through the church in the New Jerusalem. He operates in us in our thinking, our willing, and our doing. While He is operating in us, He is growing in us. Then we grow in His growth. This is the work of God's new creation. God works on us as the old creation to produce the new creation.

The building up of the New Jerusalem as the outcome of God's new creation is not a sudden thing. It is altogether a progressive thing. This progression started from Adam. First, God worked on Adam as the first piece of material for His New Jerusalem. Then God worked on another piece of the old creation, Abel. Eventually, Abel became a part of God's new creation. God works throughout all the successive generations to gain the New Jerusalem as the final product of His new-creation work. Today as we grow in Him and He grows in our growth, He is arriving at His goal to consummate His new-creation work. This work is going on, and this work will have a consummation. This is why the subject of this chapter is the move of God in man in the consummation of the New Jerusalem.

**THE NEW JERUSALEM BEING
THE CITY WITH FOUNDATIONS,
WHOSE ARCHITECT AND BUILDER IS GOD
AND FOR WHICH THE OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS
SUCH AS ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB
EAGERLY WAITED**

Now we want to consider what the New Jerusalem is. The New Jerusalem is the city with foundations, whose Architect and Builder is God and for which the Old Testament saints such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob eagerly waited. Hebrews 11:10 tells us this. This was the reason Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lived in tents. They did not desire to live in a city in their age, because they eagerly waited for the city to come, the New Jerusalem.

In Hebrews 12:22 we are told that we, the New Testament believers, are coming forward to that heavenly city, the heavenly Jerusalem. This shows us that there is something called the heavenly Jerusalem that is already in existence. Some teach that today there is no New Jerusalem. This is wrong.

The Bible does not tell us that the New Jerusalem will come but that it will come down (Rev. 21:2). It was there already, but it will come down and be removed from heaven to the earth.

The Architect is God. God designed it and built it. Of course, we know that God does not build it directly. He builds it first through Christ as the Head indirectly. Then Christ gave many gifts to His Body to perfect every member of the Body. Then every member of the Body functions to do the direct building work. This is God's building work in totality. The Old Testament saints like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were waiting for this built-up city.

**THE JERUSALEM ABOVE,
THE MOTHER OF THE NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVERS**

Galatians 4:26 says that the Jerusalem above is the mother of the New Testament believers. The Jerusalem beneath on this earth is a sign of the one above, and the one above is our mother. We are the children of the Jerusalem above. Thus, before we came into existence, she was there as our mother. Before we were born, our mother existed already.

**THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM,
THE CITY OF THE LIVING GOD,
TO WHICH THE NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVERS
COME FORWARD**

As we have already mentioned, the New Testament believers come forward to something that is already in existence. They come forward to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God (Heb. 12:22). This strongly proves that the New Jerusalem is now existing in the universe.

**THE NEW JERUSALEM, THE CITY OF GOD,
DESCENDING OUT OF HEAVEN FROM GOD
AND APPEARING IN THE MILLENNIUM**

The New Jerusalem, the city of God, descends out of heaven from God and appears in the millennium. Revelation 3:12 tells us that in the millennium, in the thousand-year kingdom, the New Jerusalem will descend out of heaven

from God. Furthermore, the name of the New Jerusalem will be written on the overcoming believers.

THE PARADISE IN THE MILLENNIUM

This appearing New Jerusalem will be the Paradise of God in the thousand-year kingdom (2:7). This is not the Paradise mentioned in Luke 23:43, as the joyful section of Hades. That was the Paradise that the Lord mentioned to the thief on the cross. The Lord told him that he would be with Him in Paradise. The Paradise mentioned in Revelation 2:7 as a reward to the overcomers is the highest Paradise in the universe; it is the New Jerusalem in the coming millennial kingdom. A number of Bible students consider the garden of Eden as a kind of Paradise. Thus, we may say that there are three Paradises: the garden of Eden at Adam's time, the Paradise in Hades for the dead saints, and the Paradise in the millennium, the New Jerusalem.

THE COMPOSITION OF ALL THE OVERCOMERS OF BOTH THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE NEW TESTAMENT UP TO THE BEGINNING OF THE THOUSAND-YEAR KINGDOM

When the New Jerusalem comes down from heaven, that will be the beginning of the millennium. The New Jerusalem will be the composition of all the overcomers of both the Old Testament and the New Testament up to the beginning of the thousand-year kingdom (20:4-6). This is why the Lord Jesus told us in Matthew 8:11 that many would feast with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of the heavens. This means that in the manifestation of the kingdom in the New Jerusalem, the overcoming believers will feast with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In the millennium the Old Testament overcomers will feast with the New Testament overcomers.

Hebrews 11:40 shows that the Old Testament saints cannot obtain what God promised apart from the New Testament believers. This verse says, "God has provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect." At the end of the age of grace, a good number of the New Testament saints will be matured to be the overcomers. By that time the New Jerusalem will be enlarged. The New Jerusalem in the millennial kingdom will be composed of all the overcomers of the Old Testament to the last

overcomer of the New Testament. In order to obtain and enjoy this, the Old Testament overcomers need the New Testament overcomers to perfect them. They are waiting for us to go on so that they may be made perfect.

Today God is moving in the overcomers by growing in them (Col. 2:19). He is making them mature to arrive at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:13; Col. 1:28b). The maturity comes out of our growth in life. In Ephesians 4 we see that we are growing up into the Head in all things and that all the Body causes the growth of the Body (vv. 15-16). This growth comes from God's growing in us. That growing is God's operating, and that operating is God's moving.

Before the three and a half years of the great tribulation, many firstfruits will be raptured to the heavenly Mount Zion, the center of the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev. 14:1-4). They take the lead to mature first among the saints. Then there will be the harvest of the majority of the believers at the end of the great tribulation (vv. 14-16). Between the rapture of the firstfruits and the harvest there will be the three and a half years of the great tribulation (vv. 6-13).

In between the firstfruits and the harvest there will be another group, the late overcomers, who will be killed by Antichrist and who will stand on the glassy sea (15:2-4). During the three and a half years of the great tribulation, Antichrist will set up his image, forcing all the people on earth to worship him (13:4, 12, 15; 2 Thes. 2:4). Whoever chooses not to worship him will be martyred. These ones are the late overcomers.

Then at the end of the tribulation, the Lord will harvest the majority of the saints. Because they did not become mature, the Lord will leave them on earth to become ripe under the suffering of the great tribulation, which will be like the parching sun. This sun will dry up the earthly waters from all the believers who are left on the earth in the great tribulation, enabling them to ripen. This is why the angel cries out that "the hour to reap has come because the harvest of the earth is ripe" (Rev. 14:15).

The believers who were not overcomers will suffer a dispensational punishment during the thousand-year kingdom. Through those thousand years they will become mature to be included in the final consummation, the ultimate consummation, of the New Jerusalem mentioned in Revelation

21—22. The New Jerusalem is built up by God's progressive, gradual work from Adam to the last believer of the New Testament. They all will be placed into the New Jerusalem by God's growing and operating in them. This growing and operating is God's moving and God's work through the generations. All this work is God's history.

THE NEW JERUSALEM IN THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH

The New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth is the ultimate consummation, which is revealed in the last two chapters of the Bible (21:1-3, 9-23; 22:1-5).

The Eternal Habitation of God

The New Jerusalem will be the eternal habitation of God constituted with the Triune God and with God's redeemed people (21:3, 10-23). The holy city as the tabernacle of God is for God to dwell in, and God and the Lamb as the temple (v. 22) are for the redeemed saints to dwell in. In the new heaven and new earth the New Jerusalem will be a mutual dwelling place for God and man for eternity.

Revelation 21 tells us that the New Jerusalem is of gold as the base (v. 18). This refers to God the Father in His divine nature. Then the walls and foundations are built with precious stones, signifying the Spirit in His transforming work (vv. 18-20). Then there are the twelve pearls for twelve gates, displaying Christ in His redemptive and regenerating work (v. 21). Thus, the holy city is constituted with the Triune God.

Furthermore, the names of the twelve tribes are inscribed on the twelve gates (v. 12), signifying that the New Jerusalem includes all the redeemed saints of the Old Testament. Also, the twelve names of the twelve apostles are on the twelve foundations (v. 14), signifying that the New Jerusalem includes all the New Testament saints. This shows that the holy city is a composition of the Triune God and His redeemed people.

The Mingling of the Processed and Consummated Triune God with

the Regenerated and Glorified Tripartite Men

The New Jerusalem is also the mingling of the processed and consummated Triune God with the regenerated and glorified tripartite men for the eternal manifestation and expression of the Triune God through His redeemed people.

The Greatest Sign in the Book of Revelation as an Organism of the Triune God in Eternity

The holy city, New Jerusalem, is the greatest sign in the book of Revelation as the organism of the Triune God in eternity. The first sign in the book of Revelation is the golden lampstands (1:12), and the last is the New Jerusalem. Both refer to God's building.

The Triune God's Flow as the River of Water of Life

In the center of the city there is the throne of God and the Lamb. From the redeeming God's throne flows a river (22:1). That river refers to the Spirit. God, the Lamb, and the Spirit are the Triune God's flow as the river of water of life to water, nourish, sustain, and maintain the entire city for eternity.

The Move of God in the Redeemed, Regenerated, Transformed, and Glorified Humanity as the Ultimate Consummated Part of the Move of God in Man for Eternity

In the New Jerusalem we see the move of God in the redeemed, regenerated, transformed, and glorified humanity as the ultimate consummated part of the move of God in man for eternity, thus to be a great part of God's history in His union with man. This is altogether the move of God in His union and in His mingling with man, so this becomes God's history. The entire Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is the history of the Triune God.