
MEDITATIONS ON GENESIS



LIVING STREAM MINISTRY

MEDITATIONS ON GENESIS

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CONTENTS

1. Genesis and Geology
2. The Original World and the Cause of its Desolation
3. The Recovery of the Earth in Six Days
4. The Creation and the Christian Experience
5. The Creation and the Holy Works of Christ
6. The Creation and the Holy Works of Christ (Cont.)
7. The Story of Creation and the Truth Concerning the Dispensations

CHAPTER ONE

GENESIS AND GEOLOGY

We believe that the entire Bible is the Word of God, and every word of it is inspired. A very grievous thought in the mind of godly ones is that men have despised and opposed His Word. God's children are grieved because men do not respect God's statutes. Among the sixty-six books of the Bible, Genesis has been subjected to the most doubt. Those who oppose the Bible often try to overturn God's clear revelation with geological ages and prehistoric discoveries. The evidences in geology prove to them that the earth has been in existence for tens of thousands of years, and that the record of six thousand years of history in the Bible is untrustworthy. In the name of science, the world hurls its attacks on the book of Genesis.

Many dear brothers in the Lord are not that scholarly (the author being one of them) and become lost in this storm. Although geology does not form part of our meditation, for the benefit of all, we will study the Word of God by the Lord's grace at the commencement of our meditation and will consider how perfect is His Word, so that we can silently behold His beauty in His presence.

Genesis is God's revelation, while geology is man's invention. God knows the whole truth. As such, His revelation can never be wrong. Man only sees in part. As such, his conjectures are not accurate. When we place Genesis side by side with geology, we should follow Genesis and not geology, because it is God who stands behind Genesis. If there are any basic differences between Genesis and geology, the error must be on the side of geology. The authority of the Bible is undisputed. Everything that is contrary to the Bible is wrong. Thank God our Father that He has given us such a complete revelation. If there are any incompatibilities between God and man, we would rather give up man and accept God. If there is no incompatibility, should not feeble human beings all the more believe in the revelation from heaven?

Men often laugh at the ridiculous stories of creation circulated among the Chinese, the Babylonians, and other countries. No scientist has to spend much effort to refute these myths. The reason is that there is not much weight to these traditions. This is why they have not attracted much attention. But men's attitudes towards the Bible are very different. The very fact that they

have tried their best to resist the Bible proves the power of the Bible. They cannot treat the Bible the same as the traditions of the nations because they have recognized the extraordinary nature of the Bible.

All those who have read Genesis 1 cannot fail to marvel at the beauty of its record. How ordinary it is, yet how marvelous! It is a plain record and contains no theory or arguments to prove its authenticity. The writer of the book was not bound by the book, but was transcendent above its record. The true author of the book is the One who is far above the universe it describes—God.

Had the recorder of the book, Moses, written this book according to his own learning and ideas, his thoroughly Egyptian-trained intellect would surely have been influenced by the Egyptian theory of creation. Yet who can detect a trace of Egyptian philosophy in Genesis 1? Why is this? It is because God was the One who inspired Moses to do the writing. Otherwise, how could Moses know that the land came out of the water? This is, of course, a fact established by geology and is a modern discovery. Had Moses not been inspired, it would be difficult to explain this fact. As to the development of life on earth, although the Bible does not support the theory of evolution, it does not altogether reject the fact that there was a progression. First, there were aquatic organisms, and then there was man. Would not a scientist marvel at the record of Moses? The omniscient God must surely have given inspiration according to facts; those who were inspired by such an omniscient God cannot be in error.

Yet the Bible is not a textbook of science. Its goal is to guide sinners “unto salvation through the faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3:15). Nevertheless, the Bible does not contain any scientific errors. If there are any contradictions with science, it is either a misinterpretation of the Scripture or a misjudgment of science. Many of the definitive statements by geologists in the past have been overturned! Many of their assertions have been proven wrong. Cummings said, “Geology has made mistakes in the past. It is possible that it will be wrong again. The hasty and loud assertions by those who are not too familiar with its theories may be proved inaccurate again.”

Since the Bible is not a science textbook, it only mentions the “whats” of creation without mentioning the “whys.” Science is interested in the “whys.” Of course, in many cases it is successful in doing this. But one must not

overturn the “whats” with theoretical “whys” just because man’s finite mental research has come into conflict with God’s record. What God said are the facts because He knows everything. If the world wants to study what God has said and why He has said it, it must not hold on to its own ideas while rejecting God’s authority. It is a good thing to have wisdom, but there is one kind of foolishness which is more blessed.

Among Christians, there is a popular theory that Genesis 1:1 is a kind of general introduction, and that the work of the six days is actually an expansion of the record of verse 1. In other words, they consider the words “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” as merely a subject of Genesis 1. They say that in the first sentence the writer wrote down a summary of what he was about to say, after which he went at length into an explanation of this sentence. After telling us that God created the heaven and the earth, Genesis goes on to tell us the condition of the earth after creation, and how He created light, air, the land, the plants, and the animals day by day. This popular theory considers Genesis 1 as a record of the creation of the universe, and that the universe was created out of desolation. If we study the first chapter of the Bible carefully, we will see the error in this supposition! This erroneous supposition, not the Bible itself, has put the church into a great debate with the world. This supposition gives men the excuse to say that Genesis is incompatible with geology and casts doubts in the minds of many young people concerning the accuracy of the Bible.

In Hebrew, the original language, there are altogether seven words in Genesis 1:1. Each of these seven words has independent meanings. God’s inspired record does not say that at the beginning of time, God molded the heavens and the earth into being, or that He made them out of some elements. It says that the heavens and the earth were created.

How clear is the word created! To create is to make something out of nothing; it is to create something out of void. It is not to make something out of some existing elements. The word create is bara in the original language. “In the beginning God bara the heaven and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). The word bara is used three other times in Genesis 1 and 2: (1) “And God created (bara) great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good” (v. 21). (2) “So God created (bara) man in his own

image” (v. 27a). (3) “In it he had rested from all his work which God created (bara) and made” (2:3b).

To create is to make something out of nothing. The great whales and every living creature do not have an outward body only, but a life-element within them. The only way that this can be done is through God’s direct work of creation. This is why it says that God created the great whales and every living creature (1:21). There is a very good reason for the Bible to say “created” instead of “made.” In the same way, although man’s body was made from the dust, 2:7 tells us that man has a spirit and a soul which cannot be made from any physical material. This is why the Bible says that God created man according to His own image.

In Genesis 2 there are three words for the act of creation: (1) Bara, which means to make something out of nothing. We have covered this briefly. (2) Asah, which means to make. This word is very different from the first. Bara is to make something out of nothing, while asah means that there is some raw material first, and then something is made out of the raw material. A carpenter can make a chair, but he cannot create a chair. In describing most of the work during the six days, this word is used. (3) Yatsar, which means to complete, has the sense of a potter molding a piece of clay into shape. This is the word used for formed in 2:7. Isaiah 43:7 shows the relationship between these three words: “Everyone who is called by My name, / Whom I have created, formed, and even made for My glory.” To create is to make something out of nothing, to form is to mold into shape, and to make is to work from some material.

Genesis 1:1 uses the word bara. The phrase in the beginning is a further proof that God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing. There is no need of any hypothesis. Since God has said this, man should believe. If man wants to fathom God’s work in the beginning with his finite mind, he will only expose his own presumptuousness! “By faith we understand that the universe has been framed by the word of God” (Heb. 11:3). Furthermore, who can answer God’s challenge to Job concerning the creation?

God created the heaven and the earth in the beginning. The heaven does not refer to the heaven that surrounds our earth but rather to the heaven of the stars. This “heaven” has not changed since the creation of the universe. Although the heaven has never changed, the condition on earth has changed!

If we want to understand Genesis 1, it is very important to differentiate between the earth in verse 1 and the earth in verse 2. The condition of the earth in verse 2 was not the condition at the beginning of God's creation. In the beginning when God created the heaven and the earth, His creation was perfect. God is not a God of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33). Therefore, the condition of void and confusion in verse 2 was not the original condition at the time of God's creation. How could God possibly have created an earth that was void and without form? We can answer this question by reading one verse alone. "For thus says Jehovah, / Who created the heavens— / He is the God / Who formed the earth and made it; / He established it; / He did not create it waste, / But He formed it to be inhabited: / I am Jehovah and there is no one else" (Isa. 45:18). How clear this is!

The word waste in this verse is the same as the word without form in Genesis 1:2, which is *tohu* in Hebrew. Unfortunately, translators of the Bible have not used the same word in both places. "He did not create it [the earth] without form." Why then does Genesis 1:2 say that "the earth was without form"? It is easy to find the solution. In Genesis 1:1, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth that God created then was not void and without form. Later there was a cataclysm, and the earth became without form and void. Verse 3 does not refer to the original creation, but to a restored earth. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and then during the six days, He re-created the world. The world in Genesis 1:1 was the original world, while the world in 1:3 is our present world. Genesis 1:2 describes the transitional condition of desolation after the initial world and prior to our present world.

We do not base our explanation on Isaiah 45:18 alone (even though Isaiah 45:18 alone is sufficient as a proof). We have other evidences. According to Bible scholars, in Hebrew the first word in verse 2 is a conjunction, which should be translated as *and*. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, and the earth was without form, and void."

The "and," according to Hebrew usage—as well as that of most other languages—proves that the first verse is not a compendium of what follows, but a statement of the first event in the record. For if it were a mere summary, the second verse would be the actual commencement of the history, and certainly would not begin with a copulative. A good illustration of this may be found in the fifth chapter of Genesis (Gen. 5:1). There the opening words,

“This is the book of the generations of Adam,” are a compendium of the chapter, and, consequently, the next sentence begins without a copulative. — G.H. Pember, *Earth’s Earliest Ages*, 1942, reprinted 1975, p. 31.

Therefore, what follows in Genesis 1:2 is not a detailed explanation of the record in 1:1, but an independent, distinct, and later event. The creation of the heavens and the earth is one thing, and the earth becoming without form and void is another. Later we will explain why the earth became void and without form.

About a hundred years ago, Dr. Chalmers pointed out that the word was in “the earth was without form” should be translated became. Dr. I.M. Haldeman, G.H. Pember, and others also pointed out that this word is the same as the word became used in Genesis 19:26. “And she became a pillar of salt.” If the same word is translated became in 19:26, why should it not be translated the same way here? Even the word became in 2:7 is the same word as in 1:2. Therefore, it is not hypothetical to translate 1:2 the following way: “And the earth became without form.” When God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was not without form and void. Later it became such. Let us read a few more verses:

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is” (Exo. 20:11). Comparing these two verses, we can see that the world in Genesis 1:1 was very different from the world in 1:3. In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth, but in the six days, God made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them. There is a vast difference between create and make. One is to have something from nothing, while the other is to improve the things that are in existence. The world can make, but it cannot create, while God can both create and make. This is why Genesis says that “in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Later because of the cataclysm, the earth became desolate, and “in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is” (Exo. 20:11).

Second Peter 3:5 through 7 says the same thing. The heavens and the earth in verse 5 are the heaven and the earth in Genesis 1:1. Verse 6 speaks of the world flooded with water, which is the earth that was without form and void and that was under the water in Genesis 1:2. “The heavens and earth now” in

verse 7 is the restored world after Genesis 1:3. There is a clear difference between God's work in the six days and His work of creation at the beginning.

The more we read Genesis 1, the more we will see that our explanation above is the proper one. In the first day light was called into being. Before the first day there was already land, but it was "without form, and void" and was buried in the deep under the water. On the third day God did not create the land; He merely caused it to appear. F.W. Grant said that the work of the six days merely put a new order to the earth; it did not create something out of nothing. The earth was there already. The Bible never says that the earth was created during the six days. Grant also said, "At which point did the first day begin? Some may think that it began from desolation. Yet this is not true. The 'evening' on the first day indicates light had been there since the beginning. 'The darkness he called Night,' yet the 'evening' is a darkness that is already under the control of light."

In the first day God did not create the light; He merely caused the light to appear on the darkened earth. In the same way in the second day, He did not create the heaven. The heaven there was not the heavens, but the atmospheric "heaven" which surrounds the earth. This was not created then. Where then did the atmosphere come from? Our answer is that it was created in verse 1. Therefore, there was no need now to create; there was only the need to restore.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." There is no detailed discussion here. We do not know if the primordial world was created in an instant or became what it was through an endless period of time. We do not know if it was completed in a few thousand years or millions of years. We do not know the shape and the size of it. All that we know is that "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." We do not know how many years there were between verses 1 and 2 of Genesis 1. We do not know how long ago God created the heaven and the earth, and we do not know how many years after the creation of the primordial world did the desolation of verse 2 occur. But we believe that there was a long period of time between the perfect creation at the beginning and the later change into something that was without form and void.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." How much later was it that "the earth became without form, and void"? We cannot tell. But we

know one thing: there was a long gap between the two expressions. This long gap between the first two verses of Genesis covers the whole prehistoric period. But from verse 3 until now there are less than six thousand years. Since we have proved that there is a big gap between the first two verses of the Bible, all the years which geology demands to exist and all the geological periods associated with these years can fall within this period. We do not know how much time passed on the earth and how many changes occurred on the earth's surfaces and in the atmosphere before there was the condition of void and formlessness; the Bible does not say anything about it.

But we can say for sure that the Bible never says that our earth is only six thousand years old. The Bible only testifies that there are six thousand years of human history. If the Bible has not said something, science can conjecture all it wants. But science cannot form conjectures on what the Bible has already said. After we understand the first two verses of the Bible, we can be assured that there is no contradiction between the Bible and geology. All the attacks by geology on the Bible are beating the air. How wonderful is the Word God has written!

We are not saying this to please science. God's revelation never wavers before man. We do not give up the Bible's authority in order to accommodate man's inventions. If there are any contradictions between the Bible and science, (and we would expect there to be some, because fleshly man is always at enmity with God), we have no intention to reconcile and annul these differences. The above assertion was not proposed after some geological discoveries, in an effort to reconcile the Bible with science. There were men in the ancient church who spoke about this. At that time, geology was not yet in existence! When men like St. Augustus interpreted Genesis, the world did not yet have the term geology!

A Christian does not trust in human wisdom, but in God's Word. We need nothing other than the sure rock of the Bible. As long as we have the "it is written" (Matt. 4:6) in the Scripture, everything is solved. Unfortunately, many apologetics have forgotten their ground; they change the words of the Scripture to accommodate man's teaching. An example is given by A.W. Pink, who noted that after the translation of a certain Assyrian tablet, the apologetics enthusiastically reported that much of the Old Testament history was verified! This turns things upside down! Does the Word of God need verification? If the record on the Assyrian tablet coincides with that of the

Bible, it only shows that the Assyrian tablets have no historical error. If they do not agree, it merely proves that the tablets are in error. Worldly men and vain scientists will of course scorn at our logic. But this only goes to demonstrate God's Word which says, "But a soulish man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him and he is not able to know them because they are discerned spiritually" (1 Cor. 2:14). We must never lower ourselves to appease men. It seems like a good idea to change the Bible to suit man's taste, but doing so changes the true nature of the Bible.

How wonderful is Genesis 1! It devotes only one verse to the description of the first creation! It uses only one verse to describe the desolation of the world! This is far less than the thirty or so verses that describe the restoration of the world! Who can come up with a composition that matches the record of Genesis 1? The subject is difficult, yet the explanation is clear; the facts span a long time, yet the description is simple. It does not talk about science, yet it is scientifically accurate. Who except God can compose such a writing? The reason God did not say more than this is that He only intended to show man His own relationship with man.

J. N. Darby said: "This revelation from God is not a history by Him of all that He has done, but what has been given to man for his profit, the truth as to what he has to say to. Its object is to communicate to man all that regards his own relationship with God...But historically the revelation is partial. It communicates what is for the conscience and spiritual affections of man...Thus no mention is made of any heavenly beings...Thus also, regards this earth, except the fact of its creation, nothing is said of it beyond what relates to the present form of it." — The Synopsis of the Books of the Bible, reprinted 1970, p. 9.

Indeed, God's revelation is not given to satisfy human curiosity, but to manifest His Godhead, the world's sinfulness, the way of salvation, and the coming glory and judgments.

The present worldly knowledge is indeed dangerous. Unless God bestows grace on man, man would boast in himself and use the knowledge he acquires as a basis to oppose God. How difficult it is for an intellectual person to humble himself! Man can search for knowledge as much as he wants. But God will not supplement this with His revelation. This is why He does not say much in Genesis 1. Our present need is not more science, but deeper spiritual

fellowship. Only this will reap real fruit in eternity. We have to praise God the Father because He is full of love! He not only created us, but re-created us, and made us a new creation in the Lord Jesus. Lord Jesus! How sweet is this name! God has given us His Son. What a marvelous grace this is!

CHAPTER TWO

THE ORIGINAL WORLD

AND THE CAUSE OF ITS DESOLATION

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth perfect. Later, after an unknown period of time, the earth which was originally good became waste and empty, without any life whatsoever. God then rose up to recreate the world; He restored the desolate world in six days. In the next chapter we will study the work of the six days. Now we will consider why the world became desolate. How could God allow the work of His hands to be destroyed? Why did such a catastrophe come upon the once beautiful earth? There is probably no other reason besides sin.

The question we are considering has no perfectly clear explanation in the Bible. Nevertheless, we can find many shimmering lights in the Word of God which will enlighten us concerning this question and which will enable us to have a little more understanding concerning the former world and the cause of its desolation. Only the Word of God can guide us and our thoughts. The understanding of His Word, regardless of the question being discussed, always brings us edification. The greatest vanity is the reasonings in man's mind which do not rest on the foundation of God's Word.

Although in reading Genesis 3 we cannot find Satan's name, we all know that the serpent was Satan's vessel and perhaps was even the embodiment of the devil. Revelation 12:9 says, "And the great dragon was cast down, the ancient serpent, he who is called the Devil and Satan, he who deceives the whole inhabited earth." Genesis 1 gives no record of the creation of Satan. Where did he come from? This is a problem. Furthermore, we can see many evil spirits in both the Old and New Testaments; we meet them even more frequently in the Gospels. Where did they come from? We also do not see the creation of angels in the six days of work in Genesis 1. Where, then, did the angels who are frequently mentioned in the Bible come from? These questions are all related to our subject. Since the creation of the angels and the other supernatural beings is not recorded in Genesis 1, which covers the work of God during six days, we know that they were not created during that time. Since they were not created within these six days, when were they

created? The only explanation is that they were creatures of the former world—the original, perfect world.

As the fossil remains clearly show, not only were disease and death—inseparable companions of sin—then prevalent among the living creatures of the earth, but even ferocity and slaughter. And the fact proves that these remains have nothing to do with our world; since the Bible declares that all things made by God during the Six Days were very good, and that no evil was in them till Adam sinned...Since, then, the fossil remains are those of creatures anterior to Adam, and yet show evident tokens of disease, death, and mutual destruction, they must have belonged to another world and have a sin-stained history of their own, a history which ended in the ruin of themselves and their habitation. — G. H. Pember, *Earth's Earliest Ages*, 1942, reprinted 1975, pp. 34-35.

By reading Jeremiah 4:23-26, we see the reason why the earth became waste and emptiness. Verse 26 says that it was due to “His [Jehovah’s] burning anger.” Why was the Lord so angry? It was probably because of the sin of the creatures at that time. Isaiah 24:1 says that “Jehovah now makes the earth desolate.” Why would the Lord destroy the earth of His original creation? Judging from the history of our own world, we can answer that it was probably because of the sin of the earth’s inhabitants which forced God to judge them.

We have said before that when we read Genesis, we do not see the origin of Satan. As we look into the cause of earth’s desolation in the beginning, our mind will naturally think “an enemy has done this” (Matt. 13:28). Other than attributing the cause to Satan, it seems that we cannot find any other clues in the Bible.

We will study a portion of the Bible which seems to tell us the origin of God’s enemy and thereby we may know the condition of the former world and the cause of its becoming desolate. Let us now read Ezekiel 28:1-19. These nineteen verses are divided into two sections: (1) verses 1-10 concern the prophet’s warning to the prince of Tyrus, and (2) verses 11-19 concern the prophet’s lamentations upon the king of Tyrus. The first section, a word to the prince of Tyrus, is easy to understand. He was exalted with pride, considered himself God, and thought that he was wiser than Daniel. Due to his progress in commerce, he became puffed up. Therefore God punished him, causing

him to be slain and destroyed by the terrible of the nations. Soon after this prophecy, Nebuchadnezzar of the Chaldeans came and destroyed Tyre. Josephus believed that the prince of Tyrus was Ithobalus, who was called Ithobaal II in the history of the Phoenicians. Since we know that this prophecy has already been fulfilled, it is not difficult for us to interpret verses 1 through 10. But when we read on from verses 11 through 19, we find many places that we do not understand. Since this portion of the Word is very much related to the subject which we are studying now, we quote the text in full:

“Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, ‘Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffic; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more” (Ezek. 28:11-19).

This section is indeed hard to understand, for it contains many expressions which cannot be applied to any mortal man. If the “king of Tyrus” were only a mortal man, how could we explain the things in verses 11 through 15? How could the king of Tyrus have been in the garden of Eden or upon the holy mountain of God? How could he have been the anointed cherub that covered the ark? None of the things mentioned here had been the experience of the

king of Tyrus. We cannot explain this section simply by spiritualizing it. It is unfair if we spiritualize the interpretation of a section when we encounter difficulties in it.

I believe that the first section (vv. 1-10) addressed to the prince of Tyrus was a word spoken to King Ithobalus II, and the second section (vv. 11-19), the lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, denotes the coming Antichrist. Verse 2 of this chapter speaks of Tyre “in the midst of the seas.” By reading Daniel 11:41-45, we know that when the coming Antichrist will be in Palestine, perhaps he will dwell at Tyre. That is why he was called the king of Tyre here. Moreover, Antichrist is Satan incarnate; therefore, numerous expressions in this section refer to Satan himself. Mr. Darby said, “Verses 11-19, while continuing to speak of Tyre, go, I think, much farther, and disclose, though darkly, the fall and the ways of Satan, become through our sin the prince and god of this world.” Dr. A. C. Gaebelein also said that the king of Tyre is a type of the last great sinner (Antichrist), that behind this evil king, we see another power that is Satan; Satan was the power behind the king of Tyrus then, and he still is the god of this age now, who rules the nations of this world.

If we have studied the Scriptures carefully, we will realize that the justification for merging Satan and Antichrist in this passage into one being is not contrary to the general teachings of the Scriptures. We know that, although human beings have their own will, their walk is either directed by God’s operating (Phil. 2:13) or by the operating of the evil spirits (Eph. 2:2). Human beings are never totally free. Ordinarily, human beings are under the control of the evil spirits. Sometimes, in important matters, Satan himself, in addition to the working of evil spirits, will also participate in the work. Hence, we see him personally coming to tempt Christ in the wilderness. Later, in trying to hinder Christ from going to the cross, he personally used Peter. After that, in attempting to destroy Christ, he entered into Judas. Eventually, on the world stage he will be united to Antichrist. Scripture says that the works of Antichrist are “according to Satan’s operation” (2 Thess. 2:9); it is Satan who “gave him his power and his throne and great authority” (Rev. 13:2). Since Antichrist is the incarnated devil, the Holy Spirit speaks of him together with Satan in this passage. In these few verses, the superhuman aspects all refer to Satan himself, and the remainder to Antichrist. Since our purpose is not to study the question of Antichrist, but to know the creatures of the former world and the cause of its desolation, we shall put aside the verses in this

portion concerning the Antichrist and concentrate on Satan, who is related to our subject. Now let us consider the words that refer to Satan.

Ezekiel 28:12 says that Satan (Note: “Satan” is the name used after he had sinned; he was called the “son of the dawn” and also “Daystar” or “Lucifer” (Isa. 14:12) before his fall. “Satan,” which means “adversary,” is his name after the fall. For the sake of convenience, we shall call him Satan in the following paragraphs.) “sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.” This depicts his condition before he had sinned. He was superior to all the other angels. Phrases like “sealest up the sum,” “full of,” and “perfect” reveal that he was the greatest of all the creation. God had put him above all the creation. Being “full of wisdom” probably refers to his understanding of God’s will; if this is true, he might have had the office of a prophet already.

The first part of Ezekiel 28:13 says, “Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering.” When we read Genesis 3, we indeed see Satan there. However, he was not being covered by “every precious stone”; he was tempting Adam and Eve. Hence, the two gardens of Eden are not of the same time. In Adam’s garden of Eden, Satan had fallen, whereas here, it clearly depicts the situation before his fall. Hence, the garden of Eden here must be earlier than the one at Adam’s time. If so, then it must not have belonged to the present world but to the previous one. This garden of Eden, like the coming New Jerusalem, had many precious stones, such as sardius, beryl, etc. The garden of Eden where Adam lived was not like this. The Bible focuses only on the trees and does not say anything concerning their being covered with precious stones. Hence, the garden of Eden here must be different from that of Adam and is much earlier. His being covered with the precious stones reminds us of the precious stones on the priest in Exodus. He probably had been appointed by God to be a priest. The latter half of the verse says, “The workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee.” In the Bible musical instruments are used by kings. We see how David played the harp for king Saul. When the king of Babylon was destroyed, the sound of his lutes were said to be brought down to Sheol (Isa. 14:11). And when the king of Babylon was pleased, various musical instruments were played (Dan. 3). Satan was a king at that time and these musical instruments were given to him by God.

The first half of Ezekiel 28:14 says that he is “the anointed cherub that covereth.” Anointed indicates that he is consecrated. The work of the

cherubim is to lead men to worship the Lord (Rev. 4:9-10; 5:11-14). Therefore, his work in the beginning was also to lead the creatures at that time in the worship of God. This also refers to his priesthood.

The latter part of verse 14 says that he was “upon the holy mountain of God” and had “walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.” The holy mountain of God probably is the place where God’s glory is manifested. As the priest of God, he would, of course, stand before Him to minister. What does it mean to walk “up and down in the midst of the stones of fire”? Ezekiel 1:26 reveals that the position of the cherubim is below the throne. Now when Moses took seventy of the elders of Israel up the mountain of Sinai, “they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness...And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount” (Exo. 24:10, 17). The paved work of sapphire stone in the appearance of devouring fire probably was “the stones of fire.” This indicates that Satan enjoyed a very high place, right below the throne of God, and was very intimate with God.

Verse 15 says that he was perfect in his ways from the day that he was created, but that later God found iniquity in him. All of God’s creation was perfect; God is not the author of sin. Iniquity was initiated by the archangel who sinned. He was created and given a free will by God just as we were. Unfortunately God’s created angel abused his freedom! And how many people are still following his footsteps!

The first part of verse 16 says that by the multitude of his merchandise they have filled his midst with violence, and he has sinned. We may refer this word solely to Antichrist. During the end time commerce will be very prosperous (Rev. 18). Many sinful things will be brought in because of this. This can be proven by history.

Nevertheless, the same clause may be applied to Satan. Mr. Pember points out that “the word translated ‘merchandise’ may also...signify ‘detraction’ or ‘slander’; and we know that the very name ‘Devil’ means ‘the slanderer,’ or ‘malignant accuser’” (Earth’s Earliest Ages, p. 52). Thus, we can find out the meaning here. We see how Satan accused Job and tried to destroy him with insidious acts. Also in Revelation 12:10 we read, “Now has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ,

for the accuser of our brothers has been cast down, who accuses them before our God day and night.” The casting down here probably corresponds to the casting of Satan out of the mountain of God in Ezekiel. The reason for the casting out in Ezekiel and in Revelation is one and the same, that is, accusation (or slander). Perhaps what was recorded in Ezekiel was the conviction of Satan by God and what was written in Revelation was the sending of Michael by God for the execution of that conviction. Then why would God still allow Satan to remain in the heavens? The reasons seem to be: (1) the time of God has not yet come, and (2) His own children need the furnace to purge away the dross still in them.

Ezekiel 28:17 reveals the cause of Satan’s fall. His heart was lifted up because of his beauty, and his wisdom was corrupted by reason of his brightness. The king of Babylon as described in Isaiah 14:12-14 bears much resemblance to this verse. Many servants of God believe that the Holy Spirit is not only pointing out the king of Babylon, but in a deeper sense, the cause of the fall of Satan who was behind the king of Babylon. In my view, the record in Ezekiel reveals the cause of his pride, while in Isaiah it shows the manner in which he exhibited his pride. It is probable that after comparing himself with God’s other creatures, his heart was lifted up. In the end he tried to exalt himself to be equal with God and thus suffered God’s judgment. “How you have fallen from heaven, / O Daystar, son of the dawn! /...But you, you said in your heart: / I will ascend to heaven; / Above the stars of God / I will exalt my throne. / And I will sit upon the mount of assembly / On the sides of the north. / I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; / I will be like the Most High” (Isa. 14:12-14). Since he was so proud, God punished him. His authority in the heavens was removed and abolished by God. The remaining part of the prophecy in Ezekiel is not relevant to our subject, and we shall stop here.

From the prophecy contained in this passage in Ezekiel, if our interpretation is correct, we can see how God created Satan the fairest and wisest of all His creatures in the former world and made him their leader. God placed him in the garden of Eden, which was long before the Eden of Adam. The things in the former garden, if not altogether different from those of the latter garden, were at least more numerous than the latter. They resemble the future New Jerusalem. He was a prophet there, teaching all the inhabitants of the earth with his wisdom to know how to serve God. He was also there as the priest of God, directing them in the worship and praises of God. He was also the king among the creatures, having been placed in a position that was above

all the creation. He must have been in such a condition for a lengthy period of time (v. 15), but because of his sin, he became the greatest enemy of God.

So far we have covered the origin of Satan. We shall now proceed to cover Satan's angels and demons, which are under him, and to investigate how they fell and how this affected the earth, causing it to become waste and void.

From the New Testament we see that under the hand of Satan there are two living beings: (1) angels and (2) demons. Let us first look at the angels. Matthew 25:41 speaks of "the devil and his angels." Revelation 12:4 says that the dragon's "tail drags away the third part of the stars of heaven, and he cast them to the earth." The stars denote the angels (Rev. 1:20). Therefore 12:9 says, "And the great dragon was cast down, the ancient serpent, he who is called the Devil and Satan,...he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him." These angels were probably the ones established by God in the beginning to assist Satan to rule the world. They were "the congregation of the mighty" and "the gods" in Psalm 82 (cf. John 10:35). When Satan fell, they either conspired or sympathized with him. Therefore, they fell together with him and became today's "rulers," "authorities," "world-rulers of this darkness," "the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies" (Eph. 6:12). Note that the numbers are plural. These angels are not disembodied demons; they have ethereal bodies. This is why the Lord promises that the children of resurrection will be like the angels in the heaven.

Satan has another class of subjects, the evil spirits. Demons and the evil spirits (or filthy spirits) are the same. We can tell this by checking with the translation of the Mandarin Bible. In Matthew 8:16, it firstly mentions the demons, then the spirits. But the Bible translators, seeing that the Holy Spirit used the words "demon" and "spirit" interchangeably, translated both into "demons." In Luke 10:17 the word "demons" is in the original language, but in verse 20 the word "demons" should be "spirits." In these two verses of the Bible we see the Lord Jesus acknowledged the "demons" and the "spirits" to be the same and thus the Chinese Bible translator again translated both as "demons." Matthew 17:18 speaks of the Lord casting out a demon, yet Mark calls this demon an unclean spirit and dumb spirit (Mark 9:25). Demons and spirits are the same.

These demons, or spirits, probably were the race who lived in the former world. They helped Satan in his sinning; or, perhaps after Satan sinned, they

followed him rather than forsaking him and obeying God. Therefore, they were cut off by God and their bodies were removed from them. Hence, they became disembodied spirits. Although we cannot find any clear evidence in the Bible to confirm this theory, we can find some clues. In Matthew 12 we see the situation of a demon when he left the human body. He became helpless and wandered about. Besides the human body, he could not find another resting place. Therefore, he eventually returned to his original place, the human body. If they were not disembodied spirits, why did they have to enter into man's body? As we read Luke 8, we see how the legion of demons was unwilling to leave the human body. When they had no way to remain in the human body, they even entered the bodies of the swine. Presently in the world they still cling to human bodies. Even some believers are unconsciously possessed by them. They are different from Satan and his angels who do not like to enter human bodies. Satan and his angels still have a spiritual body, but the demons do not. Their character and liking seem to prove that they are the disembodied spirits. Since they are disembodied spirits, where were they when they were disembodied? We know that the spirits of all the dead are in Hades. So, where do these spirits come from? They must have come from the former world. While they were alive, their habitation was probably the former world where Satan exercised his rule.

In the Bible we can find another clue that tells us that there were inhabitants in the pre-Adamic world. Isaiah 45:18 shows that the world created by God in the beginning was not waste and empty. Since this verse speaks of the original world, one expression suggests to us the existence of mankind in the previous world. It says, "He is the God / Who formed the earth... / He did not create it waste." This clearly refers to the original creation. Following this it says, "He formed it to be inhabited." This seems to clearly tell that the earth then was inhabited by some race.

As we read the Bible further, we find clues which indicate that there is a detention place for the demons now. The legion of demons in Gadara must have known this. They were in great fear and begged the Lord that He would not "order them to depart into the abyss," (Luke 8:31) because they would be tormented there (Matt. 8:29). Mr. Pember says that this "abyss" in the original language is abussos; and that "in some passages, such as the ninth chapter of the Apocalypse, this term is evidently applied to a fiery hollow in the centre of the earth: but it is also used for the depths of the sea, a meaning which accords well with its derivation" (Earth's Earliest Ages, p. 60). In the

future Satan will be detained in a bottomless pit in the center of the earth. This is revealed in the book of Revelation. The demons are also detained in an abyss now, yet some of them still have freedom. We must wait until God's appointed time comes for them to be completely shut inside. This abyss is probably different from the one in the heart of the earth; it is in the sea. Furthermore, at the final judgment (Rev. 20:11-15) when all the prisoners will have been thrown into the lake of fire, there will be no more sea in the new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21:1). However, there may be only one abyss that is divided into two parts.

There are other clues concerning the sea being the place of detention for demons. In the Septuagint Bible, the word "deep" in Genesis 1:2 is the same as "abyss" here. We have said that these demons are probably created races who lived in the first world. This corresponds to what we read in Genesis 1:2 because they originally lived on the earth. After sinning, their bodies were destroyed by God; their habitation was judged by God and became without form and void. The whole earth was covered by water and was characterized as "the deep." It follows then that the spirits of the races at that time were in this "deep"! Finally, on the third day when God restored the earth, He commanded the earth to come out from the water and called the gathering of the waters the sea. This earth was prepared for mankind in the new world. Where then have the former demons gone? We can spontaneously answer that they went into the sea. As we read Revelation 20:13, we often do not understand why the sea will give up the dead which are in it. It is understandable to say that death and Hades will deliver up the dead which are in them, but why will the sea give up the dead which are in it? The common interpretation is that the sea surrenders the bodies of those who are drowned. If so, then the earth should also give up its dead because there are more bodies buried in the earth than in the sea. Yet the earth does not give up its dead. Therefore, the sea will give up the spirits of the imprisoned ones and not the bodies of the dead. Men's spirits are in death and Hades; the Bible does not say that the spirits of man are kept in the sea. Then whose spirits will the sea give up? It will give up those who are from the other world, that is, the former world. The sequence here indicates this. "The sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them." Those who lived in the former world died first. Therefore, they will be the first beings to be given up; then, we who are of this world will follow after because every man will be judged in his own order.

Thus far we have seen the probable origin of Satan, his angels, and the demons. As to how man lived on the former earth, this is something beyond our knowledge. However, we can see some hints in the Bible. Many Bible scholars, Dr. Scofield being one of them, believe that Jeremiah 4:23-26 refers to the condition of Genesis 1:2, in which the earth was without form and void. Although the context of this passage is the desolation of Judah, these few verses of the Scripture have a notably broader view, as if God caused the prophet to view the desolation of the earth in the beginning. If our belief is accurate, then we know that in the former world there was “the fruitful land” and “its cities” (v. 26). The inhabitants then dwelt in cities and some took up farming as an occupation. When they were deceived by Satan, the burning anger of Jehovah came upon them (v. 26) and the earth became “waste and emptiness” (v. 23).

From these biblical clues we see the original situation of the earth, the races who dwelt on the earth, the paradise, and the princes, etc. If we are not mistaken in our meditation, we can draw a conclusion concerning the first world and the cause of its desolation as follows: In the beginning of “time” (as opposed to eternity) God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was not waste (Isa. 45:18) but very beautiful and perfect. On this earth there were inhabitants and the number of the inhabitants was great. Before God created the earth and human beings, He had created the angels (Job 38:6-7). He assigned Satan, whom He created, as the leader to be above all the angels. Satan, the most beautiful and wisest of all, the prime of all God’s creation, dwelt in the garden of Eden. God made him the ruler of the world; therefore, he was called “the ruler of the world” (John 14:30). Many angels were under his rule, and these angels shared in ruling with him. Then, because of his position and honor, he became proud. Due to pride, he rebelled and lifted himself up to be equal with God. He was not satisfied with being a creature, but desired to be the Creator. Therefore, he slandered God before the people and accused the people before God. God found out his iniquity and condemned him. When the time comes, he will be cast to the earth. One third of the angels (Rev. 12) followed him in rebellion and, therefore, became the angels of the devil. God has prepared hell for them (Matt. 25:41), and when the time comes, Satan will be cast into it. In the former world, the inhabitants of the earth, being under Satan and his angels’ rule, were also deceived and filled up with sins. (We can readily understand this when we consider our world situation today.) Therefore, God’s anger was fierce, and He completely

destroyed the earth and all the races therein and locked up many spirits in the abyss in the sea. These evil spirits, angels, and Satan himself formed the kingdom of darkness. We do not know how long this period lasted.

Later, the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters again, and the Triune God began His restoration work on the world. After His restoration of the world, He created Adam and his wife and asked them to guard it, so that there would be man on the earth to cooperate with Him in heaven to stop Satan's power. Perhaps God used Adam to test Satan to see whether he would repent. However, he came to tempt Adam; therefore, God cursed Satan. Because Adam fell, he could not bring the world which was under Satan's rule back to God. On the contrary, the world Adam received from God's hand was given anew to Satan. Since angels and mankind had failed, God came in the person of the Son to be a man, the last Adam. The Lord Jesus became God's prophet, priest, and king. When He was on this earth, He was God's prophet without blemish. When He was about to die, He was able to say, "The ruler of the world is coming, and in Me he has nothing" (John 14:30). At His death all who are in Adam were crucified in Him. He was able to include all of the old Adamic creation in His crucifixion because He is God, and He is able to continue on as the new man. His human living had nothing to do with Satan. Through His death and resurrection, He regained the world lost by the first Adam. Every sinner, who is destined to die in the old Adam, can return to God and be saved if he rejects the first Adam through the death of the last Adam and joins himself to Christ in life. This is the meaning of believing in the death of the Lord Jesus. Therefore, whoever believes in the Lord Jesus becomes an enemy of the devil. In everything he attacks us, and in everything we resist him, his angels, and the demons. This is God's purpose in saving man, and this is a real spiritual warfare.

Satan was judged once on the "holy mountain of God," and he was judged again on the hill of Golgotha. He has been convicted, yet his judgment has not yet been executed. When the time comes he will be cast down from heaven and when the Son of God returns to this earth, he will be cast into the abyss. After one thousand years he will forever suffer in the lake of fire. Now the Lord Jesus holds the authority which Satan had abused, and He will hold it until all traces of rebellion disappear. He has brought His own blood into the Holy of Holies and has cleansed the heavens; He is now a Priest of God. When He returns, it will be the time of the restoration of all things. He will be a King, ruling this world from heaven with all the overcoming saints, in the same way

that Satan ruled with his angels in the former time. At that time He will teach the inhabitants of this earth to know God's will and to worship God, in the same way that Satan did in the former days. The situation in the millennium will be like the situation in the world before Satan sinned.

Christ will restore all things to the condition in the "beginning" in order to accomplish God's original purpose. After this He will burn up the whole world, and there will be a new heaven and a new earth in which the righteous will dwell.

Therefore, as God's children we ought to have a deeper enmity for the devil. For thousands of years God's only purpose has been for man to be joined with Him to destroy Satan's authority. Our God is a law-abiding God. He will not take back by force the world which was lost through man. Therefore, He sent His Son to become a man in order to regain what man had lost. We, men who have been saved, ought to cooperate with the unique "Man," the Lord Jesus. In our life, in our work, in our environment, in our dwelling, and in the world, we should resist the works of the devil. Our resistance is in firmness of faith (1 Pet. 5:9), and not by means of fleshly weapons (2 Cor. 10:4), which is the way of social reformers who are being utilized by the demons.

Satan was wise and beautiful! But because of his pride, he ended up in complete ruin. It is dangerous for frail mortals to esteem themselves wise and beautiful! Beware, lest being lifted up with pride, you fall into the judgment of the devil (1 Tim. 3:6). Being self-exalted with pride is not a blessing to man; wisdom rests only with those who fear the most high God Jehovah.

CHAPTER THREE

THE RECOVERY

OF THE EARTH IN SIX DAYS

We have seen that in the beginning God created a perfect world. Later, because of the sins committed by Satan and those who dwelt on the earth, they and the earth were judged by God, and the earth became without form and void. Now we will see God's work of restoring the earth.

In the book of Job, Job mentions the failure of Satan's rebellion in order to show that it is foolish to dispute with God. "He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered? which removeth the mountains, and they know not; which overturneth them in his anger; which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble; which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars" (Job 9:4-7). When did God do this? When did He shake the mountains and the earth, and alter the position of the celestial bodies due to man's stubbornness towards Him? Since the time of Adam, such an act of God in the world has not been seen. This passage must be a description of God's judgment on Satan and on the earth under his dominion when he rebelled. At that time God shook the earth and overturned the mountains. The calamity came so swiftly that the mountains were overturned unnoticed. In addition to the earth, the positions of the celestial bodies were also affected. Because of God's judgment, the sun disappeared completely and the stars did not shine. The world was plunged into darkness. There was no sun and no heat was produced. Consequently, this led to the glacial epoch on this earth. Then, after a long period of time, possibly due to internal heat at the earth's core (Rev. 9:2), the ice gradually melted. However, the sun had not yet appeared and the stars were still "sealed up." When the Spirit of God began to move, there was the deep, and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

Job not only mentions God's judgment, but also His work of restoration. He says, "Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, / and treadeth upon the high peaks of the sea; / which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, / and wonders without number" (Job 9:8-10, Heb.). The phrase "spreadeth out the heavens" indicates God's work on the second day. God divided the waters

with a firmament in their midst, and this firmament was called Heaven. So the “high peaks of the sea” probably indicates the waters above the firmament. The phrase “maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades” indicates God’s work on the fourth day. The word “maketh” does not mean creates but fashions. God did not create stars at this time, but He fashioned anew the existing stars. In Job 9:7 it says, “Sealeth up the stars.” This shows that the stars already existed. Genesis 1:16 says, “He made the stars also.” This was a restoration to their condition before they were sealed. Having read Job’s word, we are more convinced that our exposition is correct.

In Genesis God began His work of restoration. He called out for light because the face of the deep was dark, and this light divided the light from the darkness. There was light before, and now light came back. Some mockers have said, “How could there be light without the sun?” However, science no longer laughs at this kind of record in the Bible, and recently science has proven Moses’ words to be correct. The record here is “non-science”; it is not “anti-science.” The book of God is not intended as a science textbook, yet the word of God is not erroneous according to science. Man now understands that besides the sun there are other sources of light. Light is an energy from an unknown source that produces vibrations of the ether around the universe. This vibration is beyond human imagination. (Of course, the light that we now see relates to the burning of the sun as well as other sources of light.) But scientists cannot tell us about the sources of this energy. Concerning this point, they are fully in darkness; but faith knows. “And God said, Let there be light: and there was light” (Gen. 1:3). It is most pitiful that while there is God, who is the source of all positive things, and in whom everyone should believe, people still reject Him and prefer to grope in the dark, considering it unscientific and superstitious to believe in God’s Word! But we are so happy that we not only have God, but that He is also our Father. It does not say that light was created or brought into being by God on the first day. Light has not existed for merely six thousand years. Before light came, darkness was confined to one place, the face of the deep (i.e., the whole earth). Darkness was confined to this one assigned place. When light appeared, it appeared in the same dark place, the whole earth. When God said, “Let there be light” (v. 3), the whole universe was not in darkness. God was merely commanding the light to appear on the surface of this earth.

In Moses’ time, science did not know of other sources of light besides the sun (such as the Aurora Borealis, the northern lights). But Moses still

recorded that God called out the light first, then made the sun to appear. If this was not a revelation of the Holy Spirit, how could he have made such a statement? Thank God that He is not limited by the ignorance of people. The more the scientists understand the natural laws established by God, the more they realize that the Word of God is worthy of all acceptance.

“And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day” (v. 5). God did not create the light here because it had existed for a long time; He just called out the light. When did the first day start? Someone said it was from the time when the earth was “without form and void” (v. 2); however, that is not the meaning here. “And the evening and the morning were the first day” (v. 5). “Morning” was the time when the light of the first day appeared. If there were no light before the first day, then the “evening” mentioned here does not make sense. The “evening” came first, and then “the morning.” If the morning indicates the time when the daylight first appeared, and if there was no light before the first day, then the evening would indicate the darkness before the light, which would be the prolonged darkness mentioned in verse 2. If that were the case, would not the first evening have been too long? If the evening of the first day was the darkness in verse 2, then the first day would have started from the darkness of the formlessness and void. But Genesis clearly does not consider the formlessness and void as the first day. Hence, before the “evening” of the first day, there was light already. However, this light was not shining on the earth. God called the darkness Night, but “the evening,” being different from the night, was a darkness under control of the light. For this reason, light existed before “the evening” of the first day; otherwise, how could we differentiate between the evening and the morning? Furthermore, the Bible does not say that God created light on the first day; He just commanded light to appear. Where was the light from? If it was not from the earth which was without form and void and in entire darkness, it must surely have been from the beginning when God created the heaven and the earth. This is a further proof that the world we are in now is a restored world.

We should know that each of the six days is a twenty-four hour day. In the Bible a day is often used to represent a period of time, such as “the day of the Lord,” etc. But the six days are not six periods. No reader without preconceived opinions would consider these as periods of time. Whenever the Bible uses “day” to stand for a period, there is no numerical indication associated with it. If there is a number before the day, it must indicate the

time of one revolution of the earth. Furthermore, it clearly states “the evening and the morning were the first day” (v. 5). Combining evening and morning as the first day is an indication of a twenty-four hour day. Moreover, God later established a Sabbath, according to His own rest on the seventh day. The Sabbath in Exodus 20 is a twenty-four hour day. If the seventh day is a twenty-four hour day, then the six preceding days must also be twenty-four hour days. Again, if we consider these six days as six geological periods, then what corresponds to the “evenings” of these geological periods, and what corresponds to the “mornings” of these periods? Furthermore, if these six days correspond to six geological periods, there would have been no grass or trees on the earth before the third period, and there would have been no animal fossils on the earth before the sixth period. But this is not the case, because there is no separation between animals and plants in the geological strata below the surface of the earth. If the six days were six long periods, then Adam, who was created in the sixth period, would have had to live a long time in paradise before he could have committed sin. Moses, who wrote the book of Genesis, had no thought of using days to represent periods. We must not twist the Word of God to fit our own concept or to lessen people’s attack. If we explain the Bible according to our own idea, we will be blamed by others and also put the Holy Scripture in jeopardy. With these proofs we must conclude that these six days were just six days and not six periods. Our God is almighty; one day is sufficient for Him to restore. There is no need for six periods. But since it pleased Him to restore the world in six days, we need to humbly observe God’s work and praise His greatness. Why should we adapt ourselves to the opinion of unregenerated people? We know that if geology is correct, the period between verse 1 and verse 2 is long enough to produce all the geological formations of the earth.

On the second day God commanded again. God put air in the firmament to divide the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament. God separated the waters on the earth from the moisture of the atmosphere. Again, the scientists ought to praise this beautiful record. This is just the phenomenon of the expansion of the air, separating the water in the atmosphere from the water below; and yet the boundary is not immovable. The atmosphere above us can be filled with moisture as recorded in the Bible. This atmosphere is not a solid reservoir to reserve water in the heaven, because verse 20 mentions “fowl that may fly

above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.” This open firmament is a region or sphere in which fowl could fly around.

“And God called the firmament Heaven” (v. 8). This “heaven” is different from the “heaven” in verse 1. “Heaven” in verse 1 denotes the whole universe with all its contents. The “heaven” in verse 8 is the “heaven” of this earth. The “heaven” in verse 1 did not deteriorate; only our earth and its celestial position were changed from its original condition due to God’s judgment. God saw His works and considered that they were good on five of the six days. After the second day, the words “and God saw that it was good” were not mentioned. Does the Word of God overlook this day? No, the words which God omits are just as meaningful as the words He speaks. Every word and every phrase of the Bible is inspired by God. This omission has something to do with Satan. He is the ruler of the authority of the air (Eph. 2:2). The demons under him are the “spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies” (Eph. 6:12). God probably saw the air as the dwelling place of Satan and his demons. That is why He did not say that it was good. Some may ask, “How could the evil spirits (Eph. 2:2) ascend to the air?” We have said that their prison was the deep sea which was the “deep” that covered the whole earth. While God was separating the waters, they probably took the chance to escape out of their prison by attaching themselves to the upper waters, and thus they migrated to the heaven where their ruler stayed. This is why we have records in the New Testament of evil spirits existing in heaven and working on earth. Although they are fugitives, God has temporarily allowed them to stay there until the time for them to be thrown into the abyss. Since the air is the headquarters of the kingdom of darkness, most of Satan’s work starts from the air. Therefore, when we come together to meet or pray, we should ask God to cleanse the atmosphere with the precious blood of the Lord, in order that we may not be oppressed by Satan.

On the third day, although the water was separated, there was still water covering the whole earth and there was no dry land. God commanded again, “Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear” (Gen. 1:9). What is spoken of here matches what we have already explained. God commanded, “Let the dry land appear,” so there was land buried beneath the water for a long time which did not reappear until then. God did not say, “Let the dry land come out of nothing.” He simply commanded the waters to withdraw, allowing the land which was originally

created by Him to reappear. This further proves that the six-day work of God was one of restoration rather than creation.

Psalm 104:5-9 speaks about how God created the earth in the beginning, how He then judged the earth, and how He finally rebuked the flood (the third day's work in Genesis) to restore the earth. Jehovah "laid the foundations of the earth, / that it should not be removed forever" (v. 5). This was God's original creation. "Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment: / the waters stood above the mountains" (v. 6). This was the condition after God's judgment over the various creatures then on the earth; this was the water that covered the earth in Genesis 1:2 (compare with 1:9). "At thy rebuke they fled; / at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away. / They go up by the mountains; / they go down by the valleys / unto the place which thou hast founded for them. / Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; / that they turn not again to cover the earth" (Psa. 104:7-9). This was God's work on the first half of the third day. "Rebuke" and "thunder" corresponds to God's command in Genesis 1:9. "Fled" and "hasted away" describes how the waters were "gathered together unto one place." "They go up by the mountains, / and they go down by the valleys" does not refer to the creation of mountains and valleys because the mountains were present in Genesis 1:6 already. Rather, it refers to the reappearance of the preexisting but submerged mountains and valleys, after the withdrawal of the waters. It is a description of the mountains and the valleys when "the dry land" appeared after the waters subsided. "Unto the place which thou hast founded for them. / Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; / that they turn not again to cover the earth" (Psa. 104:8-9). These few verses explicitly tell us how the waters under the heaven were gathered together into one place to let the dry land appear. Thus we firmly believe that the world we are now in is the result of God's restoration work.

The earth coming out of water has also been proven by science. Geologists believe that all geological formations were formed under water. Many people are not clear about the foundations of the earth, as mentioned in Psalm 104:5. We can find out the meaning of the foundations from Genesis 1:10 which says that "God called the dry land Earth." The foundations of the earth refers to the dry lands of the earth, and not to the whole globe.

On the third day God had still more work. The land had emerged out of the water, but there was no vegetation. So God came in to adorn it.

On the fourth day the restoration of the dry land was complete, so God came in to restore the celestial bodies. Since He had called out the light on the first day, He now made luminaries in the firmament of the heaven and put light into them. The light of the first day had divided the day from the night (vv. 4-5). Now the luminaries also divided the days from the nights; in some respects, the “light” on the first day is similar to the “luminaries.” Probably the light of the first day shone on one side of the earth for half a day and then on the other side for half a day. In this way there was day and night on the first day. On the fourth day, God made the luminaries and put the light of the first day into them. As the earth and luminaries rotate around one another, they not only divide the days from the nights, but also become “for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years” (v. 14).

The greater light that God made was the sun. Genesis 1:16 does not say that God created the sun because the sun was created in the beginning. God was only doing a work of restoration. The sun was probably a luminary in the pre-Adamic world, but after Satan’s rebellion, it was also affected and lost all its light, being enveloped by darkness. In spite of this, earth was probably still rotating around it. On the fourth day when God restored the sun, He caused it to receive and emit light again and thus became a luminary once more.

Scientists tell us that the moon is a dead and desolate wilderness. If that is the case, it is quite conceivable that after Satan’s revolt, the sun, the moon, and the stars were all affected.

After God made the two great lights, He also made the stars. We should again note that the stars were not created then, because they existed long before. Job provides evidence. In Job 38:4-7 Jehovah said, “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? /...Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? / Or who hath stretched the line upon it? / Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? / Or who laid the corner stone thereof; / when the morning stars sang together.” No matter which earth is referred to here, whether the original created earth or the restored earth on the third day, one thing is definite: before the earth was formed, the stars already existed. As the earth was being formed, morning stars were there singing together, praising the work of God. In Genesis God was only rearranging the stars that were there before. After He had gathered the light into the sun and had made it the great light, He restored the stars and made them appear in the sky to meet the needs of the earth.

The Holy Spirit inspired Moses to describe God's work with human words because the Bible is written for man. He did not speak of the positions and functions of the sun, moon, and stars, but only mentioned their relationship to the earth and man. Although seasons, days, and years have to do with other creatures, the use of the celestial bodies "for signs" is specifically for man, since no one besides man is able to observe the motions of the celestial bodies in order to make signs. God only speaks about the positions and functions of the sun, moon, and stars according to man's viewpoint. He does not mention other matters. In man's eyes the sun is the greatest light, the moon is the second, and the stars are still smaller lights. Is it not wonderful that God has prepared such an immense universe for men as small as we?

On the fifth day, after the dry land and the celestial bodies had been restored, God prepared to create living organisms to inhabit the earth. "Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven" (v. 20). God's commandment expressed God's purpose. "And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind" (v. 21). God created these things out of nothing. We do not know what materials God used to make fish and aquatic life. As for the birds, 2:19 tells us that they are made out of the ground.

Science tells us that living organisms first existed in the water, then on the ground. Aquatic organisms are the most primitive species among all the animals. Even today, the ocean is still home to the majority of the living creatures. Birds, on the other hand, are the most primitive species of all warm-blooded animals. We can see how closely science resembles the description in the Bible. Although science proves these words, faith believes without the help of science!

On the sixth day God went on to create the beasts, the cattle, and the creeping things. Finally, He created man in His own image. We will discuss the creation of man in more detail in later messages. Here we will deal only briefly with the subject. Chapter one covers the creation of man in a brief way to show us man's position among the creatures, while chapter two describes the origin of man in detail to show us man's relationship with God.

We should notice that man was “created” by God (v. 27). Man did not evolve from a lower class of animal. The word “creation,” as we have mentioned, means the making of something out of nothing. It is a special work of God and not a natural process of evolution. The Bible does not give credence to the theory of evolution, which will forever be a vain idea! On the third day God ordered each type of vegetation, the trees, grass, and vegetables, to yield seed after its kind. Grass cannot change into a tree, neither can one tree change into another kind of tree. On the fifth day aquatic life and birds were all after their kinds. On the sixth day the beasts, cattle, and creeping things were also after their kind. Every creature is after its kind. The Bible does not tell us how these kinds were classified, yet the words “after his kind” is sufficient proof that in those days every creature was of a different kind. Since God has said that everything was “after his kind,” the boundary of each kind was set by God. There is absolutely no possibility for one kind to evolve into another kind. Plants cannot change into animals; even one kind of plant cannot change into another kind of plant, neither can one kind of animal change into another kind of animal. We Christians believe in the Word of God. Anything beyond “thus saith the Lord,” we will not believe. How much less should we listen to a theory that is contradictory to the Word of God? The Word of God is sufficient to solve all the problems. The world may be scornful of our logic, but we are satisfied with God’s Word. Pitiful mortals do not believe in our God. As a result, they drift aimlessly and devise theories for themselves on which to base their faith! They think that it is too incredible for God to bring something out of nothing into being, and to make man out of the dust of the earth. To us, however, for a tiny embryo of one kind of animal to undergo the numerous processes of evolution to become a monkey, and then after many more steps of evolution, to change from a monkey into a man, is something that is far more incredible. Just for a monkey to evolve into a man is incredible. It is much more incredible than God creating man! I warn my readers not to believe such end-times nonsense. Not only should we not believe such talk; we should not even listen to it. We should not read magazines or books that contain these kinds of theories. We thank God that His words are clear and easy to understand. He said, each “after his kind,” and all around us we see all animals and plants behaving according to this word. Formerly, evolutionists said that man’s ancestors were some sort of animal many thousands of years ago. Now they tell us that after many more thousands of years, our descendents will be formless animals without fingers or toes. They are talking things that belong to many thousands of years ago or

many thousands of years in the future, things which we will never see or be able to hold up for questioning! Our Bible is a book of the present. At present, all creatures multiply after their own kind. The Bible does not make irresponsible statements!

As noted by many previous writers, “Elohim,” one of the names for God in the original Scriptures, is plural in number. However, in Genesis 1:26 the verb used after God is singular in number. It seems incompatible to have a plural noun with a singular verb. However, this indicates that God is three-in-one and one-in-three. Since there is more than one person in the Godhead, the noun does not have a singular designation. Neither are there two persons. Hence, the designation is not dual. Rather, there are three persons. Hence, there is the plural designation “Elohim.” Although there are three, there are not three Gods. For this reason, the verb is not plural, but singular. This reveals that God is triune. Although the Bible does not explicitly state that God is triune, we can find many proofs and indications of this fact in the Bible. There is no doubt that the doctrine of the Trinity is indeed a great doctrine in the Bible. Furthermore, the word “us” in verse 26 indicates the plural number in the divine Persons, while the verb “make” indicates the oneness of God’s purpose. In chapter one, the words “God said” are used thirty-one times. What God said was God’s Word. When we read the Gospel of John 1, we see that all things were made by the Word of God. Genesis 1 alludes to the work of the Lord Jesus in creation. In this way, the Triune God works together in creation. We have “God,” “God said,” and “the Spirit of God.” The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all here.

Before God created man, He paused and had a discussion within the Godhead, saying, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion.” As we meditate on this discussion, we realize that God was very serious about this matter. This seems to indicate that our previous exposition is correct. Satan, as well as the previous inhabitants of the earth had already failed. God restored the earth and heaven, and made them fit for human habitation. All the living creatures were ready. The Godhead seemed to be taking a pause to talk among Themselves, “Behold, We are going to create man now!” This is the spirit of this passage.

Here God tells us His purpose in creating human beings, “let them have dominion.” Satan had been defeated. Under God’s judgment, he could no longer have dominion over the world. Although in reality he was still free, the

judgment on him had already been pronounced. The earth restored by God has nothing to do with Satan; everything on this earth is the expression of a new order. Although Satan still retains his title of “the ruler of this world,” the man created by God is endowed with a free will; he has autonomous power. God established man, apart from the authority of Satan, to have dominion over the newly created living creatures and plants, and over all the earth. If man had been able to carefully guard his God-given rights and power, Satan would have held “the ruler of this world” as an empty title only. God wants to annul the authority of Satan since He has already been judged. For God to have ejected Satan would have been quite easy; but for reasons unknown to us, He wants man to be His co-worker to destroy the work of the devil. Therefore, God created man and let him have dominion. This was the position Satan had once held, but lost. Unfortunately, soon afterward man failed. Man lost his right, and Satan regained his power and dominion as ruler of the world. This we will see when we come to chapter three, but let us be clear about one thing: all of God’s plan and work in this world has one goal, the elimination of the power of Satan. The Lord Jesus called him the enemy (Matt. 13). Therefore, we believers, as God’s chosen people, should constantly bear this purpose of God in mind—the destroying of the power of the devil. In everything we do, we should not ask whether something is good or bad, but how it would benefit God and destroy Satan. If our efforts cannot affect the kingdom of darkness and cause the devil to suffer loss, then we should not do it. In all our work for God, we should not look for superficial results. Rather, we should consider who will profit and who will suffer in the spiritual realm. This is a spiritual warfare and not a struggling in flesh and blood. One day, our judgment before the judgment seat will be measured by this standard. Whether our work will remain or be consumed by fire depends on how much it helps to accomplish God’s purpose. The best way to fight against the power of darkness is, on the one hand, to resist in our spirit the work of Satan, not agreeing with his winning, and on the other hand, to use prayer as our weapon by asking God to destroy Satan’s work and scheme. At the same time, we should obey God’s will practically. Each time we obey God’s will, Satan suffers defeat.

Man was made firstly in God’s image, and secondly after His likeness. This does not refer only to man’s physical body. “In God’s image” means that man represents God on earth. “After His likeness” means that man is after God’s kind; in other words, His race (Acts 17:28). Morally and intellectually, there are similarities between God and man, so that man can know God and

fellowship with Him. Unfortunately, man has sinned and lost God's image and likeness. Now man's ignorance in matters concerning God is beyond imagination. Therefore, unless a man is born again from above, he does not know how to fellowship with God. Paul told us that man is "God's image and glory" (1 Cor. 11:7); God made man to express His own glory. God wants to display His glory to Satan in the air. However, the first man failed. Yet the second Man did not fail. He was the express image of God's person (Heb. 1:3, KJV), and He was able to fully express God.

"And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed,...and every tree, in the which is the fruit...to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast...every fowl...and to every thing that creepeth...I have given every green herb for meat" (Gen. 1:29-30). In the world before sin came, there was no eating of flesh. Eating flesh is a thing of the sinful world. In the coming new heaven and the new earth there is no mention of any eating of flesh; the only thing worthy of eating will be the fruit of the tree of life. In the present order of things, God's opinion is that "every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified through the word of God and intercession" (1 Tim. 4:4-5). In a world that is full of sin, if we try to abstain from meat (4:3), we are denying the fact that the present world is under a curse!

"God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31). God did not make anything that was not good. Bad things came as a result of sin; they were not creations of God. In this sinful world, we should not murmur against God, because in Him there is no evil, and what He made is all good. God has treated us mortals graciously. He first created various forms of vegetation on the third day and then prepared them as food for the animals. After this He created the fowls on the fourth day, land animals on the fifth day, and man on the sixth day. He set up the whole environment in a good order before He put man in it. If we truly believe this fact, what a consolation it will be to us! God always makes preparations for His creatures this way. For the growth of grass, He first prepared the land; for the support of animal life, He first prepared vegetable life. But because we often fail to see this fact with our naked eyes, we become worried. Blessed are those who have faith to see God and His work! Nothing will shake such a heart!

The first three verses of chapter two should belong to chapter one. On the seventh day God did not do any work. He rested on this day. One thing we

should notice is that this rest is God's rest and not man's. The Bible tells us that this was God's Sabbath. God worked for six days and then He rested. This rest is not a physical rest, because with God there is no fatigue. "Do you not know, / Or have you not heard, / That the eternal God, Jehovah, / The Creator of the ends of the earth, / Does not faint and does not become weary" (Isa. 40:28). What is the meaning of this rest? This is not a physical but a spiritual rest. God was satisfied. He saw everything that He had made was very good, and He was satisfied. Every careful reader of the Bible will see that this is the meaning of God's rest. God did not ordain the Sabbath here for man to observe. Man had not done any work, so he did not need any rest. It was only after Adam fell that he had to work (Gen. 3:19). At this point, Adam had not sinned. Therefore he did not need to rest on the seventh day. For this reason, we should not consider this Sabbath as something of Jewish law (which we do not need to keep), but rather as the Sabbath in God's creation. We should remember that God did not give the Sabbath to man as just a day to keep. For the period of two thousand five hundred years after that day, there is not one mention of the word "Sabbath" in the Scripture!

We should notice one more thing. After the first six days, the phrase "and the evening and the morning" is included. However, after the seventh day, the Sabbath, there is not such a phrase! After God worked, He rested in the eternal brightness of the nightless day! This day of rest is a type of the coming day of rest for God's people mentioned in Hebrews 3 and 4, when the co-workers of God will rest for eternity with Him in a nightless day. When we think of that day, does our heart not rejoice?

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CREATION

AND THE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

We have seen that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, that later the earth became without form and void, and that God restored the earth and all the things on the earth in six days. Now we will go on to consider the spiritual significance of all these things.

Concerning the original creation, we only know that “in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). In the following verse we see that the situation changed. Things were not the same as they were before: “the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep” (1:2). Surely this was not the situation that God originally created, because the Bible clearly states that God “did not create it waste” (Isa. 45:18). Therefore, in Genesis 1, between verses 1 and 2, there was a great change. After the earth became desolate, God began His work of restoring the earth which He had judged. From the first day until the sixth day, God worked to restore the world. On the seventh day He rested.

Is it merely God’s intention to let us know how He created and restored the world? Or is there a deeper significance? Is there a difference between the “new creation” and the creation of the world in those days? Is the creation of the physical world similar to the spiritual world? The outward world is only a reflection of the inner world. The way in which God dealt with this great world is the same as the way He acts toward each individual. In God’s plan and in its fulfillment, the process of creating the physical world and the experience of personal spiritual renewal are related. The history of creation typifies the path of the experience of our life in the new creation.

Our present focus is not on the history of ancient mankind, but rather on the spiritual experience of individuals today. In these latter days, the greatest failure is that people pay too much attention to mankind and forget about the individual man himself. But God is not like this. Although He wants to bless mankind, He starts with individual men. He does not look lightly upon any person. “And not one of them [two sparrows] will fall to the earth apart from

your Father” (Matt. 10:29). From the acts of God, we should see the Father’s hand. Man has sinned and has fallen; yet, thank God that He does not look lightly upon any person. His heart is poured out toward everyone. Just to know this should comfort us. Only God’s heart can satisfy man’s heart.

I. “In the beginning” means the beginning of the world

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). When the heavens and the earth first came out from the Creator’s hand, how fresh and beautiful they were! Perfection, purity, beauty, and brightness were the condition of the heavens and the earth at that time. “The morning stars sang together, / and all the sons of God shouted for joy” (Job 38:7). How joyful! No sound of sighing or sorrow was mingled with that joyful melody. What harmony between the Creator and the creation! There was no sin, no Satan, no sorrow, no pain, no sickness, no death, but rather graciousness and glory. Surely it was a world of sublime bliss.

This was the original condition of man. The original condition of Adam and Eve was perfect, just as the material world was perfect in the beginning. Man was created in God’s image and after God’s likeness. God prepared a companion for him. God put him in a garden and blessed him and entrusted all things into his hand. He was the king of the earth. God commanded him to be fruitful and to replenish the earth. God said that it was exceedingly good. In Adam’s background, there was no inheritance of sin. The nature of sin was not in him, nor the mark of sin upon him, nor the condition of sin around him. Adam was an ideal man living in an ideal environment. Adam and his companion fellowshiped with their God. Everything should have caused him to be satisfied and happy.

II. “And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep” (Gen. 1:2)

The once perfect world fell, terrible calamities came, and the whole earth was distorted. Once sin came in, death followed. Once death came in, so too came all manner of death. The Creator’s masterpiece was destroyed. The potter’s vessel was damaged. What was formerly most beautiful had become

most ugly. What was formerly the best became the worst. What was once called perfect became desolate. Voices of singing could no longer be heard; the light was also diminished. The whole earth perished under God's water of judgment. There was no more firmament. Darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the deep covered the whole earth. There was nothing on earth apart from gloomy color, brackish odor, and roaring sound. God's original creation was damaged.

This is a vivid picture of how man departed from God. What confusion! What darkness! Waves of lust toss and tumble. Our once beautiful nature was buried under the depth of sin! "But the wicked are like the tossed sea, / For it cannot be calm, / And its waters toss up mire and mud" (Isa. 57:20).

Man became fallen. Formerly he received blessing, but now, the curse. Death and sorrow came to the place where there was once life and joy. Man fell deeply into sin and could not rescue himself. He was hidden in darkness and could not see himself. The striking characteristic of a fallen human being is desolation. Darkness in moral and spiritual matters is the common condition of sinners (Eph. 4:18). "Without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep"! This is the true picture of every sinner. How pitiful that many do not realize their own condition!

This is the cause of all the calamity and sorrow in the world. This is the source of man's sinful nature. Man lost his original image. The man that God created was originally upright (Eccl. 7:29). However, man lost his condition. "As through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin, death; and thus death passed on to all men" (Rom. 5:12). "As through the disobedience of one man the many were constituted sinners" (v. 19). Now before God, man's condition is "without form...void...and darkness," "alienated from the life of God" (Eph. 4:18), "dead in your offenses and sins" (Eph. 2:1), and "incurable" (Jer. 17:9). "All have sinned" (Rom. 3:23), and "there is none who does good" (Rom. 3:12). "There is none righteous, not even one" (Rom. 3:10). How pitiful! Yet men still boast of their knowledge, wisdom, education, and culture. If men would realize that they are "without form," "void," and "darkness," they would be blessed.

III. "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters"

(Gen. 1:2)

God could not rest in a situation that was without form, void, and dark. Neither was He happy with a situation in which man was subdued under sin, death, and Satan. In such a fallen, desolate situation, it would not have been a surprise if God had forsaken man. Yet God did something that was altogether unexpected. Why was God still concerned about that which He had righteously judged? Why was God still mindful of the desolate and destroyed? Why did God still have compassion on something that was without form, void, and dark, which was not even worthy of His attention? These questions are hard to answer. It was only because of God's mercy and grace. God's love came to those who were not worthy of His love! And His heart had compassion on those who were not deserving of His compassion! Neither the desolate earth nor fallen humanity had any right to ask God to work. In their condition, to ask God for such compassion seemed beyond hope. In themselves, there was nothing worthy of God's love. Nevertheless, in spite of man's poverty, worthlessness, fall, and failure, God still gave His sovereign grace to those who were poor and unworthy. He gave His inexhaustible mercy to those who had fallen and failed.

His first step was by means of "the Spirit" moving "upon the face of the waters." Without the Spirit, how could the earth recover? How can a dead person resurrect himself? How can darkness turn itself into light? How can those who were under God's righteous judgment make themselves able to receive God's blessing? If not for the Holy Spirit's operation, how could a fallen one rise up? The desolate and weak creatures were helpless. How could they have been restored, revived, and resurrected without the operation of the Holy Spirit? If they tried to overcome and be revived by themselves, eventually they would admit, "In my flesh, nothing good dwells" (Rom. 7:18).

But thank and praise God! Although sinners cannot be reborn by themselves, just as the earth could not recover itself, although sinners cannot separate themselves from sin, just as the earth could not separate itself from the deep waters, although sinners cannot act righteously, just as the earth could not change from darkness into light, nevertheless, God Himself can rescue us. The new creation is the same as the old creation: both were created by God Himself. Man is unable to create his own spirit, just as he is unable to create the world. God has to do all the work. Thank and praise God! Although He was not obligated to rescue us, He provided unexpected grace and came to

rescue us. God did what He did not have to do. That is mercy. What man did not deserve, he obtained. That is grace. Concerning salvation, man was in an absolute position of needing to receive help. If anyone thinks that within him or outside of him there is anything good, that is an insult to God and a despising of His grace.

The working of the Holy Spirit is the beginning of man's rebirth. In the original text, "moving" has the meaning of "overshadowing," "brooding." This indicates love and tenderness. This same word is used as "hovers" in Deuteronomy 32:11: "As the eagle rouses his nest, / Hovers over his young, / Spreads his wings, takes them, / And bears them up upon his pinions." Oh, may we respond more to the love of God! How His heart desires us! But who is "us"? We are just sinners, fallen humanity! He is not angry with us, nor does He look lightly upon us or reject us. He does not consider that even though we are without form and void and darkness, that we are unworthy of His Holy Spirit's brooding. Although He has "purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity" (Hab. 1:13), He humbled Himself to rescue those who were in the midst of dust and dung. O God! "What is man, that You remember him / And the son of man, that You visit him?" (Psa. 8:4). We really do not comprehend why God so loves sinners such as us. I especially do not comprehend why God loves me. Indeed, it is "not that we have loved God but that He loved us" (1 John 4:10). O God! How wonderful is Your grace! How true it is that Your "delights were with the sons of men" (Prov. 8:31).

God's love is the reason that we were born again. "For God so loved the world...that every one who believes into Him...would have eternal life" (John 3:16). God's love causes Him to work in the midst of desolation until He says, "Very good," and rests. Until what is desolate is completely recovered to a state of being "very good," His heart of love can never rest!

To be born again is the initial work and also the most important work. Without this work, God's light shines in vain. God first causes the Holy Spirit to work an incredible work within man. This serves as a preparation for His light to shine. "You must be born anew. The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from and where it goes; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit" (John 3:7-8).

What a sinner lacks is life. In this world nothing can replace life. Sinners do not want God and do not want the light that shines out of God in Christ. They

hate it and reject it. “Men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil” (John 3:19). Only those that are born again love God’s light. After man’s second birth, he has feeling toward God’s light, and his conscience causes him to be stirred up and turn to God.

IV. “And God said, Let there be light: and there was light” (Gen. 1:3)

The previous verse said that “the Spirit of God moved.” Here it says, “God said.” This is God’s word. The Spirit of God and the word of God are two inseparable co-workers. First, the Holy Spirit works; then the word of God works. We are born of the Holy Spirit (John 3:5-6), and we are also “regenerated not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, through the living and abiding word of God” (1 Pet. 1:23). “The entrance of thy words giveth light” (Psa. 119:130). Therefore, “God said [the word]...and there was light.”

The work of the first day was God’s calling of light to come forth through His word. The initial work of the Spirit of God and the word of God cause light to shine out of darkness. Sin caused the eyes of man’s heart to be darkened; it blinded the eyes of his understanding. If man stands alone without any help, he will never know that his position is perilous and his future is perdition. Spiritually speaking, he is completely blind, not knowing that he needs a Savior. The loves within his heart, the thoughts within his mind, and the decisions from his will do not afford him any light. But God’s light can come and shine in his heart. Only God’s light shining on the desolate scene can expose the real condition of the creature to the uttermost! Everything remains the same. The only thing that changes is darkness itself. Nothing that is exposed can please God’s heart. The only thing good in God’s eyes is His own light (Gen. 1:4). Within man, there is not one thing that can satisfy God or be acceptable to Him. Nevertheless, He delights in His beloved Son (Matt. 3:17), who is the true light of the world (John 1:9). Concerning the work that God did on the first day, the apostle said, “Because the God who said, Out of darkness light shall shine, is the One who shined in our hearts to illuminate the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6). Just as God’s light shined on the dark world before, today the Christ of God also shines in the dark and sinful heart.

Once man receives God’s enlightenment, the light is divided from the darkness (Gen. 1:4). Thus, spiritual sense and knowledge are gradually

recovered. The things a man once thought were right, he now realizes are wrong. What he formerly considered to be wrong, he now realizes to be right. Although in the experience of most people they do not have an accurate discernment right away, nevertheless, within their heart the division between light and darkness becomes a reality. At this time the word of God (through the light emitted from it) begins to divide man's bright spirit from his dark soul (Heb. 4:12). From this point on, within a person there is a division between "that which is born of the flesh is flesh" and "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). Although this division has yet to reach its perfect state and the believers have yet to experience it in full, in fact, the division between these two has been accomplished.

God divided the light from the darkness, and He gave light its position and named it light. Darkness was still there, and it also had its position and name (Gen. 1:5). Darkness is still darkness; in eternity it will still be darkness, and it will never change into light. The earth has never been the source of light. Whenever the earth turns its back to the light, it remains in darkness. When darkness is controlled by the light, it is powerless to do anything to lessen the brightness of light. Once light comes, darkness and shadows are gone. Both still exist as before. Our old nature (the flesh) and our old life (the soul) will always be darkness. However, whenever the spiritual life, the divine nature, is strengthened, the former things become completely powerless. However, if we do not walk in the light, we will do deeds of darkness once again. As long as we are in this world, we can always walk in the light. However, we can never eradicate the darkness completely nor can our sinful life and nature be changed. Although we are children of the day and children of light, we still have to walk in God's light. Otherwise, the night will return.

Strictly speaking, the day is not completely light. It is composed of "evening" and "morning" (v. 5). While we are on earth, the most noble life we can have is the "day." Nevertheless, it is still composed of "evening" and "morning." If there is only morning and no evening, that is not the "day" the Holy Scripture talks about. "If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves" (1 John 1:8). "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar" (1 John 1:10).

Although darkness itself is "night," once the light comes in, darkness is no longer "night," but rather "the evening." Once God's light comes in, no matter how much darkness there is, the night cannot be night if there is a single

beam of light. Since the night has some light, it should no longer be called night, but rather “the evening.” After being enlightened by God’s light, a believer’s darkness still remains. It has not changed its nature. Yet after being enlightened, his darkness becomes a darkness that is under the control of the light; it is no longer without restriction. Sometimes his darkness may even be intensified; yet what he has is just the evening. It can no longer be completely “night,” completely dark. Although sometimes he may fail completely and fall utterly, he cannot lose all of the light or the life that comes from the light. Neither can he revert to being an unbelieving sinner. Once a man believes in the Lord Jesus, he is born again; and once he is born again, he has the eternal life. He may fall, but he is still a son of God. While he may be occasionally overcome by trespasses (Gal. 6:1), they cannot cause him to return to a sinner’s position. This is the grace of God!

In Genesis 1 it mentions “the evening and the morning” six times. Although the light is called “Day,” during the six days it is referred to as “morning.” The real experience of the “Day” has not yet come. Morning is only the beginning of the day; it is not the peak of light. In God’s ordination, after evening there is morning. Although we have the dawning light, the time for this shining to shine “more and more unto the perfect day” (Prov. 4:18) is in the future. All we have today is the morning. One day, when God’s work is completed and His heart is satisfied and at rest, the “perfect day” will appear. There will be no more evening or morning. We will enter into God’s rest and eternally rejoice in the bright, nightless day. “Day to day pours forth speech, / And night to night tells out knowledge” (Psa. 19:2), yet those who hear and understand are few.

Indeed, the light we have now is only the “morning.” The time when we will brightly shine is still in the future. At that time the temporal things will pass away, and we will enter into God’s perfection.

**V. “And God said, Let there be a firmament
in the midst of the waters,
and let it divide the waters
from the waters” (Gen. 1:6)**

This is the firmament we know. The firmament divides the waters above from the water beneath (vv. 7-8). What had previously been deep in the

brackish, dark, and dismal waters was divided and became a vapor ascending into the firmament. What a division! Through “the firmament,” God has divided that which is pure from that which is evil and filthy, so that each may have its own place.

This is the work of the cross. The work of the cross is to divide. God’s light shined upon the dark face of the deep and exposed its real condition. These enormous, boundless, and dismal waters were hidden deep under the covering of the darkness; it was not easy to recognize their real condition. But the light came. They could no longer hide. The more the light of God shines, the more it exposes vast and great filthiness. Light does not cleanse; rather, it exposes the unseemly shame. Under the shining of God’s light, men become contrite and penitent. The things in which they formerly took consolation, upon investigation, are found to be worthless. The wickedness of the sinful life and nature receives its true evaluation. It is in the midst of our disappointments and repentance that we know the dividing power of God’s cross. The cross has crucified our sin (Rom. 6:6, 11), self (Gal. 2:20), flesh (Gal. 5:24), the world (Gal. 6:14), and the elements of the world (Col. 2:20). Death divides. Death is a great dividing, dissolution, and detaching. Death cuts off all relationships and terminates all entanglements. Without the cross, nothing can divide us from things which are beneath. Our union with Christ’s death detaches us from the things which are “beneath.” Although we have been regenerated, sin, the self, the flesh, the world, and worldly elements can still tightly hold and drag us down. After regeneration, if we die with Christ experientially, we will become a “divided” person. The mark of the cross is the proof that we are heavenly people and that we are divided from the worldly people. God’s light leads us into self-judgment, and after self-judgment to the cross, through which we receive deliverance.

We should not confuse our position and our experience. Once we believe in the Lord as our Savior, we have the highest position in Him. What He has accomplished for us is ours. When we receive Him as our personal Savior, He divides that which is above from that which is beneath through the cross. This is a matter of position. But at this time, we still may not have the experience of this division. When we exercise our faith to receive what has been accomplished on the cross and are in union with His death, we have the real experience of being detached from the things beneath and setting our mind on the things above. Although we were born from above, the meaning of regeneration, we do not all have the experience of being “not of this world”

(John 8:23). Therefore, we have to enter into the Lord's death, to prove His death, so that we can have the real experience of dividing the spirit and soul (Heb. 4:12). Just as the knife of the high priest pierces and divides the joints and marrow of the sacrifices, the cross, revealed through the Word of God, also divides our spirit and soul.

The moment we were born again, God reckoned us as being crucified with Christ. We have believed that His death is a death on our behalf. Since He has died for us, His death is our death. This is a co-death. A substitutionary death will naturally produce a co-death. For Him to die for us means we died with Him. When God accepted the Lord Jesus' death on our behalf, He reckoned us dead. From the view of our personal experience it is a substitutionary death. From the view of the judgment of the law it is a co-death. When we believed in the Lord Jesus, we died with Him in fact; but we still may not have the experience of this death. The experience of this co-death comes after we have been regenerated, in the struggle between the two lives and natures of light and darkness, as we seek deliverance at the cross.

Believers have this division not only in outward matters, but also in their inward being. God is working in the heart of man in a hidden way, causing his love and desire to turn upward. The believers have been regenerated and have received God's divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). The working of the Lord's cross causes this nature to divide the things which are above from the things which are beneath. The differences between earthly things and heavenly things are made manifest through God's nature. Now a believer's heart can turn toward the heavens. The old, brackish, and dark heart, filled with wickedness and lusts, can be purged; it can now be set on the things above.

Wherever there is life, there must be air for this life to breathe. Since the heavenly light has shined into our spirit, this spirit must breathe heavenly air. God not only is dividing the waters which are above from those which are beneath within us, He is also dividing things which are above and things which are beneath outside of us. He has put "the heavens" in us. He also has put us in "the heavens," so that our faith can have a suitable environment. The first mark of the saints is their being of the heavens. They have received a heavenly calling and are looking unto the heavenly kingdom, desiring a heavenly city. Their hope is in the heavens, and they look forward to a heavenly country, counting themselves as pilgrims sojourning on the earth.

Once we have the heavens inwardly and outwardly, we will know the things above from the things beneath.

The inward heaven requires an outward heaven. One who has a heavenly life, will surely have a heavenly walk. The nature of a regenerated person will lead him not to “walk in the counsel of the wicked,” and not to “stand on the path of sinners, nor sit in the company of mockers” (Psa. 1:1). Worldly pleasure, love, and fashion will have difficulty drawing him along. If a physically strong and healthy person cannot breathe dirty air, how can saints breathe in the midst of hatred, wickedness, frivolity, and confusion? They will love the company of their brothers and companions in their heaven-bound pilgrimage. “We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brothers” (1 John 3:14).

By this time, the heart of a believer has come under God’s regulation. Yet he may not be much different from his former condition if the dry land has not appeared and fruit has not been produced. Even though his heart is heaven-bound, and traffic between him and the heavens has begun, he needs to go further and bear fruit to glorify God.

**VI. “And God said, Let the waters
under the heaven be gathered together
unto one place, and let the dry land appear:
and it was so” (Gen. 1:9)**

This was God’s work on the third day. God’s work here coincides with “the third day” (1 Cor. 15:4), a number which indicates resurrection. The dry land appeared from under the waters. It was buried under the dismal sea of darkness, but it came out from its grave. The clean earth, able to cultivate and bring forth fruit, came out from the sea of death. Although God did not eliminate the sea, He restricted it so that it could not go beyond its boundary. Presently, the sea has its boundary and cannot flood the earth. God gave a name to it (Gen. 1:10) and recognized its existence. Not until the new heaven and the new earth will it be eliminated. The dry land also received a new name (v. 10) to distinguish it from the sea. The appearance of dry land was the work of the first half of the third day. The work of the third day was divided into two halves. On that day God spoke twice; He twice said that His

work was good. During the first half, the dry land appeared; during the second half, the earth brought forth grass, herbs, and fruit trees.

We saw the work of the cross in relation to God's work on the previous day. The third day signifies resurrection. Both the death and the resurrection of Christ are the means of our new life. Just as He died for us, He was also raised for us (Rom. 4:25). We need His resurrection as much as we need His death (Rom. 5:10). If we forego either of the two, we make the gospel vain. Through the death of Christ we are freed from everything that belongs to Adam and the natural man; through His resurrection we enter into everything that belongs to Christ and that is beyond the natural realm. His death frees us from the position of a sinner and can free us from the experience of sins. His resurrection grants us the position of a righteous man and can grant us the experience of righteousness. "So then if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, they have become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).

According to His plan of salvation, God has no intention to restore or mend our old nature, but rather to make us "a new creation." He does not want any of our old nature. The death of the Lord Jesus has freed us from the old, and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus causes us to enter into the new. If we are raised together with the Lord, we shall have the experience of being joined to Him. If we have the experience of being "in Christ," then we shall have the experience of the new creation, of old things passing away and all things becoming new. In order for us to practically live the life of the new creation, we must die with the Lord and be raised together with the Lord.

Nothing included in our "old creation," whether our life and the deeds that issue forth from this life, or our nature and the intents that issue forth from this nature, can satisfy God's heart. "For just as in Adam all die" (1 Cor. 15:22). In the eyes of God, everything of our old creation has the mark of "death." These dead things cannot be repaired or corrected. God wants something entirely new; He wants a new creation in which the old things have passed away and all things have become new. Therefore, His first work is to regenerate man and to give him a "new spirit" and a "new heart." This was the work of the first day. Our new spirit works together with God's Holy Spirit to put the old life and nature on the cross, crucifying them there. This was the work of the second day. Since God terminated all the "old things," He can now begin to develop the "new creation," so that all things can "become new." In

this way, step by step He moves forward until eventually our body is transfigured on the sixth day, a complete new man. We will see this more clearly later.

The experience of resurrection comes after regeneration, on the first day, and after our co-crucifixion with the Lord, on the second day. Regeneration is the beginning of life. After receiving the regenerated life, we have a part within us that is willing to cooperate with the Holy Spirit; this part is willing to be crucified together with the Lord. This co-crucifixion naturally leads us into co-resurrection. “For if we have grown together with Him in the likeness of His death, indeed we will also be in the likeness of His resurrection” (Rom. 6:5). Regeneration is to receive life; resurrection is to receive more abundant life. If a believer remains merely regenerated, he will not be able to overcome sins. If he remains merely in co-crucifixion, he will not be able to advance to righteousness, God’s holiness. We should always advance in our experience. Although in experience regeneration comes first, followed by co-crucifixion and co-resurrection, in reality the moment we believe in the Lord Jesus and are regenerated, God reckons us as being resurrected. At that time, however, we do not yet have the experience of resurrection in our own life.

Many believers, through introspection, cannot see that the old things have passed away and that all things have become new. This is a great danger. They either consider themselves to be unregenerated or else consider that this word is too hard to experience. Some will endeavor to correct and mend their own lives in the hope of matching God’s Word, yet in their experience, they end up with failure and the loss of peace, joy, freedom, and power. If by faith they would reject the self and with their whole heart look to Christ, they would have the potential of being victorious. Our failures come when we try to reject the root of co-crucifixion while pursuing the fruit of resurrection. We do not allow the cross to do a deeper work in us; yet at the same time we desire to go on with haste to receive the resurrection life. We try to create the new life with the old life. This is altogether impossible. Resurrection is grounded in the cross; without the cross, there is no resurrection. Whoever desires the experience of resurrection must first experience the cross.

Being accepted by God does not depend on our experience. When we believed in the Lord Jesus, faith brought us into union with Him. Our position “in Christ” makes us well-acceptable to God, and He reckons us a completely new man. To be accepted in Christ is to be accepted just as Christ is accepted.

God does not care for what we have inside. He looks upon us as completely new simply because of our new position. This concerns our salvation.

On the other hand, God wants us, the Body of His Son, to experience all that our Head has accomplished for us. It is by this that we are delivered from the old creation and become the new creation. We were raised together with Christ; we do not raise ourselves. Christ's resurrection has put us in a new realm; we were raised together with Him. If by faith we acknowledge this fact to be true and receive it, the Lord's resurrection will put us on the dry land where the seawater cannot reach.

As the earth came out from the waters, so the spirit is resurrected from within the flesh. The waters were not eliminated. The flesh does not become the spirit, nor is it eradicated. The waters were gathered into one place and could not go over their boundary. Likewise the flesh is still here, yet the Lord's death and resurrection have given us authority to restrict it. The flesh is incurable and has been rejected by God. Yet whoever has died and has been raised together with the Lord is "not in the flesh." (Rom. 8:9)

We have seen the work on the first half of the third day. Now we come to the second half. We have been resurrected; now it is a matter of bringing forth fruit (Gen. 1:11-12). Resurrection and the bringing forth of fruit are directly connected. "So then, my brothers, you also have been made dead to the law through the body of Christ so that you might be joined to another, to Him who has been raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit to God" (Rom. 7:4). "And having been freed from sin, you were enslaved to righteousness" (Rom. 6:18).

God called the dry land "Earth." The root of this word in the original text is "broken." We all know that rich soil must be broken. If it is not broken, it cannot be fertile. The more the earth's soil is crushed to powder, the better the harvest will be. Only in this way can the soil supply nourishment to planted seeds. Although the seawater retreats in our experience, the land may still be hard; it can still resist the hand of the sower. Although the power of the flesh is lost, the natural soul-life still considers itself a "good self," boasts of its natural abilities and virtues, and refuses to surrender. The broken soul-life of a believer is rich soil in the heavenly Father's hand. God does not require ability, but inability, of us. He does not require strength, but weakness, of us. He does not require us to be filled up but to be emptied. He does not

want us to resist but to surrender. He is almighty and He has all the might. His power is manifested in weakness. God's seed flourishes the most in a broken field.

Fruit-bearing does not come through the preservation of the self. Rather, it comes by its breaking, its humbling, and its weakness; it comes by our reliance on God which allows His hand to work. Our own ability is always an obstacle to the manifestation of God's ability. "Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24). If we do not hate our soul-life, our natural life, our ability, our talent, our wisdom, and our virtues, we cannot produce much fruit. When we drive out the natural life and ability inherited from our flesh (the earth that emerged from the waters) and accept God's hand with a broken heart, we can obtain God's fruit.

We often think that this sinful, filthy flesh should be annihilated. But we should realize that to bring forth fruit, it is important to forsake our good, just, honest, and righteous soul (the self). We may be content with our field, but God thinks that the field must be broken. We value ourselves too much! Little do we realize that our self has been infected by Adam's sin, and that it is still weak and powerless! All our good resolutions and intentions are like overnight flowers and soap bubbles.

When we are weak, empty, and destitute, submitting as clay to the potter's hand, the life of Christ will live within us, and His power will be manifested in our body. The more we know the meaning of the cross and the reality of resurrection, the more we will know the true meaning of the breaking of the soul-life.

This earth is not irrigated by seawater; its productivity is not cultivated by the flesh. The mist (Gen. 2:6) is its moistening agent; the Holy Spirit cares for it. In bearing fruit in the truth, all the ordinances of the flesh are "of none effect." Limiting its boundary and naming its name shows that the flesh is not a help to the new creation, and that it should be condemned and regarded as incurable.

There is also a progression in the fruit brought forth. First there was grass, then herbs, and then the fruit trees. Fruit is not primarily for its own use, but for the Lord's. "Bear fruit to God" (Rom. 7:4). Every kind of fruit is able to

continue its own kind, “whose seed was in itself, after his kind.” The seed is within the fruit, after its kind. Therefore, only love can beget love, only joy can beget joy, and so on. If we want love, then we must show love. If we want joy, then we must show joy. The fruit that spends much time under the sun’s heat is the ripest and most suitable for the master’s appetite. The ripest fruit has the ripest seeds. What a man reaps is according to what he sows.

**VII. “And God said, Let there be lights
in the firmament of the heaven
to divide the day from the night;
and let them be for signs, and for seasons,
and for days, and years:
and let them be for lights in the firmament
of the heaven to give light upon the earth:
and it was so” (Gen. 1:14-15)**

The work on this day is quite different from the previous days. The work on the earth has moved to the heavens. The work on this day is a work in the heavens. This is the ascension of Christ with His believers.

After resurrection the next event in sequence is ascension. Ascension is the crucial truth after resurrection. Without ascension, our “new creation” is not a complete work. We receive ascension, like all the other truths such as crucifixion and resurrection, at the moment we believe in the Lord Jesus. At that very moment God puts us in the position of ascension even though we have not yet had the experience. The experience of ascension follows the experience of resurrection. If we are truly resurrected with the Lord and united with His resurrection life, we will spontaneously bear fruit on this earth, and our spiritual life will ascend to the heavenlies.

God “raised us up together with Him and seated us together with Him in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:6). After resurrection, spontaneously there is ascension. Every Christian must attain to this ascended life. The Lord Jesus was raised from among the dead and was seated at the right hand of God, “far above all rule and authority and power and lordship and every name that is named” (Eph. 1:20-21). The ascended life is a life that triumphs over all of Satan’s authority and power. Prior to the experience of ascension, we only

have victory over the flesh, sins, and the world. When we are in ascension, we experience the warfare with, and victory over, every ruler, authority, power, lordship, dominion, and every name in the dark domain. We are able to attain to the ascended life when our spirit and soul are completely divided, when our spirit is absolutely free through resurrection, when we are no longer affected by the emotion and the mind of the soul, and when we are transcendent over all the environment and worldly affairs. Saints who have attained to the ascended life have a view that comes from the throne. They have the experience of not being affected by anything. Those who are truly crucified with the Lord will resurrect together with Him. And those who are truly resurrected with the Lord will ascend together with Him to the heavenlies. “If therefore you were raised together with Christ, seek the things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things which are above, not on the things which are on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God” (Col. 3:1-3).

The various lights are the sun, the moon, and the stars (Gen. 1:16). The sun is the light for the day. It is the source of heat and light for the earth. Its light is self-originating, unchanging, and constant. It is truly a type of the “heavenly Man.” He was once on this earth, yet He has returned to glory. Malachi 4:2 declares this same thing. The glorious Lord Jesus is the “great light” of the heavens. When He was on the earth, He was “the rising sun...from on high” that visited us (Luke 1:78). He was also “the light of the world” (John 8:12). He was “the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man” (1:9). “And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it” (v. 5). “The light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil. For every one who practices evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his works be reproved” (John 3:19-20). Therefore, the Lord went back to the heavens to abide in the “tabernacle.” When the millennial kingdom comes, He will be the “Sun of righteousness” and “the sun, /...like a bridegroom, goes forth from his canopy; / He rejoices like a mighty man running the course. / His rising is from the end of the heavens, / And his circuit is unto their ends; / And there is nothing hidden from his heat” (Psa. 19:4-6).

Today His light does not shine on this world. Only those who believe in Him are under His shining. “And the world beholds Me no longer, but you behold Me” (John 14:19). “But we see Jesus...crowned with glory and honor”

(Heb. 2:9). “Therefore He says, Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you” (Eph. 5:14).

In the morally dark night of today’s world, people have lost sight of the sun. But the church has ascended on high and is still able to see the sun. Just as the moon reflects the sun at night, so the church, which abides in the light of Christ, becomes the light for the night which has rejected Christ. On the first day of our salvation, we received the light. “Believe into the light, so that you may become sons of light” (John 12:36). Now we reflect the light, and we are the witnesses of Christ in this perverse generation. “You are the light of the world....Let your light shine before men” (Matt. 5:14, 16).

In this ascended position the saints have a more intimate fellowship with the Lord Jesus. Is it not here that we see the true situation of the dark night? Is it not here that we sense the power of darkness close by? Is it not here that we have a broader view? Is it not here that we have a clearer view of Christ? What a position!

Although the brightness of the moon is second only to that of the sun, there is a tremendous difference between the two! Even though the moon is the light of the night, at her most beautiful and fullest moment, compared with the source of light, she cannot help but appear cold and silvery. Constantly she changes! She waxes and wanes! The degree of her waxing and waning depends on the degree of her movements in facing the sun! Sometimes she does not show forth any light at all. “But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:18). How easily she changes! According to God’s ordination, she is a heavenly object remaining in the heavens. Yet according to man’s view, she is not always there; and sometimes she disappears. Even when she is there, she is rarely in her fullness. It is not unusual for her to move away from the source of light. Her work is to receive. She has no glory of her own. All her glory comes from her Lord. In His light she is able to shine forth light. She does not have her own light. She does not need to worry or labor. When she faces the sun, it is her bright and shining day. When men look at her from the earth, she is “fair” (S.S. 6:10), she puts forth the choicest of the yield (Deut. 33:14), she “shall be established for ever...as a faithful witness in heaven” (Psa. 89:37), and there shall be an “abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth” (Psa. 72:7), yet life and the life supply are given to men by the direct rays of the sun

itself. Our position in Christ is precious; yet directly experiencing His warmth is also important. When the sun rises, the stars and the moon are all seen no more.

The stars are a type of the individual saints today, because they “shine as luminaries in the world” (Phil. 2:15). When the sun goes down and the moon wanes, the stars come out. “And those who have insight will shine like the shining of the heavenly expanse, and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever” (Dan. 12:3).

All of these lights were created by God “to rule” (Gen. 1:16-17). There is ruling power in the shining of the saints. Many sins must hide themselves before the saints. Many filthy people with corrupt deeds dare not approach the saints. All the saints who walk in God’s holiness, glory, righteousness, and love share such ruling power.

What the saints rule over is the night. The greatest authority for an ascended Christian is to have victory over the power of darkness. Before ascension believers are not clear about spiritual warfare. They do not have a clear view of the devices of Satan, the attack of the enemy, the temptation of the devil, or the counterfeit of the evil spirits. Not until they reach ascension do they sense the reality of the power of darkness. Then they realize how to overcome the enemy by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of their testimony, and by not loving their soul-life. Then they know how to use the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, to attack the power of Satan. Then they know how to pray in a challenging way asking God to destroy all the activities of Satan. Then they know how to stand on the ground of the cross, holding the accomplished victory of the cross, using words of praise to chase away the attacks which come from evil spirits. Then they know how to exercise their will to fight against every stratagem of the enemy. Since the ascended believers have already obtained a position that allows them to rule over the power of darkness, they will have frequent experiences of crushing Satan under their feet.

These lights are also for “signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years,...and to divide the light from the darkness” (vv. 14, 18). Ascended believers know the signs of the age. They know how to discern the times. They have God’s view from the throne and are very clear about world events. Ascended believers will know about the situation in the last days. Therefore,

they will be at rest and unmoved when things change and confused, panicked people wonder what is happening and what to do. They will know what will surely happen. When they reach the ascended position, believers will know about the Lord's move in the last days, about their proper manner toward the church, about their attitude toward the world in the last days, and about how watchful they should be. They will know that in the last days false Christs and false prophets will deceive the world. They will know how evil spirits and fallen angels will confuse the world and entice men to follow the teachings of demons, deceiving ignorant saints to believe in miracles and wonders, and to seek after false tongues and all kinds of supernatural experiences. Those who are not rooted in the Word of God will be deceived. But ascended believers, who have God's view, will not be deceived, for they will already know of their devices.

**VIII. “And God said, Let the waters
bring forth abundantly the moving creature
that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth
in the open firmament of heaven” (v. 20)**

This is the work of the fifth day. This day is the period between ascension and the Lord's coming back to be King. Therefore, it is not difficult to derive the spiritual significance.

God created the fish and the birds (v. 21). Water itself cannot produce fish; neither can the earth produce birds. Fish and birds were created by God and were placed in the water and on the earth. Both items have life (v. 21). They are only different in the form of life. Water represents our sinful nature, the flesh, as mentioned earlier. This brings us into trials. Yet in these trials the grace of God works out the form of life for us. The earth represents our purified soul-life, as mentioned earlier. This causes us to be greatly affected. In this, the goodness of God works out a form of life for us.

Although our life has reached the point of ascension, we are still human and living on this earth. We have no way to express the life of God except through our body. Ascension is to go out of the world; but today is the time for us to live in the world. Through His teaching, God enables us to express His life through our soul and our body. When we have reached this step, our life seems to be taking form. Although the forms of life differ, this is the time of

going “from glory to glory.” Ascension is our heavenly position. But today is the time for our living to be expressed on this earth. Therefore, in dealing with the world, we have no choice but to express our life through our body and soul. The outward forms of the fish and the birds are different, but the inner principle of life is the same. The fish in the water indicate that there is life in the water. The birds on the earth indicate that there is life on the earth. Originally, the water and earth were dead and without life; yet God was able to create living creatures, though in different forms, and put them there. This is very clear. When our Christian life first begins, we do not have life in our body or our soul. But after we ascend to the heavenlies, the life of God will be expressed in our body and soul through our living on the earth. We should be clear, however, that there will never be life in our body and our soul; it is only the life of God which is expressed in them. “Among whom you shine as luminaries in the world, holding forth the word of life” (Phil. 2:15-16). “Your life is hidden with Christ in God.” This is ascension. “Put to death therefore your members which are on the earth” (Col. 3:3, 5). This is to express life. In this way, we will get the blessing from God (Gen. 1:22).

**IX. “And God said, Let the earth bring forth
the living creature after his kind, cattle,
and creeping thing, and beast of the earth
after his kind: and it was so” (v. 24)**

The work on the sixth day, like the work on the third day, was divided into two halves. The living creatures on the earth were created on the first half of the sixth day. At this point, the appearance of life is more advanced. Now there is no water and the virtues of the new man are produced.

If we combine the work on the fifth day with the work on the first half of the sixth day, we will find great significance. All the fish, birds, cattle, insects, and beasts are types of man (Matt. 4:19; Acts 10:12, 28). Christians, after their ascension, become a channel for the life of God; they convey God’s life into the hearts of many. All these refer to today’s life and work.

Now we will look into the work on the second half of the sixth day. God created man in His own image and after His likeness (Gen. 1:26-27). This brings us to the second coming of Christ. Spiritually, this is already a reality.

Saints who have experienced regeneration, co-crucifixion, co-resurrection, fruit-bearing, and ascension, and have expressed all these progressive stages in their spiritual life, will spontaneously attain to this step, that is to be completely like God. “Christ...formed in you” (Gal. 4:19) is the spiritual goal of the saints. When we are united with Christ in all things and have experienced all that He has accomplished for us, we will be able to experience being “transformed into the same image” (2 Cor. 3:18).

“Since you have put off the old man with his practices and have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him” (Col. 3:9-10). “That you put off, as regards your former manner of life, the old man...and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind and put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality” (Eph. 4:22-24). In our experience we should have the life of the “new man” who is completely like God. “Putting off” and “putting on” are actions initiated by our will. Believers exercise their will to reject all the conduct of the old man and choose the newness of the new man. The highest level of Christian living is a living by the will. At this point, they will be renewed in their mind and knowledge, and they will have the image of God in full. The mind is the spiritual battlefield. They may be righteous and holy in their conduct and life (Eph. 4:24), but they may not have the experience of the mind being renewed. The mind is the greatest stronghold of old Adam’s life; it is the part that is most deeply contaminated by sin. If the mind is renewed, the image of God is restored.

Nevertheless, the actual recovery of the image of God is still in the future, at the time of the second coming of the Lord Jesus. “For our commonwealth exists in the heavens, from which also we eagerly await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transfigure the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of His glory, according to His operation by which He is able even to subject all things to Himself” (Phil. 3:20-21). “If He is manifested, we will be like Him” (1 John 3:2).

Saints not only have the image of God, but also dominion over all things (Gen. 1:26, 28). This brings in the millennial kingdom. This is the ruling of the saints. “They...reigned with Christ for a thousand years” (Rev. 20:4). “Have authority over ten cities” (Luke 19:17).

Not every believer will have the glory of the millennial kingdom. Rather, only those who have experienced all the stages in Genesis 1 will have this glory. Those who are united with the past experiences of Christ will also be united with the future glory of Christ. We only need to believe in the Lord Jesus to be saved; but if we are not faithful, and if we do not suffer and overcome, we will not be able to reign with the Lord. The cross is the way to the crown. Suffering is the condition to entering into glory. God gives salvation freely, but He will not award glory without a price. Whosoever is willing to suffer loss in this age for the Lord's sake will receive in the coming age. How can someone who reigns in this age receive glory in the coming age? It is not easy to humble ourselves! Rather, we are always ready to be exalted and receive glory! Those who live a holy life with faithful work will surely receive praises before the Lord. Yet to have this kind of reigning, we do not have to wait until the next age. We can reign in our spirit, even though the complete fulfillment will be in the future. We can apply the authority from the Lord to rule over all things. We should be kings to rule over evil spirits and prohibit them from working. Since Satan will be bound in the millennial kingdom, we can apply the authority of the coming age to confine him to a certain limit. We also should use the weapon of prayer to rule over our environment; whether they are national affairs, family affairs, church affairs, or personal affairs, we can use prayer to rule over all of them. By our will and through the Holy Spirit, we can even bring ourselves under full control. This is, indeed, a victorious life. "Millennial kingdom" Christians are the most powerful Christians.

Besides reigning as kings, the saints will also have their own food (Gen. 1:29). The herb-bearing seed is a sign of life. The power of life is in it. Only those things that have life are good for food. Food is part of our future reward: "To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7). "To him who overcomes, to him I will give of the hidden manna" (v. 17). The matter of food will continue even after the resurrection because our Lord also ate and drank after His resurrection. The fruit of the tree of life is for man to eat in the eternal, heavenly city.

Nevertheless, today we can experience the place where we will be in the future. What we eat is the constituent of our health. Only life-food will give the nourishment of life to those who eat it. Therefore, all the living creatures are given "every green herb" for food. "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). "My

food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work” (John 4:34). “I am the bread of life” (John 6:48). “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life” (v. 54). If we want to be strong, we must take in the word of God, take His will as our food, and eat and drink of the Lord Jesus. We should not read the Scriptures in a casual way, but use prayer and meditation to digest the word of God and receive nourishment for our spiritual life. Every time we faithfully take the will of God, we will sense that our inner man has once again been nourished. By faith we take the death (flesh) and the life (blood) of our Lord Jesus to assimilate them into our life so that we can go on with strength. In order to be healthy spiritually, we need to take in the bread of life. All other kinds of food are but chaff.

X. “In it he had rested from all his work which God created and made” (Gen. 2:1-3)

The heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. God’s redemptive work had been accomplished. Now there was nothing left to do but rest.

In chapter one God spoke more than ten times. Whatever was spoken was now finished. The word of God worked in every stage. He spoke every time. Each of God’s works shows the development of His intrinsic power. Step by step, they show forth His divine power for the carrying out of His divine plan. “We are His masterpiece, created in Christ Jesus for good works” (Eph. 2:10). Blessed are they who are obedient to the whole scope of the word of God. Seven times God said, “It was good,” but the last time, He said, “Very good.” His heart was satisfied with the work he had patiently and carefully done. Because He was satisfied, He rested. This is God’s rest. This brings us to the new heaven and new earth, the age of eternal rest. At that time, we will enter into God’s rest (Heb. 4:3). “He who has entered into His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His own” (Heb. 4:10). Eternity will begin, and during those millions of endless days we shall rest before God and shall be in Him, understanding His will, marveling at His lovingkindness, and praising His grace. What a situation that will be! “Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard and which have not come up in man’s heart; things which God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Cor. 2:9).

Praise the Lord, because we do not need to wait for the future to have that rest. Even now we can have a foretaste of this rest. “Come to Me all who toil

and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matt. 11:28-29). Here there are two rests. The first we receive when we believe in the Lord Jesus as our Savior. The second we receive when we learn of the Lord Jesus. Our souls are full of passion, excitement, covetousness, sadness, irritation, and grief. But when we consider the meekness and lowliness of the Lord, how He endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, how He took the yoke upon Himself, and how He showed Himself as an example of a lamb, then we will no longer be weary and faint. If we learn of Him, we will find rest for our souls, a peaceful life, a life that does not strive, and a life that appreciates the will of God! What a joy!

In all of the six days, there was “the evening and the morning.” After evening there was always morning, yet there was not a day with no evening. But the seventh day, God’s Sabbath day, has neither evening nor morning. Now all we have is an endless “day” (different from morning) which is perfect, full, glorious, blessed, and sanctified by God.

The creation of the physical world is a type of spiritual development. The history of the creation of the material world consists of ten stages, both past and future; but all these stages can be experienced by the believers, although some of these experiences will have their complete fulfillment in the future. “Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her that He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word, that He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:25-27).

How simple and how clear are these matters that we have just mentioned! Whoever wants to understand this lesson must apprehend the voices uttered through creation. The works of God’s hand are testimonies of God; they express His deep thoughts and His great love. Creation and redemption are two prongs of God’s work; they silently speak forth God Himself. Christ is the key to all the Scriptures. We are not distorting the Scriptures, chopping off the toes to fit the shoe. God has ordained that the Scripture should testify of Himself, of Christ and His redemption. If there is any error in this message, it is only due to clumsy writing which fails to convey its intended meaning.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CREATION

AND THE HOLY WORKS OF CHRIST

Christ is the key to all truth. If the Bible does not have Christ, it is a dead book. Without Christ, we cannot understand the Bible. If we examine the places in the Bible that are difficult to explain or understand with a view to Christ and put Him into them, we will receive extraordinary light. In fact, the Bible has one Man as the center; without this Man we do not know what the Bible is talking about. This Man is the Lord Jesus Christ. He Himself said, “You search the Scriptures,...and it is these that testify concerning Me” (John 5:39). Again He said, “In the roll of the book it is written concerning Me” (Heb. 10:7). The Bible is God’s written Word, and Christ is God’s living Word. The written Word is to testify the living Word. The living Word is to fulfill the written Word. Even as we read about the Lord Jesus in Matthew, we can also read about Him in Genesis.

We have seen in the preceding chapter that the physical creation merely expresses the spiritual creation. Now we want to see the procedures taken by God in His physical creation and how these correspond to Christ’s work in the spiritual creation. God’s creating work is actually done by the Lord Jesus since “all things came into being through Him, and apart from Him not one thing came into being which has come into being” (John 1:3). “Because in Him all things were created” (Col. 1:16). We want to see now how Christ in the physical creation and Christ in the spiritual creation correspond. May we be delivered from all conjectures and only manifest the Christ of whom God has clearly written in His book. Since God uses the physical creation to signify the spiritual re-creation, it is reasonable for us to find out how these two creations correspond in the hand of Christ.

THE NEED OF REDEMPTION

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). All of God’s works are perfect; all that has passed through the hand of the Almighty is without any blemish of sin, wrinkle of oldness, or any other sickness. All of God’s works are like Himself, beautiful and perfectly good. The things which

newly emerged from the hand of the Ruler of the universe, the unique Potter, were sparkingly fresh and glorious! God considered this original state of mankind to be “very good.”

Nevertheless, good things always come with many trials, and this state did not last long. After learning that God created a perfect heaven and earth, we immediately heard a tragic story: “The earth became without form, and void” (v. 2, Heb.). The record in this verse is different when compared with the preceding one! The earth which God created changed! Between these two verses, an extraordinary catastrophe must have occurred and the beautiful earth became without form and empty. Sin came in! The angels fell! This section of history was so grievous that God did not want to record it directly. Mankind also sinned and fell to a low state.

“Darkness was upon the face of the deep” (v. 2). This is a portrait of the fallen. Darkness covers the face of the deep! Spiritually, morally, mentally, and behaviorally, darkness blinds the whole of mankind; all are born of the flesh! The authority of darkness, which is the power of Satan, comes upon sinners in the world, depriving them of freedom and subjecting all of them to his rule. In the deep, men invent, produce, and boast of their culture and wisdom; but Satan just causes darkness to cover the face of the deep so that there is no illumination of God! Yet men still say to themselves that twentieth century civilization is unprecedented! Actually, it is still under the authority of Satan.

Under these circumstances, there is no hope that men can be saved. God is not indebted to man, except that He entered into a covenant with men that He had to fulfill, obligating Himself to send His Son to save the world. If He executed His judgment and caused the entire world to perish eternally, this would still be very righteous. However, He has immense grace, a grace that is boundless, exceedingly great, and beyond man’s expectation. He prepared salvation to save the world. Just as He recovered the physical creation in six days, God also redeemed sinful humans in Christ’s redemption, typified in the six days, to accomplish His spiritual creation. We want to go one step further in our meditation. What a joy to speak more of Christ and think more of Christ! May we silently praise and worship this wonderful Savior for His wonderful work of salvation.

I. The work of the first day

signifies the birth of the Lord Jesus

On the first day God created light, and the light shone in the darkness. The face of the deep of the world was originally covered with darkness, but light came! This was the first time light and darkness met. There was never such a state on this earth; this was the first time light came to the dark world. Clearly this typifies the birth of the Lord Jesus. When John spoke about the birth of the Lord Jesus and the incarnation of the Word, he said, “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it,” and “This was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man” (John 1:5, 9). John clearly likened the birth of the Lord Jesus to light shining in darkness. When Zachariah spoke about the birth of the Lord Jesus, he also said, “Because of the merciful compassions of our God, in which the rising sun will visit us from on high” (Luke 1:78). Even the Lord Jesus Himself also compared His birth to the light shining into the world. He said, “For God did...send the Son into the world...the light has come into the world” (John 3:17, 19). These Scripture verses testify to us that God’s work on the first day, calling light to shine into darkness, typifies the Lord Jesus becoming, at a later time, the true light to come into the world. Light came, yet what a pity that the world would not let Him shine upon them!

The work of the first day is the first step of the redemptive work. Without light coming into the world, God and man would never have the opportunity to meet. Without the Lord Jesus coming into the world, sinners would not be able to see God the Father, who is expressed by the only begotten Son. Now we can see how the work of the first day and the Lord Jesus’ coming into the world are the same.

The shining of the light comes about through the work of the Holy Spirit. “And the Spirit of God brooded upon the face of the waters” (Gen. 1:2, Heb.). The same principle is true with incarnation. The angel told Mary, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore also the holy thing which is born will be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). The Son of the Most High was born of the Holy Spirit. However, the world does not receive this conception of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, light was called for on the first day. “And God said, Let there be light: and there was light” (Gen. 1:3). This we have said already: the Lord Jesus came to the world as light. Now let us look at another place in the Bible. When Simeon saw the Lord Jesus as a child, he said, “Now You release Your slave, Master,

according to Your word, in peace; for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel” (Luke 2:29-32). Who wants to be enlightened by Him?

God declared that the light was good. “And God saw the light, that it was good” (Gen. 1:4). The first word which God spoke to our Lord Jesus Christ was, “This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight” (Matt. 3:17). Aside from His Son, no one can please the Father’s heart because “those who are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom. 8:8). One of the strange phenomena among sinful human beings today is the thought that their own behavior is perfectly satisfying to God and that the Lord Jesus is more or less like them! How blind is a man of the flesh! He cannot see the beauty of the Lord Jesus and thereby fall in love with Him! Nevertheless, God always considers that this Light is good. Blessed are those who have God’s view! Light and darkness are separated. “God divided the light from the darkness” (Gen. 1:4). Here we see a wonderful harmony in the record of the Bible. The book of Hebrews says that the Lord Jesus is “a High Priest...holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners and having become higher than the heavens” (7:26). How different this man is from ordinary people! He is willing to share our human nature, yet He does not have the root of sin like us. Light is separated from darkness; Christ is distinct from sinners. God gave light a name. “And God called the light Day” (Gen. 1:5). Likewise, the name of Christ was given by God. His name was not given by Joseph and Mary. When He was still in His mother’s womb, the angel told Mary, “You shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21). Before He was born, He had prophesied through the prophet, saying, “Jehovah has called me from the womb” (Isa. 49:1). He is Jesus; therefore, He is the Savior. Since the Savior has come, how do you treat Him? The world did not ask for a savior. Through His special grace, the Lord Himself came to the world and became a man. The Savior has come, and the light has shone. But who are those who will receive Him?

The Word becoming flesh is the first scene in the beginning of the redemptive work. In himself, man is extremely feeble and of the flesh. What is man? Man is just dust! Man is limited and bound; all of man’s virtues (if there are any) have limitations which cannot be transcended. Man’s thought, character, behavior, and ethics are completely from man; they can never be higher than this level. Weakness, degradation, and sin are man’s common

qualities. If there is any merit, it can never go beyond the human realm. However, if man remains man—weak, defeated, sinful—God will not be satisfied. God is perfect. He wants man to be perfect in character, morality, behavior, and thought, according to His own standard. Otherwise, God would never choose man for His companion, giving man eternal life and having man with Him in heaven. Unless man reaches God's level of perfection himself, he cannot receive these things. What hope does man have? It is very important that God became a man. The birth of Jesus is the mingling of divinity with humanity. The Lord Jesus is God, yet He became a man. Therefore, He is God and man; He is man as well as God. Originally there was a chasm separating God and man. God could not become man, nor could man become God. However, the Word became flesh when the Lord Jesus came to this earth. He is a floating pontoon bridge between God and man. God and man met in the Lord Jesus. Man did not become just God, neither did God become just man. The Lord Jesus expresses God, and He also represents man. He is the unique God, and He is also the unique Man. Because He is both God and man, God is able to give grace to man in Him. Because He is both man and God, man is able to draw near to God in Him. Now there are men on earth who are filled with divinity. Man has the possibility to receive God's life. God's life is able to enter into the spirit of man. Originally, it was impossible for God and man to be joined together; however, God and man have been joined in the Lord Jesus. From this point there is the possibility for God and man to be joined together. Incarnation is not the totality of the gospel. It is the very first step of salvation; this step proclaims the nature and issue of the coming salvation.

However, this is not the direct reason for incarnation. The reasons that the Son of God "Himself...partook of the same [blood and flesh]" are (1) "that through death He might destroy...the devil"; and (2) "release those [men]" (Heb. 2:14-15). All have sinned, and the wages of sin is death. The one who has the power of death is the devil. Sin leads man to death, and through death due to sin, the devil dominates man. Therefore, for God to save man, He had to solve the problem of the penalty of sin by destroying the power of death, which is under the command of the devil. The penalty of sin is death, but death requires a physical body. Thus, the Lord Jesus "partook of the same [blood and flesh]." Since He had a physical body, He was able to die and redeem man. Therefore, God had "a body...prepared" for Him "to do Your will, O God"; this will is "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all...having offered one sacrifice for sins, sat down forever" (Heb. 10:5, 7, 10,

12). The devil had the power of death. Since no man could overcome death, Jesus obtained a human body, died, and also resurrected. He overcame all the power of the devil and destroyed him.

Man has sinned and should die. God cannot grant grace at the expense of righteousness, nor can He save man without punishing sin. God wants to save man, yet God also wants to punish sin. Therefore, He Himself became a man to bear the penalty of sin on man's behalf. Consequently, sin could be judged and man saved. If God had not become a man, this could never have been accomplished. Since sins are committed by man, the penalty should also be borne by man. God cannot die. But even if God could die for man, it would be an injustice because man committed sins, not God. This is why God had to become a man. Man, collectively speaking, has sinned. The "man Christ Jesus," the unique Man in whom the whole human race is included, has borne the penalty of sin; this is in compliance with the law. Man, the world, has sinned, and the Man, the Lord Jesus, has borne the penalty; this is exceedingly just. If the Lord Jesus is separated from man, then the death of the Lord Jesus cannot be counted as man having borne the penalty of sin. Although the Lord Jesus is God, He is truly a man, having been joined completely with the human race. Therefore, His death is man's death. He should not have died; therefore, His death is a substitutional death. This is what incarnation has accomplished.

Nevertheless, Christ must be God; otherwise, redemption is unjust. Because Christ is God, He is the One whom the world has offended; He has the right to accept the offense of the world and forgive them. If He is not God, then He is not the one being offended; rather, He is an innocent third party. When an innocent one dies for an offender, even though it may be gracious, it is an injustice to the innocent one. However, Christ is not the third party. He is directly involved. He is the one who is harmed; therefore, He has the power to forgive and endure the consequence of being harmed. He is God.

Incarnation does not constitute all of salvation. The accomplishment of salvation is due to crucifixion. Incarnation is the first step of salvation. If the Savior had never emptied Himself to become a man, He could never have died to save men. Bethlehem is the antecedent of Golgotha. Without Bethlehem, there can never be Golgotha. What wonderful grace that the Son of God would forsake Himself to become a man! What a great mystery that the Son of God would become flesh!

CHAPTER SIX
THE CREATION
AND THE HOLY WORKS OF CHRIST (Cont.)

II. The work on the second day
signifies the death of the Lord Jesus

In His work on the second day, God made the firmament and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament. This firmament is our heaven. Originally, all the waters were gathered together in one place, and there was no distinction. Then the atmospheric heaven came and divided the waters under the heaven from the waters above the heaven. This atmospheric heaven is a clear type of the cross of the Lord Jesus. In the work of the second day, separation is a big item. This separation consists of two parts. In the first part, the firmament within the waters divided the waters. In the second part, the waters under the firmament were separated from the waters above the firmament. Is it not true that the cross is also composed of these two parts? When the Lord Jesus was crucified on the cross, He cried, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (Matt. 27:46). This was His separation from God. But the Bible also says that He was cut off from the land of the living. This speaks of His separation from man. The work on the second day is the most crucial part in the redemptive work. Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins. The world does not need just a shining example. Although light is good, it only exposes man’s corruption and the real condition of his fall. The more light there is, the more a person is condemned. If Christ’s birth had not been followed by redemption, His birth would have been the strongest basis for man’s condemnation. If One was able to live a holy and righteous life, everyone else should be able to live the same way. If One could do it, everyone else should be able also. If One was able, yet the others were not, then the others would be without an excuse. If the birth of the Lord Jesus was all the work, His life would have condemned the whole world of their sins. If He had not died for man, and if the purpose of His birth had not been for redemption, it would have been better for Him never to have been born at all. His thoughts, words, behavior, and living were far beyond anyone’s reach. Every aspect of His being was enough to condemn

man of his sin. He was a man, and you are a man. If He could do it, why not you? The veil in the Holy Place may be beautiful and glorious, yet this same veil separates the Holy Place and keeps man from the Holy of Holies and God. Only a rent veil can offer man a way to come before God. A living Jesus would have driven everyone away from the presence of God, while a dead Jesus can bring all the sinners to the Holy of Holies. “Who Himself bore up our sins in His body on the tree”; “Christ also has suffered once for sins, the Righteous on behalf of the unrighteous, that He might bring you to God” (1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18). As long as He was alive, no one could be joined to God.

Now we want to consider how the cross of the Lord Jesus matches the work of the second day. God did not make the firmament all at once. First God decided, then He carried it out. Verse 6 says, “Let there be a firmament.” This speaks of God’s decision ahead of time. Then in verse 7, we see that “God made the firmament.” This was God’s carrying out His decision. Before the cross was ever erected on Golgotha, God had foreordained the matter. The cross is very similar to the firmament here. The death of the Lord Jesus was not a misadventure; it was no accident; it was foreordained. “Who was foreknown before the foundation of the world but has been manifested in the last of times for your sake” (1 Pet. 1:20). He was “the Lamb who was slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8). The death of the Lord Jesus, like the work of the second day, was carried out first through a decision, then an execution.

The firmament was put in the midst of the waters. In the Bible water represents the world. We can see this clearly when we study Revelation 17:15. Water represents the world and the kingdoms of the world. In the same way the cross was lifted up in the midst of man and for man. “Where they crucified Him, and with Him two others, on this side and that, and Jesus in the middle” (John 19:18). Strictly speaking, Golgotha can be considered the center of the world. The Lord Jesus died in the midst of humanity for the purpose of saving men.

The firmament separated the waters. The cross of the Lord Jesus separated the people of the world. When He was crucified, His cross forever separated the two thieves. One went to Paradise, and the other went to Hades. Throughout their lives, the two had been sinning together. But during their last few minutes, one received the substitutional death of the cross of the Lord Jesus, and the other refused to accept. There was a separation of heaven and

hell! This separation lasts forever. His cross separated the two thieves then, and in the same way it separates the whole world today. Actually, this separation does not happen only today. Throughout history His cross has separated all the people in the world into two kinds: the saved ones and perishing ones. “For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (1 Cor. 1:18). The cross divides salvation and perdition for man. The separation of perishing ones and the saved ones is based on nothing other than their attitude toward the cross. Only the firmament can separate the waters that are above from the waters that are beneath. In the same way only the cross can divide perishing ones and saved ones.

Furthermore, the firmament separates the waters that are above from the waters that are beneath so that the waters above cannot come down. The firmament stands in the middle. It prevents the waters above from coming down and mixing with the waters beneath, which would make them once again without form and void, and return them to the desolate condition of God’s judgment. We have seen from Revelation 17 that the waters on the earth are a type of the worldly people. The waters above, however, typify something else. At the time of Noah the world fell into sin, and God judged it. He sent the rain and opened up the window of heaven, pouring down the waters from above. From this we see that the waters above are a type of the wrath, punishment, and judgment of God. If this is true, it is not hard to find the meaning of the firmament. The firmament holds back the waters above so that they will not come down to the waters beneath. It stands between the waters above and the waters beneath. This is the work of the cross. When the Lord Jesus was crucified on the cross, He stood in our place and bore our sins. He was our covering. The judgment, punishment, and wrath of God should have fallen upon and desolated us, making us the “deep.” However, the Lord Jesus stood between us and God’s wrath. When He was crucified on the cross, He allowed God’s wrath to fall on Him and not on us. According to God’s ordination, the wrath of God should abide upon us (John 3:36). But He has established Him as the bearer of our sins. “Jehovah has caused the iniquity of us all / To fall on Him” (Isa. 53:6). Thank the Lord for the firmament in the heaven that separates the waters above from the waters beneath! Thank the Lord for the cross of the Lord Jesus which separates the world from the wrath of God! Yet He has borne what we should have borne ourselves. This is salvation. This is the gospel. If the waters above are not separated from the

waters beneath, the world would forever perish under water. If the Lord Jesus had not borne God's wrath on behalf of man, the world would forever be in desolation and hopelessness. This is the substitutional work of the cross.

The firmament was created by God. The decision was made by God, and the creation was also accomplished by God. Superficially, the Lord Jesus was crucified by the Jews and killed by the Gentiles. It seems that His life was taken by men. According to the Bible, however, He was not killed because He said that no one could take His life away from Him. His death was the judgment of God upon Him for all the sins of the sinners. "But Jehovah was pleased to crush Him, to afflict Him with grief. / When He makes Himself an offering for sin" (Isa. 53:10). The cross was God's direct work. It was not men who ill-treated Him. The Bible says, "This man, delivered up by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, you, through the hand of lawless men, nailed to a cross and killed" (Acts 2:23).

Among the six days of God's work, He considered that His work during all the other days was good. This was the only day when God did not say that what He had made was good. What God has not said is as meaningful as what He has said. The work on the second day was God's dealing with sin on the cross. God's wrath was manifested on the righteous One for the purpose of releasing the unrighteous ones. It was there that God made the sinless One sin for us and caused Him to suffer the punishment for sinners. It is very meaningful that He did not say that it was good. God takes no pleasure in judging sin. He loves to give grace; He does not like to judge.

The deliverance of the cross is the basis of salvation. Without the substitution of the cross, Christ's birth is in vain. The whole world has sinned, and the wages of sin is death. Unless there is a Savior who will die on the sinner's behalf, no one will escape the judgment he deserves. If there had been only the birth of Christ, it would have been completely useless in saving sinners. What man lacks is a sin-bearing Savior, not a holy teacher. Only a vicarious Savior can deliver sinners from their sins. If there is no vicarious death, even resurrection will be useless, because without death there can be no resurrection and no need for resurrection. All the facts of salvation are based on the work of this day. If the waters had not been separated, there would have been no possibility for the land to appear. Even the shining of the light on the previous day would have been in vain. We should pay attention to this matter and never forget that the Lord Jesus died on the cross for us.

III. The work on the third day signifies the resurrection of the Lord Jesus

In His work on the third day God caused the waters under the heaven to be gathered together unto one place, made the dry land to appear, and caused the earth to bring forth grass, herbs, and trees. Originally the earth was covered by the deep waters; there was no sign of life, nor any life at all. The earth was buried deep under the judging water of God. Except for darkness, there was nothing else. Other than the billowing of filthy waves, there was not a shadow of land. Since the earth itself had disappeared, there was no earthly life. Then God began His own work. First, He caused the land to emerge out of the water. Second, He caused life to appear on the earth. The work on this day is clearly a type of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

The words “the third day” are sufficient enough to prove that the work on this day is a type of resurrection. First Corinthians 15:4 says, “He has been raised on the third day.” There are many places in the Scripture where the third day and resurrection are linked together. This is true not only in the New Testament, but in the Old Testament as well. Three days after the Passover, there is the feast for offering the firstfruits of the harvest. This refers clearly to Christ’s resurrection three days after His death. In First Corinthians 15 there is a peculiar phrase, “He has been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” (v. 4). The resurrection of the Lord Jesus on the third day was prophesied in the Scriptures, that is, in the Old Testament. Where can we find the third day? We do not have to look at all the places in the Old Testament. In Genesis 1, at the beginning of the Bible, we find the first “third day.” We cannot help but consider this as a type of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

Not only is the numerical designation, “the third day,” a type, but the work of the third day is also a proof to resurrection. The earth was once buried under the water. Verse 9 says, “Let the dry land appear.” Formerly the earth was under the water; then it rose above the water. This is resurrection. The earth rose out of the tomb of the water. Once it was covered by water. Then it rose above the water and became higher than the water. This is a beautiful picture of resurrection. We can see this picture clearly at the time of baptism. When a man is baptized, his whole being is immersed into the water, and then

he comes out of the water. Romans 6:4 and Colossians 2:12 tell us that baptism by immersion into the water is a symbol of death, burial, and resurrection. Hence, the land coming out of the water is a type of resurrection out of death and burial.

Isaiah 57:20 tells us that water represents sins. “But the wicked are like the tossed sea, / For it cannot be calm, / And its waters toss up mire and mud.” The land buried under the water is like the Lord Jesus buried in the tomb. The land did not remain under water forever. On the third day it rose from the water. This situation is like the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Romans 6 clearly tells us about the relationship between the Lord Jesus’ resurrection and sin. “For the death which He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life which He lives, He lives to God” (v. 10). And, “knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more; death lords it over Him no more” (v. 9). As the land came out of the water, the resurrection of Christ disassociates Him from sin.

The work on the third day had two levels. Not only did the land come out of the water, but it also bore new life. This speaks of resurrection. Verse 11 tells us that the land brought forth all kinds of grass, herbs, and fruit-bearing trees. Formerly there was no life on the earth. On this day, however, life began to appear. Formerly death reigned. Now life came. God did not create life on the second day, or cause things to grow on the land on the fourth day. On this day, the third day, God created life. Romans 6:4 tells us that “we have been buried therefore with Him through baptism into His death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life.” Without resurrection there would be no new life. New life comes after resurrection. Before the land emerged out of the water, no life could grow on the earth. There must first be the separation from the water before there can be the growth. There must first be resurrection before there can be life. After resurrection, life will surely follow. Without new life, resurrection is empty. Saints who pay attention to their spiritual progress should note this fact.

In the second level of the third day’s work, the most important matter is the fruit. This is the natural result of resurrection. The goal of resurrection is to bear fruit. Otherwise, why did the land come out of the water? The land came out for the purpose of bearing fruit. The Bible is not silent concerning the relationship between resurrection and fruit-bearing. Romans 6:22 says, “But

now, having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification.” How can we be freed from sin? We are freed by identifying with the Lord in His death, burial, and resurrection. This is what Genesis 1:11-13 tells us. The result of this resurrection is fruit unto sanctification. Hence, fruit-bearing is the sure result of resurrection. This is not the only place that tells us this. Romans 7:4 also says, “You also have been made dead to the law through the body of Christ so that you might be joined to another, to Him who has been raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit to God.” Without death, there is no resurrection and there is no fruit. The fruits that are for God come solely from dying and resurrecting with the Lord Jesus. The only fruit that counts before God is the fruit based on the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. In God’s eyes anything that has not passed through death and resurrection is of the old creation. It is condemned by Him and is not qualified to bear fruit.

The work on this day is resurrection. Incarnation is important, and crucifixion is also important. But without resurrection, the gospel would be an incomplete gospel. The goal of incarnation is crucifixion. The result of crucifixion is resurrection. Resurrection means that God has accepted the salvation accomplished by the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. Romans 4:25 says that Jesus was delivered for our offenses. This means that the Lord Jesus died to bear our sins. When He died, He bore the punishment of our sins, and we were forgiven. Furthermore, He “was raised for our justification.” Forgiveness is on the negative side: it shows that we have sinned and that God has forgiven us. Justification is on the positive side: it shows that we are sinless, that God has declared us sinless, and that we are justified. We can become sinless because the work on the negative side has been thoroughly accomplished and all our sins have been forgiven and cleansed. Based on the death of the Lord Jesus and our having been forgiven, God justifies us. Justification is given to us through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. His death has accomplished salvation through the forgiveness of our sins. Now through His resurrection, God has declared us sinless and justified us. Resurrection establishes a new relationship for us with God. Because of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, we are placed in a new position before God. Death and resurrection are linked together. In the same way forgiveness and justification are linked together. The Lord’s resurrection signifies that God has accepted and acknowledged His death. Our justification proves that we are forgiven by God. Because of the death of the Lord Jesus, a Christian

should realize in his spirit that his sins have been borne by the Lord, that his sins have been forgiven, and that they have been judged and punished in the Lord Jesus. All this is on the negative side. Through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the saints should realize in their spirit that they are not just forgiven sinners who should cringe nervously before God, but that they are beloved children of God. Resurrection means that every former thing has died. Everything sinful and of the self has been buried in the grave; they can never be found. They are forever gone. Everything is completely new. For this reason, we should not just be forgiven saints, merely satisfied with our sins being forgiven. Rather, we should be justified Christians, daily acknowledging the fact that God has reckoned us righteous before Him, not through any righteousness of our own, but through our new position afforded through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Daily we should believe that we are accepted in Christ and that God has accepted us in the same way that He has accepted Christ. Just as God is satisfied and pleased with Christ, He has similarly accepted us through our relationship with Christ in His death and resurrection.

IV. The work on the fourth day signifies the ascension of the Lord Jesus

On the fourth day God's work made the luminaries. He made the sun, moon, and stars. The work of the previous day was on earth. The work on this day was in heaven. The emphasis on this day is on heavenly things. The sun, the moon, and the stars are all heavenly things. God made the luminaries for several purposes. First, they "give light upon the earth" (Gen. 1:17). Darkness is the ordinary condition of the world, and light is the special condition of the world. Ordinarily the world is dark. This is why light has to shine. Otherwise, the world would sink into a long night. Second, the luminaries are to "rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness." They are not only for shining, but for ruling. The work on this day is a type of the ascension of the Lord Jesus.

All the works on this day were in heaven. This was unlike the first day, when the light was in the world. Although the light on first day was shining on the earth, the luminaries on the fourth day were in heaven. The light which comes to earth now has its source in heaven. This is ascension. The Lord

Jesus, who came down from heaven, has now been taken away from the world again.

Malachi 4:2 tells us that Christ is the Sun of righteousness. Revelation 12:1 tells us that Christ is the Sun. Psalm 19:5-6 says the same thing. In reading the Bible, we find the teaching that the sun is a type of Christ. We do not see it in the world, but in heaven. He has ascended to heaven for us and has appeared before God as our Mediator and Priest.

The work of this day signifies not only Christ, but His people as well, because the moon is a type of the church and the stars are a type of individual Christians. Based on the Lord's death and resurrection, the Lord has gained people to His own name. This is why we see the moon and the stars in the presence of the Lord. The moon does not have any light by itself; it merely reflects the light of the sun. In the same way the church does not have any light of its own; it merely reflects the light of Christ. Presently the believers "shine as luminaries in the world" (Phil. 2:15); they are like the stars. We have covered this point before and will not cover too much about it now.

The two things that we have to do now correspond to what we mentioned earlier. First, we have to reflect the light of Christ in this morally dark night. Second, we have to rule over the power of darkness with the light of our words and deeds. When the millennium comes, we will truly be kings and rule over all things.

The ascension of Christ concludes His work on earth. His ascension is based on His death and resurrection. The meaning of His resurrection is the victory over everything that belongs to Satan's kingdom. Ephesians 1:20-21 says, "Which He caused to operate in Christ in raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenlies, far above all rule and authority and power and lordship and every name that is named." We know that these things refer to Satan and his subjects. The Lord Jesus' ascension means that God has given Him a position that is higher than all the powers of Satan. His position in heaven is a Satan-overcoming position. Satan is under His feet; he has no chance to defeat Him because Jesus is now the Lord over all and has become the Head of all things.

Philippians 2:8-11 says that Christ passed through "the death of a cross. Therefore also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which

is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should openly confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.” In His ascension the Lord Jesus received the highest place, a place that Satan and his evil spirits cannot touch. They also have to acknowledge the Lord Jesus as Lord and King. This kind of position is very crucial. If the Lord Jesus had not ascended, the effect of His death and resurrection on earth would have been affected. It is right for the Lord Himself to lead His people to this heavenly position. On the one hand, His people can shine for Him, and on the other hand, overcome the power of darkness that confronts them. This is what Ephesians 2:6 tells us. As the light of the sun overcomes darkness, the heavenly position of the Lord Jesus overcomes the devil’s power of darkness. As the moon and the stars accompany the sun in the sky, Christians remain with the Lord Jesus in heaven.

**V. The work on the fifth day
signifies the Lord Jesus
as the Lord of life**

In His work on the fifth day, God created many kinds of aquatic lives and birds. In the previous four days, God prepared the heaven and the earth as the habitation for the living creatures. Until this day there were no living creatures in the water and in the air. Although plants were included in the work of the third day, there was no trace of animals. The aquatic creatures were able to live in the water because God prepared the water on the first day. The birds were able to fly in the air because God prepared the air on the second day. Both birds and aquatic creatures have life. The only difference lies in their outward shape. The God-created birds and aquatic creatures are distinct from each other in man’s eyes; they are clearly different. However, they possess the same life. They are only different in the outward shell of their life. Hence, the work of the fifth day is for life to take form. Some take their form in the water, while others take their form in the air. The work on this day is a type of the Lord Jesus as the life-giving Lord.

Life cannot create itself. All lives are created by God. God is the Creator of all life. No matter what outward form this life takes, it comes from God. After the Lord Jesus resurrected and ascended, His work has been to dispense life to people, so that those with His life may have it more abundantly. His

ascension, typified by the work of the previous day, is for the purpose of becoming life to the saints. We can see this from Colossians 3:1-4: "If therefore you were raised together with Christ, seek the things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God." This speaks of resurrection and ascension. Following ascension, the Scripture continues, "Your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ our life..." From this we see that the work of Christ after ascension is to be our life, a life hidden in God.

The birds and the aquatic creatures are a type of the people in the world. Now we want to see how the birds and aquatic creatures correspond in significance to the life of the Christian.

Life is given by the Lord Jesus. The Lord has now ascended to heaven. His goal is for His saints to express His life in a practical way before He comes back. If a life does not have an outward form, that life cannot exist on this earth or have any experience on earth. Although outward form does not mean much, without such a form, there will be no way for life to be expressed. For this reason it is indispensable for life to "take form." The Lord Jesus wants His saints to work out a practical expression of the life which is derived from His death and resurrection on the earth. They have received life through the Lord's death and resurrection. Positionally, they have received a heavenly place. What they lack is a form on earth that expresses the Lord's life. This is the meaning of the work on this day.

The Lord Jesus is now training His disciples to take form on earth. As the birds express their life through their outward forms and as aquatic creatures express their life through their outward forms, the Lord Jesus desires that His saints express Him with a definite form on earth. The Lord desires His saints, wherever they are, to express His life through their forms. This life is the same life. But in their outward forms, there is a difference between birds and aquatic creatures. Birds and aquatic creatures receive the same life. But their forms are different. Hence, there are different expressions of the same inward life. All the life that the saints receive comes from the Lord Jesus; there was no difference in the beginning. However, because of differences in the saints' character, they express the Lord's life in different ways. We see this clearly in the parable of the sower. Although the same kind of seed is sown, although the life within the seed is the same, and although the fields are all good, eventually, some bear thirtyfold, some sixtyfold, and some a hundredfold.

Everyone receives the same life from the Lord. There are different expressions to this life because the “outlets” of this life are different.

Hence, in the work of this day the Lord Jesus charges His saints to prove His life on earth and express His life through their character. This is very crucial. Unless we express the heavenly life practically on earth, the life, which we obtained through regeneration and is derived from the Lord’s death, resurrection, and ascension, will not be firmly joined to us.

Life by itself cannot have any experience. The most important thing is to have outward form. A bird’s life experiences the bird’s living through the bird’s outward form. For a saint to practically receive the Lord’s life and express this life on earth is a kind of training. The experience of the birds and the aquatic creatures begins from the day that the life within them makes them a bird or an aquatic creature. From that day the birds and the aquatic creatures are able to live out their living and acquire experience. This relates to the training of the saints. The work of the Lord Jesus now is to train His saints in life. Before this training comes about, however, the saints must first be joined to the Lord’s life.

**VI. The work on the sixth day
signifies the coming again
of the Lord Jesus and His kingship**

In the work on the sixth day God created Adam in His own image and charged Adam to rule over the whole earth. Five days of work had passed. All the things on earth were ready. All the objects in heaven were also set. The food and dwelling that man needed were all prepared one after another. Then God created man. The most important point in the creation of man is that he is created in the image of God. Man on earth is a representative of God. Man is God’s expression. This relates to the Lord Jesus’ coming again.

The Lord Jesus is the last Adam and the second Man. The first Adam was a type of Him. The first Adam was created in the image of God. Here we see a type of the coming of the Lord Jesus. When the Lord Jesus comes back, His Body, which is His church, will also be consummated. His whole church will become His image at the time He comes back. First John 3:2 says, “If He is manifested, we will be like Him.” When the Lord Jesus appears again, His

church will be fully like Him. Just as Adam was created in the image of God, the Body of the last Adam, the church, will also be fully like God when the Lord comes back. The Lord's second coming will cause every saint to take up His image, the image of a glorious body given by Him.

On the sixth day Eve was created as a counterpart of Adam. Eve is a type of the church. When the Lord Jesus comes back again, the church will be consummated and will be offered to Christ as His counterpart. She will rule with Christ over the world. Eve was created on the sixth day. The church will be consummated at the time the Lord comes back. The church will also become the Lord's counterpart when the Lord comes back. The creation of Adam and Eve on the sixth day is a clear reference to the events at the second coming of the Lord Jesus.

God not only created Adam and Eve; He made them to rule over the created world. All authority was committed to them. God does not rule over the world directly. Rather, He has committed the authority to rule over the world to Adam. When the Lord Jesus comes back again, He will set up the millennial kingdom on earth to rule over the whole world. Just as the creation of Adam in the preceding paragraph relates to the Lord's coming, the commissioning of Adam to rule over the world relates to His kingship. In the millennium God will hand over all authority to Christ and cause Him to rule. Philippians 2:9 says, "Therefore also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name." There are many other Scriptures that speak of God giving authority to Christ to be the King over all things and to rule over all things in the millennium.

Adam shared all his authority with Eve. Although it was Adam who directly ruled over the world, Eve helped Adam in being the ruler. When the Lord Jesus is King in the millennium, He will exercise His kingship. Yet the Bible repeatedly tells us that Christians are the Lord Jesus' Eve and that they will reign with Him and share in His glory. He will rule over all things, and in the same way, Christians will share in ruling over the world. Although there may be a difference of five or ten cities, our reigning with Him is an immutable fact.

The birth, death, resurrection, ascension, and life-giving of the Lord Jesus are the crucial elements in His work. If this is all that there is to His work, and if there is no second coming or reigning with Him, a Christian can only have

hope in this age and will be poorer than all other men. The saints suffer today in the world. They will enjoy their blessing in the future in heaven! Heaven may be good, but it can never make up for the sufferings experienced by the saints in the world today. Consequently, the Lord Jesus must come back again to this world. In this world He was harassed, despised, persecuted, and crucified. In this world He will receive His glory in the future. It will not be on another planet in the heavens. When Christians suffer with the Lord today, they are suffering in the world. In the future they will also receive glory in the world. This is why the Lord Jesus' coming and His kingship are necessary for Himself and His saints.

CHAPTER SEVEN
THE STORY OF CREATION
AND THE TRUTH
CONCERNING THE DISPENSATIONS

If we want to understand the Bible clearly, we must divide the Bible into different dispensations. The revelation of God in the Bible differs according to different dispensations. God uses a particular way to deal with people in each dispensation. If these dispensations are mixed together in the study of the Bible, some will see many contradictions and find many passages that are difficult to understand because they do not realize that God's dealing with man differs according to different dispensations. Unbelievers think that these contradictions exist because the writers of the Bible had an incomplete concept of God. They think that the concept of God gradually evolved until it became bright and clear at the time of the Lord Jesus. This is the tone of unbelievers who try to discredit the Bible as God's revelation. We cannot accept this, but we admit that there is a progression of doctrine in the different books in the Bible. What we see only faintly at the beginning of the Old Testament is manifested, in the clear light of the New Testament, as being short of full revelation. This is not because of man's changing concept of God, but rather because God's revelation to man is different. God's dealing with man differs according to a particular dispensation; therefore, God gradually reveals Himself to man and also reveals what kind of conduct man should have during the dispensation in which he is living.

We must divide the Bible into distinct dispensations. Many people think that the only dispensational division in the Bible is the one between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Although this division is an excellent help for study, it is not perfect. All the scholars who have studied the Bible carefully have seen that there are seven dispensations in the Bible. This analysis is not based on man's idea. By diligent study, one can see that there is a natural division [of seven dispensations] in the Bible.

The first of the seven dispensations is the dispensation of innocence, covering the period of time when Adam and Eve were in the garden of Eden. The second dispensation is the dispensation of conscience, covering the

period from the time after Adam was driven out of paradise and received a conscience until the end of the flood. The third dispensation is the dispensation of human rule, covering the period of time after the flood until the scattering at Babel. The fourth dispensation is the dispensation of promise, covering the period between the call of Abraham and the exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt. The fifth dispensation is the dispensation of law, covering the period from the exodus from Egypt and the giving of the law at Mount Sinai until the time of the cross. The sixth dispensation is the dispensation of grace, covering the period of time from the death of the Lord Jesus and the descension of the Holy Spirit until the rapture of the saints. The seventh dispensation is the dispensation of the kingdom, beginning with the second coming of the Lord Jesus and the establishment of the kingdom on the earth until the end of the millennium. After the millennium the heavens and the earth will be consumed by fire. Then God will make a new heaven and new earth where the righteous will dwell. This will be the beginning of eternity.

The two most important dispensations in the Bible are those of law and grace. These dispensations are the longest and most frequently mentioned in the Bible. The original condition of man, God's covenant with man, man's fall, and God's judgment are all different in these dispensations. If we do not separate the different dispensations when we read the Bible, we will see many contradictions. God deals differently with people in each dispensation. If we do not carefully differentiate between the dispensations, we might expect the people in this dispensation to keep the law. This would create confusion and cause us to misunderstand the meaning of the Bible. The seven dispensations of the Bible tell us the different ways in which God dealt with man. The greatest purpose of God in these seven dispensations, so far as man is concerned, is to show that man should be saved by grace and not by works. Galatians 3 tells us that when God gave His promise to Abraham, His purpose was that man would be saved through grace. At that time man did not know that he was sinful and would not admit that he was powerless to save himself through good works. To show man that he was sinful and could not do good, God added the law after He gave His promise to Abraham so that man might know himself. All of God's commandments and charges in the law show man's inward impotence and defilement so that he would be willing to receive grace and be saved. According to the nature of man, no one likes grace. All men think that they are capable in themselves, capable of good works, without sin in themselves, clean, and capable of being saved through good works. For this

reason God must first cause man to know himself; only then will he admit that he is helpless, only then will he confess that he is a sinner and receive God's grace without any pride. God spent more than fifteen hundred years in the dispensation of the law to prove that no one in the world could keep His law or do good. After a test of fifteen centuries God manifested His real purpose in the dispensation of grace: man can be saved through believing in His grace. This grace is given to the world through the Lord Jesus' death for sinners. What a pity that even today there are many people who still do not know that they are full of sins. They are still planning to be saved through works. These people should return to the dispensation of law and be tested in order to know themselves!

We can only say this much concerning the teaching of the seven dispensations. Now we want to point out why the story of creation in Genesis 1 expresses the teaching of these seven dispensations in the Bible. There are many writers in Europe and in the United States who are more capable than I and who have written many discourses on this point. I do not believe that I can write better than they, but I just want to mention these points briefly in order to help those who do not yet know this teaching.

Before we go any further, we must first mention one verse in particular. We know that in the seventh dispensation there will be one thousand years. This is the millennial kingdom, and Revelation 20 clearly tells us that the dispensation of the kingdom will actually last one thousand years. Many misunderstand the Sabbath of creation to be a type of this millennial kingdom. Since the millennial Sabbath day is one thousand years, according to 2 Peter 3:8 they think that the previous six days are also six thousand years. They think the seven days of creation are a type of seven thousand years of world history. Their basis is "that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years." This is a mistake, and I do not believe this myself. The teaching in 2 Peter 3:8 does not tell us that the Lord considers one day to be a thousand years. The purpose of this verse is to make clear to the saints that time is not a problem to the eternal God. He is the eternal God; therefore, time has no effect on Him. If we say that the seven days of creation mean seven thousand years because the Lord considers one day as a thousand years, then how do we explain the following clause which says that the Lord considers "a thousand years like one day." Therefore, the real meaning of the verse that the Lord considers "a thousand years like one day" is that in His longsuffering a thousand years is not much. As far as His delaying is concerned, the Lord considers that "one

day is like a thousand years.” This means that a delay of one day for Him is like a delay of a thousand years. This speaks of the faithfulness of the Lord’s promise and the broadness of His grace. This is proven in the following verse. We should not take the word of the Bible out of context to prove our ideas.

Now we return to our theme. Genesis 1:1 says, “God created the heaven and the earth.” This signifies the dispensation of innocence. What God created was perfect, good, and without blemish. During the dispensation of innocence, mankind was also innocent. However, the heaven and the earth created by God did not remain in the same condition as they were when they came out of God’s hand. Verse 2 tells us that “the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.” The earth created by God changed from its former appearance. It was judged by God; therefore, it fell into a state of desolation. The former, excellent perfection was lost. This depicts the situation after man was driven away from the garden of Eden. Man sinned, fell, followed Satan’s word, and rebelled against God’s commandment. They received God’s judgment and wrath. They no longer had the right to live in the beautiful paradise of Eden. They were driven away in nakedness, sufferings, and curses. Although they were covered with coats of skins, they lost their original countenance. Henceforth, the only way to describe their condition was that in the sweat of the face he would eat bread, and in sorrow she would bring forth children and be under oppression. This is the beginning and the conclusion of the first dispensation—the dispensation of innocence.

The work of the first day is a type of the second dispensation, the dispensation of conscience, because the work on this day clearly shows the condition before the flood. Although light was shining, the shining neither interfered with nor helped the creation. The shining of the light only revealed the desolation. At this time even though man received a conscience to differentiate good from evil and understand right and wrong, they did not have God’s help to restrain their sinful nature or the sinful deeds issuing from their sinful nature. Aside from revealing man’s sinfulness, the conscience does not keep one from doing evil. The work of the conscience is like the shining of God’s light into the sinners; it reveals one by one the failures of the sinner and fully exposes even the smallest item. Just as the light of the first day was not able to render help to the desolate world, the conscience is unable to render us any help.

The work of the second day was the creation of the heavens. It is not difficult to find out the meaning of the heavens in the Bible. Daniel 4:26 says, "After you have come to know that the heavens do rule." According to the Bible, the heavens mainly refer to the position of authority. Water is above the heavens. If we study the properties of water, we know that water is the weakest, most uncertain substance. The expression "weak as water" indicates this. The heavens and water combine to mean weak and uncertain authority. There is authority, but it is weak and uncertain. The work of this day is a type of the dispensation of human rule. After the flood God committed a governing authority to man. Before the flood, when Cain's brother died, he said, "I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen. 4:9). After the flood, God commanded, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed" (9:6). This clearly speaks of human government because God committed to man the authority to execute a death sentence. There was authority, but the man who had the authority was as weak as water. The commandment was committed to Noah, but after a short time Noah exposed his own weakness in the matter of drunkenness and sleeping in nakedness (v. 21). Although God did not commend His work on the second day as being good, His purpose was good. Human government was established by God. He could not bless man's government, but through government He caused man to receive the blessing.

The work of the third day is a type of the dispensation of promise. In the work on this day, the dry land was separated from the waters. According to the teachings of Daniel 7:2-3 and 17 and Revelation 17:15, we know that the waters refer to the Gentile part of humanity. In the Bible the dry land is a type of the Jewish nation. We can see this frequently in the books of the prophets, because every time the prophets mention "this land," it refers to the land of Judah. Therefore, the separation of dry land from the waters signifies the children of Israel being separated from the Gentiles. The dispensation of promise began with the calling of Abraham. The call to leave Ur of the Chaldees was like the dry land being separated from the waters. Beginning with Abraham, the children of Israel became a people of God's special choice. His call to be separated from the Gentiles was the beginning of the separation of the children of Israel by God. God's purpose in separating the dry land from the waters was for it to bear fruit. This brings us to the second half of the work on the third day.

We have previously mentioned that the work of the third day is divided into two halves. In the first half, God separated the dry land from the waters; in

the second half, God caused the land to produce fruit. The first half of the work is a type of the fourth dispensation, the dispensation of promise. The second half of the work on the third day is a type of the fifth dispensation, the dispensation of law. God gave the law to the children of Israel for them to bear fruit. The law was like a plow to till the land deeply so that it could produce fruit. When God gave the law to the children of Israel, His original intention was for them to bear fruit. Water cannot bear fruit. Similarly God did not demand that the Gentiles bear fruit unto Him. God paid attention to the land. Through the law He sowed seeds in the nation of Israel. As a householder He often sent His servants to the husbandmen to ask for the fruits. We know that very little fruit was produced by the children of Israel. Nevertheless, God used them to produce fruits because “salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22). The Lord Jesus was a man under law (Gal. 4:4). He kept the perfect law and produced the most excellent fruit. He was a real Israelite. As for the rest of the children of Israel, they will produce fruits in the millennial kingdom.

The work of the fourth day is the type of the sixth dispensation, the dispensation of grace. The heavenly luminaries clearly speak of Christ and His church. This represents the present church age. Christ is like the sun who appears in the heart of men through the power of the Holy Spirit. In this way men understand and receive His grace. During this period the church has a responsibility to reflect Christ’s light. The present age is a long dark night. During this period Christ has ascended to the heavens. The church and saints are the only luminaries on the earth. We know that all the luminaries are from the heavens. For us to shine before men means that we should be seen as people of another world. Others will see that Christ is not of the world and that we also are not of the world. Our living should also bear the heavenly nature with Christ shining from our face through our joy and satisfaction in Him. The entire testimony of the church during this age of grace is related to this shining. What a pity that the light today has become so dim and unclear! The Bridegroom delays, and the light has become hazy. Apart from the lamps of the virgins, what other light is there in the world? The shining of the light of the gospel is the characteristic of the dispensation of grace.

The work on the fifth day is a type of the great tribulation period which starts at the end of the church age. There is a short period between the end of the sixth dispensation and the beginning of the seventh dispensation called the great tribulation. It is a time of testing for the inhabitants of the earth.

In the work on this day, God again worked in the waters. At that time billows and waves rose in the sea. This situation is described in Psalm 93:3-4. "The floods have lifted up, O Lord, / the floods have lifted up their voice; / the floods lift up their waves." This was the original condition on this day. But "the Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, / yea, than the mighty waves of the sea" (Psa. 93:4).

This is the day of trial for the world because at this time God will cause trial to come on the whole inhabited earth (Rev. 3:10). The waters refer to the Gentiles. At this time the Gentiles will become loose in their own ways and rebel against the Lord. Therefore, they will be under trials from God. "Upon the earth anguish of nations in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the billows, men fainting from fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth" (Luke 21:25b-26a). "When Your judgments are in the earth, / The inhabitants of the world learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9). Therefore, the waters will be teeming with many living things. By this time God will have called all of his heavenly people home because God wants to prepare His earthly people on the earth. Although the duration of this period will not be long, God will do a preparation work, because He wants all the inhabitants on the earth to enjoy the blessings in the days when His righteousness and justice reign.

While the inhabitants on the earth are being tried, God will be working in the air. God not only created living creatures in the waters, He also made winged fowls in the air on this day. The spiritual meaning of this is not difficult to understand. The Bible tells us that when the inhabitants of the earth, the Gentiles, are under trials and being judged by God, the saints will be received by the Lord in the air. "Look at the birds of heaven. They do not sow nor reap nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father nourishes them. Are you not of more value than they?" (Matt. 6:26). "Are not two sparrows sold for an assarion? And not one of them will fall to the earth apart from your Father...Therefore do not fear; you are of more value than many sparrows" (Matt. 10:29, 31). Does this not refer to Christians? The winged fowls are actually animals in the heavens. Although they sometimes come to the earth, eventually they return home. The place where they abide and fly is in the air. God has ordained that winged fowls would fly above the earth in the air. At the time of the tribulation, "the Lord Himself, with a shout of command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are

living, who are left remaining, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and thus we will be always with the Lord” (1 Thes. 4:16-17). The winged fowls will be returning home soon.

In the work on the sixth day, God created Adam and Eve and charged them to rule the earth. This is a type of the seventh dispensation, the dispensation of the kingdom. The apostle Paul tells us in Romans 5:14 that Adam was a type of Christ who was to come. He also tells us in Ephesians 5:25 and 32 that Eve is a type of the church, who will be offered to Christ without spot or wrinkle. During the seventh dispensation, Christ, as the Son of Man, will sit on His throne with His people (Rev. 1:13; 3:21). This kind of ruling involves God ruling through man. This man is the man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5).

In the work on this day, we see many living creatures produced on the earth. The living creatures in the waters and the winged fowls in the air have been mentioned. God will turn His attention to the children of Israel again. They are “the land.” During the millennium, not only will Gentiles who have passed through the great tribulation become subjects of the kingdom, and not only will the saints reign with Christ, but also the children of Israel will become prosperous again. They will receive God’s blessing which was prophesied through the prophets; they will receive what God promised when He made a covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. “In the days to come Jacob will take root; / Israel will blossom and bud; / And they will fill the face of the earth with their produce” (Isa. 27:6). At this time God will sow Jezreel in the land (Hosea 2:22b-23a).

The rest on the seventh day is a type of the new heavens and new earth, and of eternity after the millennium. Seven dispensations have passed. What remains is the rest. This rest is not a type of the millennium, because the millennium is not a rest. God rested on the seventh day and did not work anymore. But the millennium is still not the time for God to rest; not until the new heavens and new earth will God have rest. Therefore, the day of rest is not the type of the millennium.

There is not another day after the seventh day. All the work will have been completed. The heart’s desire of God will have been accomplished. He blessed the day of rest. According to God’s thought, there are only seven days. There is no need to continue another day after seven days. The work of redemption will have been accomplished. All things will have been accomplished

according to God's eternal purpose. There will be no more need for time after the completed work. God will admire Himself in all the work He has done among the creatures and will bless them forever. Before the new heavens and new earth with the eternal rest come, however, God's work is not complete. His eyes delight to see His work of redemption being fully completed. Before it is fully complete, He cannot be satisfied. Truly, how can God have rest before such a consummation? He will rest when He sees His redeemed people completely joined to the unique, appointed One, receiving all authority and blessing. This is eternity. Eternity rests in God's satisfaction and praise. When will this time be?