The MINISTRY of the Word

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BANNERS AND BANNER SONGS

2011 WINTER TRAINING BANNERS

(1) Whenever God's people exalt Christ, giving Him the preeminence in every aspect of their living, there is restoration and revival.

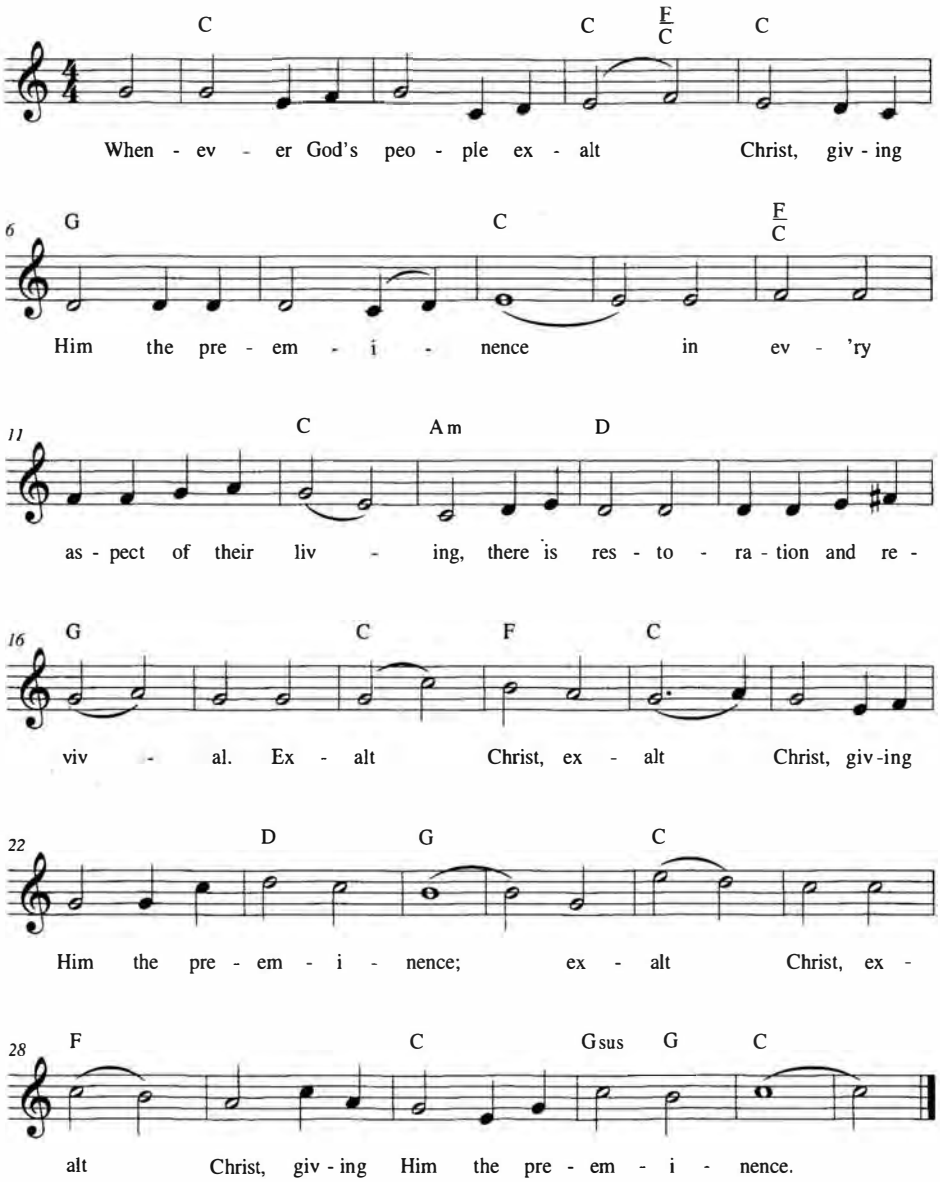
(2) To take God as our habitation, our eternal dwelling place, is the highest and fullest experience of God.

(3) God's heart is set on Zion, the city of God, with Christ within it, and on Zion we have the church as the Body of Christ and God's economy for His testimony.

(4) The praise in the Psalms issues in the consummate praise with Hallelujahs because the earth has been fully recovered by God and brought under the reign of Christ with the kingdom.

2011 Winter Training Banner Songs

Banner 1



Banner 2

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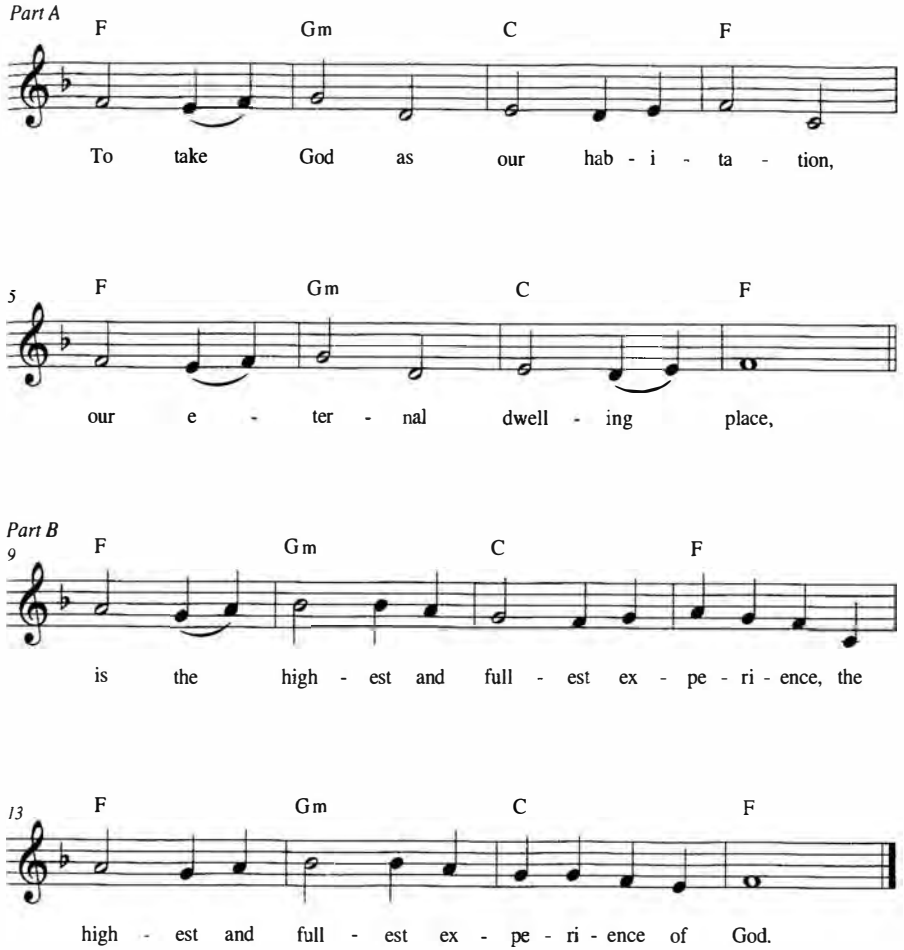

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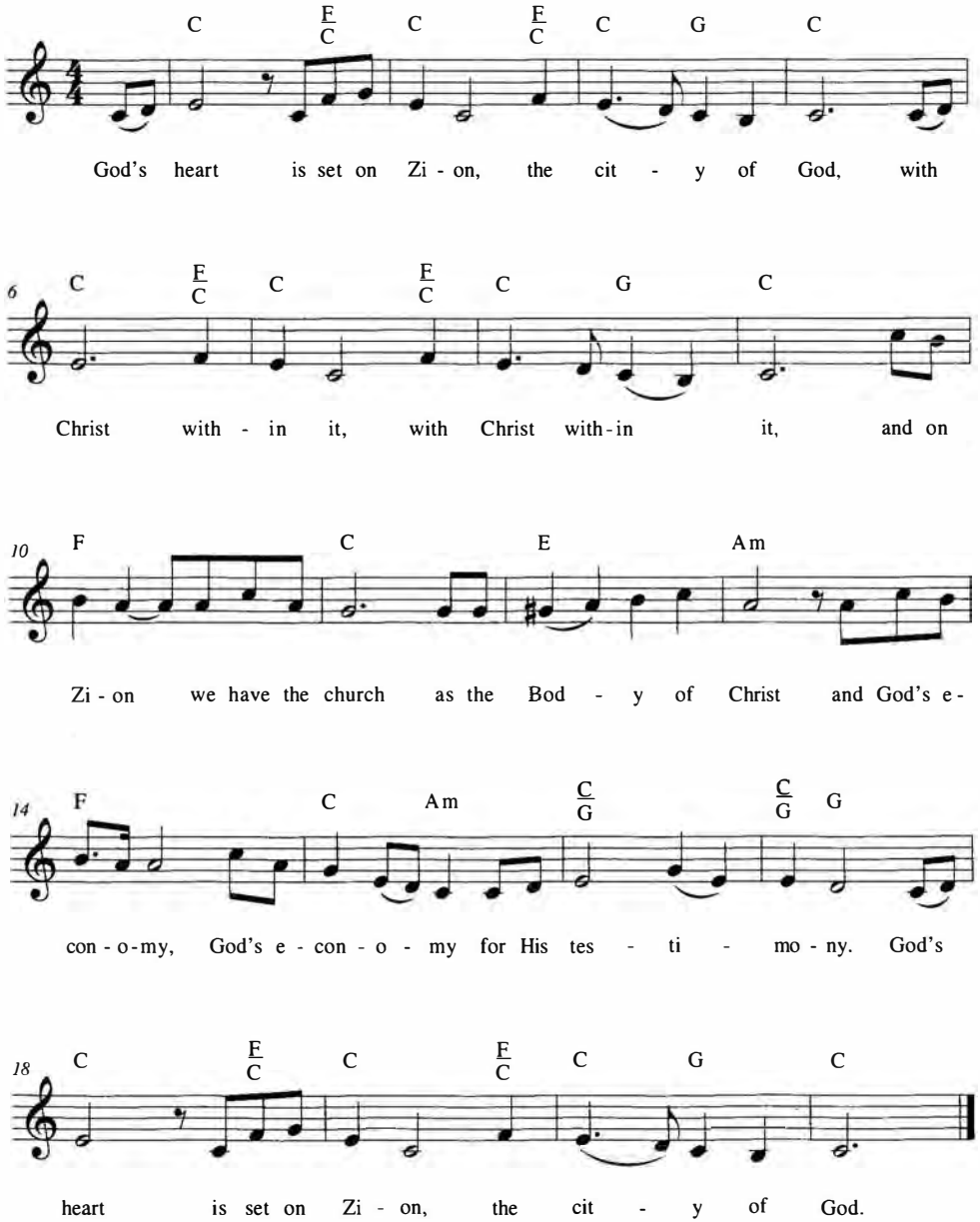

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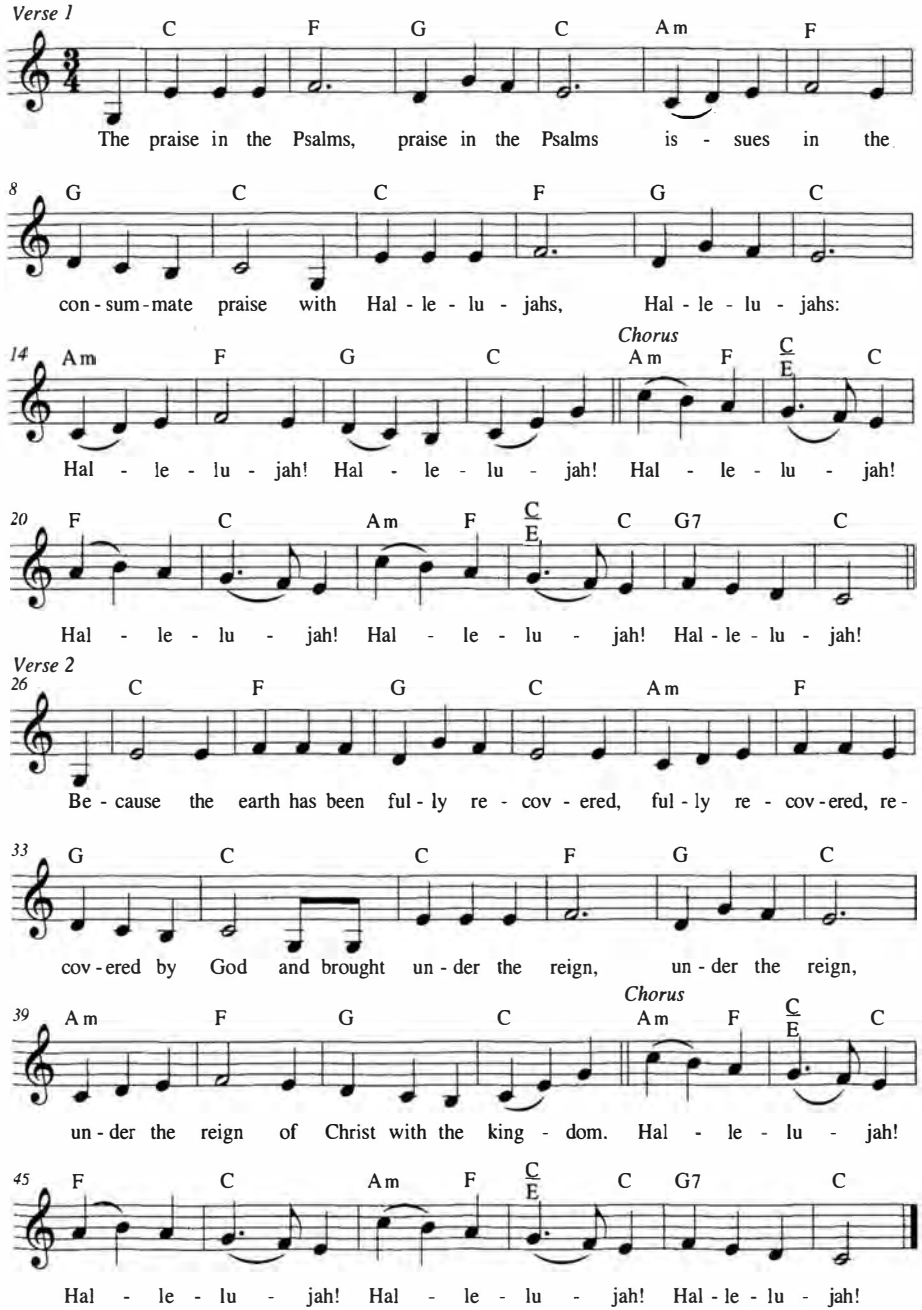


Outline of the Messages
for the Winter Training
December 26-31, 2011

General Subject:
CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OF THE PSALMS
(2)

The Need for Christ as Our Unique Portion and Desire to Be Properly Appreciated and Exalted by Us (Message 1)

Scripture Reading: Psa. 73; 80

I. The intrinsic reason for the desolation of God's house was that Christ was not properly appreciated and exalted by God's people; they did not give Him the preeminence, the first place, in everything—Psa. 74:1-11; 2 Chron. 36:19; Col. 1:18; Rev. 2:4:
   A. Their failure to give Christ the preeminence and to honor and exalt Him was the cause of their becoming sinful and evil—Jer. 2:13.
   B. The desolation of the church as the house of God always issues from the negligence of the experience of Christ—1 Cor. 1:9-13, 23-24, 30; cf. 3 John 9.
   C. The real revival in the church depends upon everyone in the church life giving Christ the first place in everything—Psa. 73:25; 80:15, 17; cf. Hab. 3:2; Hosea 6:1-3:
      1. To give the Lord the first place in all things is to love Him with the first love, the best love, regarding Him as everything in our life—Rev. 2:4; Col. 1:18; 3:11.
      2. We must not love anyone or anything above the Lord, including our soul-life—Matt. 10:37-39; Rev. 12:11.
      3. We love the Lord because He first loved us, infusing His loving essence into us and generating within us the love with which we love Him—1 John 4:19, 7-8, 16:
         a. Christ's love of affection constrains us to live and to die to Him—2 Cor. 5:14-15; Rom. 14:7-9.

b. Christ's love makes the believers martyrs for Him—Rev. 2:10; 12:11; Rom. 8:35-37.

4. We love the Lord according to the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity as love—5:5; 8:39, 35; 15:30.

D. The enjoyment of God in the house and city of God can be maintained and preserved only when Christ is properly appreciated and exalted by God's people:

1. An idol is anything within us that we love more than the Lord and that replaces the Lord in our life—Ezek. 14:3.
2. Any thing, matter, or person that preoccupies us and keeps us from the full enjoyment of Christ is an idol—1 John 5:21.

II. Psalm 73 is on the sufferings of the seeking saints and unveils God, Christ, as our unique portion and desire—1 Cor. 1:2:

A. Psalm 73:2-16 records the sufferings and puzzles of the God-seeking psalmist:

1. The psalmist was nearly stumbled by the situation concerning the prosperity of the wicked—vv. 2-3.
2. The psalmist said that he had purified his heart in vain and that he had been plagued all day long—vv. 13-14.
3. If the psalmist had spoken to others about his situation, they would have been stumbled—v. 15.
4. The more the psalmist considered his situation, trying to understand it, the more he was troubled and perplexed—v. 16.

B. Through the revelation given in the sanctuary of God, the psalmist obtained the solution to his troubling and perplexing situation—vv. 17-28:

1. The sanctuary of God is the place where we may obtain the revelation that we need—Lev. 24:2-4; Dan. 2:17-23; cf. 5:12, 14.
2. God's sanctuary is in our spirit and in the church—1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:22.
3. We enter into the sanctuary of God by exercising our spirit and living in the church—1 Tim. 4:7; 3:15.
4. Once we are in the sanctuary—in the spirit and in the church—we receive another view, a particular perception—Psa. 73:17-20:

a. Certain secrets in the Bible were not made known to us until we came into the twofold sanctuary—our spirit as the personal sanctuary and the church as the corporate sanctuary.

b. God's way is made known in the sanctuary; when we exercise our spirit and live in the church, God's way becomes clear to us—77:13.

C. Psalm 73:25-26 is the revelation given in the sanctuary of God to the suffering and seeking saints:

1. "Whom do I have in heaven but You? / And besides You there is nothing I desire on earth"—v. 25:

a. Verse 25 reveals that God's pure seeker would have God as his only possession in heaven and his unique desire on earth:

1) God was the psalmist's unique goal; the psalmist did not care for anything except God and gaining Him.
2) In this matter Paul was the same as the psalmist, counting all things as refuse in order to gain Christ—Phil. 3:8.

b. The psalmist was pure in heart—Psa. 73:1:

1) To be pure in heart is to have God as our one goal—Matt. 5:8.
2) A pure heart is one that is set on nothing but God:
   a) God Himself is the reality; anything other than God is vanity.
   b) If we continue to seek something other than God, our heart is set on vanity.
   c) Only a seeker with a pure heart can say that he has nothing but God and desires nothing besides God.

2. "My flesh and my heart fail, / But God is the rock of my heart and my portion forever"—Psa. 73:26:

a. The psalmist realized that God was working to deprive him of all material things so that he might enjoy God in an absolute way:

1) Through the revelation given in the sanctuary, he learned why God does not allow the seeking saints to prosper as the worldly people do.

2) God intends that nothing should distract us from the absolute enjoyment of Himself.

3) God's intention with the seeking saints is to remove all material blessings and physical enjoyments so that they may find everything in God.

b. When the psalmist went into the sanctuary of God, he received the revelation that nothing in heaven or on earth can be his enjoyment but God Himself, and he took God as his all—the rock of his heart and his portion forever—Deut. 32:4, 15, 18, 30-31; Psa. 18:2, 31, 46; 31:2-3; 61:2; 62:2, 6-7; 71:3; 78:35; 89:26; 92:15; 94:22; 95:1; Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 10:4; Eph. 3:17a; Col. 1:12; Eph. 3:8.

III. Psalm 80 reveals that restoration comes by exalting Christ:

A. In verses 1 through 7 the psalmist prays that the Shepherd of Israel would give ear (v. 1); in both verses 3 and 7 he prays, "O God, restore us; / And cause Your face to shine, and we will be saved."

B. In verses 8 through 13 the psalmist speaks regarding God's dealing with Israel as His vine, which He brought out of Egypt and planted; whereas the vine once was flourishing, it eventually became desolate.

C. In verses 14 through 19 the psalmist asks God to visit His vine (Israel) for the sake of Christ as the man of His right hand:

1. *Son* in verse 15 refers to the Lord Jesus; when He became a man, He joined Himself to Israel—He is "the son whom You have strengthened for Yourself"—Hosea 11:1; Matt. 2:15.

2. In Psalm 80:17 the psalmist goes on to say, "Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, / Upon the son of man whom You have strengthened for Yourself"; this verse reveals that Christ is at the right hand of God, the highest place in the universe; the first place, the highest position, the preeminence, has been given to Christ—Mark 16:19; Acts 2:33; 5:31; Phil. 2:9-11.

3. The way to be restored from desolation is to exalt Christ as the full solution to every problem—1 Cor. 1:9, 24, 30:

a. Whenever God's people do not give Christ the preeminence, the house of God, signifying the church, becomes desolate.

b. Whenever God's people exalt Christ, giving Him the preeminence in every aspect of their living, there is restoration and revival—Psa. 80:18-19.

4. Christ is now at the right hand of God (Rom. 8:34; Col. 3:1; 1 Pet. 3:22), and whoever calls upon Him as such a One will be restored and revived (Acts 2:33, 21; Rom. 10:12-13).

5. As regenerated people, we need to come together in the meetings of the church to exalt Christ by praising, singing, and shouting—1 Cor. 14:26:

a. Instead of being silent, we should exercise our spiritual birthright to exalt Christ.

b. The more we exalt Christ, giving Him the preeminence in everything, the more we will be revived and restored.

MESSAGE ONE

THE NEED FOR CHRIST AS OUR UNIQUE PORTION AND DESIRE TO BE PROPERLY APPRECIATED AND EXALTED BY US

Prayer: Lord Jesus, we love You with all of our heart. Thank You for bringing us to another time of training. Thank You for Your mercy on each one of us. Thank You for keeping us in Your recovery all these years. We consecrate the first message and this whole series of messages to You. We pray that You would release everything that is on Your heart. Release all of Your burdens into our being. Make our heart a duplication of Your heart. We especially pray that through this first message You would be our unique portion and our unique desire, that You would be properly appreciated and exalted by us. We exalt You and give You the preeminence, the first place. We humble ourselves before You. Dear Lord, speak to each one of us. Speak to us corporately and individually. Speak a Body-building word. Build up Your Body, and prepare us more to be Your bride. Hasten Your coming.

As we again come to the book of Psalms, we need to be reminded of the governing principle in interpreting the Psalms. This principle is seen in Luke 24 where the Lord was speaking with His disciples in resurrection. In verse 44 He said, "All the things written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and Psalms concerning Me must be fulfilled." We need to pay particular attention to the words *concerning Me*. This means that what is written in the Psalms is concerning Christ. All the things concerning Christ must be fulfilled. In these messages, as we consider the second half of the Psalms, we will see things that have been fulfilled, things that are being fulfilled, and things that will be fulfilled concerning Christ and His heart's desire. We praise the Lord that we are in the history of God's move as we are studying the crystals in the book of Psalms.

After the Lord said that all the things concerning Him had to be fulfilled, Luke 24:45 says that "He opened their mind to understand the Scriptures." We need to pray, "Lord, open my mind. I humble myself before You. Open my mind to understand the Scriptures."

The Lord was saying that all the things written concerning Him in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms—the entire Old Testament—must be fulfilled. This indicates that the entire Old Testament is a revelation of Christ and that He is its center and content. Thus, we may also say that the entire book of Psalms is a revelation of Christ. He is the center and content of the book of Psalms. He is the centrality and the universality of the Psalms.

In the Psalms we see Christ as the embodiment of the Triune God, as the house of God, signified by the tabernacle and the temple. He is also the kingdom of God signified by the city of God, Jerusalem. Furthermore, Christ is the Lord of lords and the King of kings. He is working and moving in us to cause us to follow Him as the Lamb wherever He goes over the entire earth, to preach the gospel of the kingdom to the whole inhabited earth for a testimony to all the nations, and then the end shall come. The central thought of the Psalms is that God is embodied in Christ, Christ is in His Body, and His Body is God's house and God's city for God's kingdom over the whole earth.

The title of this message is "The Need for Christ as Our Unique Portion and Desire to Be Properly Appreciated and Exalted by Us." If we do not properly appreciate and exalt Christ, degradation will come in. In every local church throughout the earth, we need Christ to be our unique portion and desire. We need to properly appreciate and exalt Him.

THE INTRINSIC REASON FOR THE DESOLATION OF GOD'S HOUSE BEING THAT CHRIST WAS NOT PROPERLY APPRECIATED AND EXALTED BY GOD'S PEOPLE; THEIR NOT GIVING HIM THE PREEMINENCE, THE FIRST PLACE, IN EVERYTHING

The intrinsic reason for the desolation of God's house was that Christ was not properly appreciated and exalted by God's people; they did not give Him the preeminence, the first place, in everything (74:1-11; 2 Chron. 36:19; Col. 1:18; Rev. 2:4).

Giving the Lord the Preeminence, the First Place, in Everything

We need to pause here and insert an additional word concerning giving the Lord the preeminence, the first place, in everything. I am looking to the Lord and am very exercised, lest we take this matter for granted. What does it mean to give the Lord the first place, the preeminence, in

everything? We may say, "Lord, I give You the first place in everything. I give You the preeminence in everything," but what does this mean practically? I would like to present to you twelve ways we can give the Lord the preeminence, the first place, in everything in our lives—in our family life, in our church life, and in our daily life—for the building up of the church as the kingdom of God.

Loving the Lord with the First and Best Love

To give the Lord the first place in all things is to love Him with the first love, the best love, being constrained with His love and regarding Him as everything in our life (v. 4; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Mark 12:30; Psa. 73:25-26). Revelation 2:4 says, "I have one thing against you, that you have left your first love." This is what the Lord said to the church in Ephesus. We do not want to be those who leave our first love. Second Corinthians 5:14-15 says, "The love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all that those who live may no longer live to themselves but to Him who died for them and has been raised." Paul says that the love of Christ constrains us so that we would no longer live to ourselves but to Him who died for us and has been raised. God commands us to love Him. When the Lord Jesus was asked, "Which is the first commandment of all?" (Mark 12:28), the Lord answered, "You shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength" (v. 30). When Sister M. E. Barber read this verse, she said, "Thank the Lord that He commanded me to love Him." We need to thank the Lord for this. Psalm 73:25-26 says, "Whom do I have in heaven but You? / And besides You there is nothing I desire on earth. / My flesh and my heart fail, / But God is the rock of my heart and my portion forever." We need to say this by faith.

To give the Lord the first place in all things is to love Him with the first love. The first love is the best love. This means that we are constrained by His love, regarding Him as everything in our life. Whatever we love is what we regard as everything in our life. Before we were saved, we may have regarded a person, a matter, or a thing as everything in our life. Now that we love the Lord Jesus, we love Him with the first love and regard Him and take Him as everything in our life.

The Lord's demand for us to hold on to the first love means that we should consider His love to us and keep our love for Him to be forever fresh. His love for us should be fresh to us. Our love for Him should be fresh to Him. Let us refresh and renew our love toward Him. We need to pray, "Lord, show me Your love that I might love You with Your love and with a fresh and new sevenfold intensified love for You."

Repenting and Doing the First Works

To give the Lord the first place in all things is to repent and do the first works (Rev. 2:5; 2 Cor. 4:5). After speaking of the first love in Revelation 2:4, the Lord says in verse 5, "Remember therefore where you have fallen from and repent and do the first works; but if not, I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place, unless you repent." We need to repent and do the first works. Have you considered what are "the first works"? Verse 4 speaks of the first love, and verse 5 of the first works. The first works are the works that issue out of the first love. A work that issues out of a heart filled with the zeal of the Lord's love is precious in the Lord's eyes. In other words, the first works should come out of the zeal of our love for the Lord. We love the Lord so much that we do the first works, and those works come out of our love for Him. They are works that are done out of our love for the Lord.

In that day, when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ, we will not be praised for the greatness or the volume of our work. What He will investigate is how much of what we have done was out of our love for Him. Only those works that are motivated by love are of gold, silver, and precious stones. Then we will not have empty assemblies but churches that are golden lampstands in reality as the corporate expressions of the Triune God. If we do the first works for the Lord that issue out of the zeal of our first love for Him, then we will have the corporate expression of the Triune God in every locality on this earth as the golden lampstands.

I remember an experience that I had some years ago. At that time we were working on the meeting hall in Irving, Texas. I came home from working all day at my job, and I was very tired. Yet it was my duty that evening to go to the meeting hall to install a vinyl floor in part of the building. I was very tired, but by the Lord's mercy, He constrained me by His love to go to the meeting hall. As I was there spreading the glue on the floor and laying that vinyl flooring, I was telling the Lord, "Lord, I want to do this out of love for You." Whatever we do, whether we arrange chairs, serve the young people, or do some other practical work, we must do it out of love for the Lord. Such are the first works.

Second Corinthians 4:5 says, "We do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake." Paul preached Christ Jesus as the Lord, indicating that he gave the Lord the preeminence, the first place, in everything. Only Christ is the Lord, the One exalted by God to be the Lord of all men. Furthermore, Paul and his co-workers served the saints as slaves for Jesus' sake. They did not preach themselves but Christ Jesus as Lord.

Taking Him as the Fountain of Living Waters

To give the Lord the first place in all things is to take Him as the fountain of living waters (Jer. 2:13). This verse says, "My people have committed two evils: / They have forsaken Me, / The fountain of living waters, / To hew out for themselves cisterns, / Broken cisterns, / Which hold no water." There are two evils in the Lord's sight. The first is to forsake the Lord as the source of our enjoyment. He is the fountain of living waters, the source of our enjoyment. The second evil is to try to hew out cisterns, broken cisterns, which hold no water. This is to try to make, to hew out, things that replace the enjoyment of Christ in our life. Those broken cisterns are idols because they replace the enjoyment of Christ. Every day let us come to Him and say, "Lord, I want to drink of You as the fountain of living waters today." God's intention in His economy is to be the fountain, the source of living waters to dispense Himself into His chosen people for their satisfaction and enjoyment. The goal of this enjoyment is to produce the church, God's counterpart, as God's increase, God's enlargement, to be God's fullness for His expression. This is the heart's desire and the good pleasure of God in His economy. The third way to give the Lord the preeminence is by coming to Him and drinking of Him as the fountain of living waters.

Eating Him as the Tree of Life

To give the Lord the first place in all things is to eat Him as the tree of life—the central matter in the church life (Rev. 2:7). Every day we must eat of Him as the tree of life. Footnote 6 on verse 7 says,

> Eating the tree of life, that is, enjoying Christ as our life supply, should be the primary matter in the church life. The content of the church life depends on the enjoyment of Christ. The more we enjoy Him, the richer the content will be. But to enjoy Christ requires us to love Him with the first love. If we leave our first love toward the Lord, we will miss the enjoyment of Christ and lose the testimony of Jesus; consequently, the lampstand will be removed from us. These three things—loving the Lord, enjoying the Lord, and being the testimony of the Lord—go together.

The primary matter in the church life is eating Christ as the tree of life. This is the way we give the Lord the preeminence in all things. We need to love the Lord with the first love, we need to enjoy the Lord as the tree of life, and spontaneously we will be the testimony of the Lord, the corporate expression of the Triune God as the golden lampstands. I would emphasize this point—to give Christ the preeminence, we have to eat Him every day as the tree of life.

Contacting Him, Receiving Him, and Enjoying Him

To give the Lord the first place in all things is to continually come to Him to contact Him, receive Him, and enjoy Him (Isa. 57:20). Isaiah 57:20 says, "The wicked are like the tossed sea, / For it cannot be calm, / And its waters toss up mire and mud." The footnote on this verse says, "The evil condition of the wicked is that they do not come to the Lord to eat and enjoy the Lord (cf. 55:1-2). They do many things, but they do not come to contact the Lord, to take Him, to receive Him, to taste Him, and to enjoy Him. In the sight of God, nothing is more evil than this." Conversely, to give the Lord the first place in all things is to continually come to Him, contact Him, receive Him, and enjoy Him. To give Him the first place is to contact Him. We come to the meetings to contact God in our spirit, to receive God, and to enjoy God.

If you are not enjoying the Lord, you are like the tossed sea. You cannot be calm, and what comes out of your being is not the pure river of living water but mire and mud. That is terrible. We do not want this to be our case.

The footnote on 57:20 says, "The evil condition of the wicked is that they do not come to the Lord to eat and enjoy the Lord. They do many things..." It is possible for us to do many things in the church life. We can be serving, doing this and that, but if we are not coming to contact the Lord, to take Him, to receive Him, to taste Him, and to enjoy Him, nothing is more evil than this in the sight of the Lord. In God's sight nothing is more evil than our not enjoying Him, not contacting Him, not receiving Him, not taking Him, and not tasting Him.

Taking Him as Our Centrality—Our Holding Center, and Our Universality—Our Everything

To give the Lord the first place in all things is to take Him as our centrality, our holding center, and our universality, our everything (Col. 1:17b, 18b). Colossians 1:17b says, "All things cohere in Him." This means that the entire universe—including all the galaxies, stars, and planets—are held together by Christ. He is the subsisting and holding center of the entire universe. In the same way, our personal universe is held together by Christ. We need to take Him as our center, as our hub, and as our holding center. If we do not take Him as our center, our personal universe falls apart. We need to take Him as our centrality, our holding center, and as our universality, our everything.

We need to take Him as the center of our personal universe, even in the way we dress, style our hair, speak to our spouse, and treat our fellow believers. How do we dress? The brothers and sisters in the full-time training have a dress code, but once they graduate, the dress code is over. Nevertheless, we should have an inner dress code. We should have a dress code that is according to Christ and according to the Spirit.

In the same way, we should cut and style our hair according to Christ as our center and our everything. How do we cut our hair? How do we style our hair? Do we comb our hair? If my hair were sticking straight up as I am speaking to you, you would probably fast and pray for me. You would say, "Why doesn't this brother comb his hair?" This may seem like a small thing, but Brother Lee trained us to take Christ as our center in such small things. In one meeting he said to a brother, "Brother, you need to comb your hair." From that time forward this brother combed his hair. At the same time, we should not take too much time styling our hair. This is practical. We need to take Christ as our center and our everything. Some sisters take a long time to comb and style their hair. They may even have another sister help them. When boys are little, you may have to repeatedly tell them to comb their hair, but when they reach junior-high-school age, they begin to spend a long time combing their hair and using hair products to style their hair. They take too much time. This is practical. In one meeting Brother Lee asked me, "How long do you take to comb your hair?" I had never thought about this before, so I prayed inwardly and desperately for what seemed like a long time before I responded, "Maybe one and a half to two minutes." He said, "Very good." The point is that we have to take Christ as our centrality and universality in everything, including all the small things in our daily life. In this way we practically give the Lord the first place in all things.

Aspiring to Please Him

To give the Lord the first place in all things is to aspire to please Him in all things (2 Cor. 5:9; Col. 1:10; Heb. 11:5-6). Second Corinthians 5:9 says, "Therefore also we are determined, whether at home or abroad, to gain the honor of being well pleasing to Him." We should have this divine determination to gain the honor of being well pleasing to Him. Colossians 1:10 says, "To walk worthily of the Lord to please Him in all things, bearing fruit in every good work and growing by the full knowledge of God." Hebrews 11:5-6 says, "By faith Enoch was translated so that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God had translated him. For before his translation he obtained the testimony that he had been well pleasing to God. But without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to Him, for he who comes forward to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." Before Enoch was translated, he obtained the testimony that he was well pleasing to God. We need to pray, "Lord, before I go to meet You or before You return, I want to obtain the testimony that I am well pleasing to You."

We can please Him in all things by bearing fruit in every good work—living Christ, growing Christ, expressing Christ, and propagating Christ in every respect. This is the real essence of every Christian good work. We can please Him in all things by growing by the full knowledge of God—the living knowledge of God in spirit. We can also please Him in all things by being like Enoch—walking with God by taking Him as our center and everything and by doing everything according to His revelation and leading.

Having a Clear Sky

To give the Lord the first place in all things is to have a clear sky like awesome crystal with God's sapphire throne above it (Ezek. 1:22, 26). These verses say, "Over the heads of the living creature there was the likeness of an expanse, like the sight of awesome crystal, stretched forth over their heads above...And above the expanse that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, like the appearance of a sapphire

stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was One in appearance like a man, above it."

To give the Lord the first place in all things is to have a clear sky. We need to have a clear sky, like awesome crystal with God's sapphire throne above it. This means that there is absolutely nothing between us and the Lord and that we are filled with the heavenly atmosphere, condition, and situation of His ruling presence, allowing Him to rule and reign within us. This is signified by the man on the throne. The throne is sapphire, which signifies that it is heavenly. The highest point in our spiritual experience is to have a clear sky with a throne above it. We need to pray to have such a clear sky, with nothing between us and the Lord under the heavenly rule.

Holding Him as the Head

To give the Lord the first place in all things is to hold Him as the Head, staying intimately connected to Him and enthroning Him as the Ruler and Decider of everything in our life (Col. 2:19). Colossians 2:19 says, "Holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God." We need to hold Him as the Head. This is to stay intimately connected to Him as the Head of the Body, giving Him the preeminence. We need to stay intimately connected to Him as the Head and enthrone Him in our being as the Ruler and Decider of everything in our life.

Asking for the Counsel of Jehovah in Everything in Our Lives

To give the Lord the first place in all things is to ask for the counsel of Jehovah in everything in our lives (Josh. 9:14). In Joshua 9 the children of Israel were tricked by the Gibeonites. The Lord had commanded the children of Israel to destroy all the inhabitants of the land (cf. Deut. 7:1-2). However, the Gibeonites were able to trick the children of Israel to make a covenant with them so that they would not be destroyed. Joshua 9:14 gives the reason why the children of Israel were able to be deceived: "They did not ask for the counsel of Jehovah." To give the Lord the first place in all things is to ask for the counsel of Jehovah in everything in our lives. In every detail of our lives we need to ask for the counsel of Jehovah.

Giving the Flow of Life the Preeminence in All We Are and Do

To give the Lord the first place in all things is to give the flow of life, the flow of the Lord Jesus within us, the preeminence in all that we are and do (Ezek. 47:1; Rev. 22:1-2). In Ezekiel 47 the flow of life comes out of the right side of the house. The right side is the preeminent side. Thus, the flow of the Lord Jesus within us needs to be given the preeminence in our being. The practical preeminence of Christ, the practical presence of Christ, is the flow of the Lord Jesus within us. We need to give this flow the preeminence in our being.

Do you have the Lord Jesus flowing within you? If you do, everything is all right. If you do not, you need to get it back. Perhaps you need to confess your sins to the Lord, or you need to apologize to someone. Open to the Lord and say, "Lord, I treasure the sweet flow of life. I want this flow to deepen in my being." This flow comes out of the throne and brings the throne with it. We need to give Him the preeminence in all that we are and do in the flow of life.

Being Dominated, Governed, Directed, Led, and Moved by Our Mingled Spirit

To give the Lord the first place in all things is to be dominated, governed, directed, led, and moved by our mingled spirit, caring for the rest in our spirit (2 Cor. 2:13-14). Paul cared for the rest in his spirit. In verse 13 he says, "I had no rest in my spirit, for I did not find Titus my brother; but taking leave of them, I went forth into Macedonia." In verse 14 Paul goes on to say, "But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in the Christ and manifests the savor of the knowledge of Him through us in every place." These verses show that Paul was dominated, governed, led, controlled, directed, and moved by his mingled spirit. He cared for the rest in his spirit by being a captive of Christ, by taking Christ as his General, and by being in Christ's triumphal procession.

This is why we want to give the Lord the preeminence. We should pray with our whole being, "Lord, conquer me. Make me Your captive. Never let me win. Lord, defeat me all the time." We should pray this prayer every day. These twelve points give us practical ways to give the Lord the preeminence, the first place, in our life.

Their Failure to Give Christ the Preeminence and to Honor and Exalt Him Being the Cause of Their Becoming Sinful and Evil

Their failure to give Christ the preeminence and to honor and exalt Him was the cause of their becoming sinful and evil (Jer. 2:13).

The Desolation of the Church as the House of God Always Issuing from the Negligence of the Experience of Christ

The desolation of the church as the house of God always issues from the negligence of the experience of Christ (1 Cor. 1:9-13, 23-24, 30; cf. 3 John 9). The Corinthians neglected the experience of Christ, so they became desolated, even evil. The church in Corinth had all kinds of problems and negative situations because they neglected the experience of Christ. Therefore, Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, giving them at least twenty items of Christ for their enjoyment. In the church life we must concentrate on Christ (see footnote 2 on 1 Cor. 1:9). We should not concentrate on any person, matter, or thing other than Christ. If we concentrate on any person other than Christ, we will be disappointed, but if we concentrate on Christ, we will never be disappointed. Therefore, we should focus on Him as our unique center appointed by God so that all the problems among the believers may be solved.

The Real Revival in the Church Depending upon Everyone in the Church Life Giving Christ the First Place in Everything

The real revival in the church depends upon everyone in the church life giving Christ the first place in everything (Psa. 73:25; 80:15, 17; cf. Hab. 3:2; Hosea 6:1-3).

To Give the Lord the First Place in All Things Being to Love Him with the First Love, the Best Love, Regarding Him as Everything in Our Life

To give the Lord the first place in all things is to love Him with the first love, the best love, regarding Him as everything in our life (Rev. 2:4; Col. 1:18; 3:11). This is the first of the twelve points that we presented concerning how to give the Lord the preeminence. We need to love Him with the first love, the best love, regarding Him as everything in our life.

Not Loving Anyone or Anything Above the Lord, Including Our Soul-Life

We must not love anyone or anything above the Lord, including our soul-life (Matt. 10:37-39; Rev. 12:11). Actually, the more we love the Lord, the more we gain the Lord, and the more we know the Lord, the more we will hate ourselves and deny ourselves. We must not love anyone or anything above the Lord, including our soul-life. Revelation 12:11 says that the overcomers "loved not their soul-life even unto death."

Our Loving the Lord Because He First Loved Us, Infusing His Loving Essence into Us and Generating within Us the Love with Which We Love Him

We love the Lord because He first loved us, infusing His loving essence into us and generating within us the love with which we love Him (1 John 4:19, 7-8, 16). What a miracle! We love Him because He first loved us. Do you love the Lord Jesus? I love to say, "Lord Jesus, I love You." We love the Lord Jesus, yet we love Him because He first loved us. He infused His loving essence into us and generated within us the love with which we love Him. First John 4:16 says, "We know and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him."

Christ's Love of Affection Constraining Us to Live and to Die to Him

Christ's love of affection constrains us to live and to die to Him (2 Cor. 5:14-15; Rom. 14:7-9). Every day we need to pray, "Lord, constrain me with Your love." The word *constrain* may be translated "forcibly limit." Therefore, we can pray, "Lord, forcibly limit me with Your love." We need to pray this every day. Romans 14:7-9 says, "None of us lives to himself, and none dies to himself; for whether we live, we live to the Lord, and whether we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore whether we live or we die, we are the Lord's. For Christ died and lived again for this, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living." He died and resurrected so that He could be the Lord inside of us, that is, so that He could be the preeminent One in our being, having the first place in our being and being enthroned in us as the Ruler and Decider of everything in our life for the church life.

Christ's Love Making the Believers Martyrs for Him

Christ's love makes the believers martyrs for Him (Rev. 2:10; 12:11; Rom. 8:35-37). Revelation 2:10 says, "Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life." There are three kinds of martyrdom—physical martyrdom, psychological martyrdom, and even spiritual martyrdom. Paul told the saints in Corinth, "Concerning our brother Apollos, I urged him many times to come to you with the brothers; yet it was not at all his desire to come now, but he will come when he has opportunity" (1 Cor. 16:12). I believe that was a kind of spiritual martyrdom to Paul. Surely Paul felt that Apollos should go there, yet Apollos would not take Paul's word. Therefore, Paul maintained his oneness with Apollos. That was a spiritual martyrdom for Paul, for he had to deny even the leading that he had received from the Lord in his spirit because the brother would not go along with it. I saw Brother Lee do this a number of times. He just went along with some people in order to keep the oneness, even though that was not according to his own feeling.

Then there is such a thing as psychological martyrdom. Once you give yourself to be absolute for the Lord, even your family members may turn against you. Sometimes even your spouse will turn against you. Brother Lee told the story of a very wealthy brother who began to love the Lord and give Him the preeminence in his life. This made his wife quite unhappy, for suddenly he no longer cared about making money. Since his whole life now revolved around the Lord Jesus and giving Him the preeminence, he invited the brothers to his home. However, when they came to his home for dinner, his wife served them cold leftovers. This caused the inviting brother to feel so bad that his eyes filled with tears. Nevertheless, Brother Lee and the other brothers just ate the meal and said, "Brother, this is a tremendous meal. Thank the Lord that we can have this fellowship here tonight." Of course, whenever we come together, our main concern is not with the food but the fellowship. That dear brother experienced a kind of psychological martyrdom.

Loving the Lord according to the Divine Dispensing of the Divine Trinity as Love

We love the Lord according to the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity as love (Rom. 5:5; 8:39, 35; 15:30). In Romans 5:5 and 8:39 we have the love of God, in verse 35 we have the love of Christ, and in 15:30 we have the love of the Spirit—we have the love of the entire Triune God. Thus, we love the Lord according to the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity as love.

The Enjoyment of God in the House and City of God Being Maintained and Preserved Only When Christ Is Properly Appreciated and Exalted by God's People

The enjoyment of God in the house and city of God can be maintained and preserved only when Christ is properly appreciated and exalted by God's people. Let us give ourselves to properly appreciate Him and to properly exalt Him so that we can be brought out of all desolation and degradation.

An Idol Being Anything within Us That We Love More Than the Lord and That Replaces the Lord in Our Life

An idol is anything within us that we love more than the Lord and that replaces the Lord in our life (Ezek. 14:3). The Lord told Ezekiel, "Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts." This shows that an idol is not just something outward and physical; an idol can be something inward, something in our heart, that we love more than the Lord or that replaces the Lord in our life. Therefore, we need to guard our heart from any kind of idol.

Any Thing, Matter, or Person That Preoccupies Us and Keeps Us from the Full Enjoyment of Christ Being an Idol

Any thing, matter, or person that preoccupies us and keeps us from the full enjoyment of Christ is an idol (1 John 5:21). The last verse in John's first Epistle says, "Little children, guard yourselves from idols." Do not let any person, matter, or thing preoccupy you and keep you from the full enjoyment of Christ. Even in a meeting like this, we need to exercise that nothing would keep us from the full enjoyment of Christ. We are here to fully enjoy Christ. This meeting, this whole day, and this entire training are for us to fully enjoy Christ.

PSALM 73 BEING ON THE SUFFERINGS OF THE SEEKING SAINTS AND UNVEILING GOD, CHRIST, AS OUR UNIQUE PORTION AND DESIRE

Psalm 73 is on the sufferings of the seeking saints and unveils God,

Christ, as our unique portion and desire (1 Cor. 1:2). In this verse Paul speaks of Christ being "theirs and ours"; He is our unique portion.

Psalm 73:2-16 Recording the Sufferings and Puzzles of the God-seeking Psalmist

Psalm 73:2-16 records the sufferings and puzzles of the God-seeking psalmist. In verses 2 through 16 we see a seeker of God with a pure heart, but he is puzzled. He is puzzled because he is suffering and does not know why. He says, "I was envious of the arrogant, / When I saw the prosperity of the wicked... / They do not find themselves in the hardship of men, / Nor are they plagued like other men... / Behold, these are the wicked; / And always at ease, they heap up riches. / Surely I have purified my heart in vain, / And I have washed my hands in innocence. / For I have been plagued all day long / And chastened every morning" (vv. 3, 5, 12-14). He is suffering, yet he does not know the reason for his suffering. Therefore, the psalmist was nearly stumbled by his situation in the face of the prosperity of the wicked.

The Psalmist Being Nearly Stumbled by the Situation concerning the Prosperity of the Wicked

The psalmist was nearly stumbled by the situation concerning the prosperity of the wicked (vv. 2-3). In the first sixteen verses of this psalm, the psalmist was in darkness, and therefore he was nearly stumbled by the situation concerning the prosperity of the wicked.

The Psalmist Saying That He Had Purified His Heart in Vain and That He Had Been Plagued All Day Long

The psalmist said that he had purified his heart in vain and that he had been plagued all day long (vv. 13-14).

If the Psalmist Had Spoken to Others about His Situation, Their Being Stumbled

If the psalmist had spoken to others about his situation, they would have been stumbled (v. 15). Maybe you are one who is plagued all day long, and you realize that you cannot talk to others about it because they may be stumbled. Maybe you are envious of the arrogant and the wicked. You are thinking, "Look at them; they are heaping up riches, and they are always at ease." Perhaps you are in the full-time training,

and sometimes you feel that you are suffering every day while so many others are at ease and are heaping up riches.

The More the Psalmist Considered His Situation, Trying to Understand It, the More His Being Troubled and Perplexed

The more the psalmist considered his situation, trying to understand it, the more he was troubled and perplexed (v. 16). In verse 16 he says, "When I considered this in order to understand it, / It was a troublesome task in my sight." Then verse 17 is the turning point in this psalm. It begins with the word *until.* It says, "Until I went into the sanctuary of God; / Then I perceived their end," that is, their final destiny. In other words, the psalmist thought that their destiny was this, but it was not until he went into the sanctuary of God that he perceived their true destiny, their end. Therefore, this verse is the turning point in Psalm 73.

In verses 17 through 28 the psalmist is enlightened. He says, "When my heart was embittered, / And inwardly I was pricked; / I was brutish and knew nothing; / I was like a beast before You" (vv. 21-22). In the first sixteen verses he was like a beast before the Lord. He continues, "Nevertheless I am continually with You; / You have taken hold of my right hand. / You will guide me with Your counsel, / And afterward You will receive me in glory. / Whom do I have in heaven but You? / And besides You there is nothing I desire on earth. / My flesh and my heart fail, / But God is the rock of my heart and my portion forever" (vv. 23-26). Then in verse 28 he says, "As for me, drawing near to God is good for me; / I have made the Lord Jehovah my refuge, / That I may declare all Your works." This was his experience when he entered into the sanctuary of God.

Through the Revelation Given in the Sanctuary of God, the Psalmist Obtaining the Solution to His Troubling and Perplexing Situation

The Sanctuary of God Being the Place Where We May Obtain the Revelation That We Need

Through the revelation given in the sanctuary of God, the psalmist obtained the solution to his troubling and perplexing situation (vv. 17-28). The sanctuary of God is the place where we may obtain the revelation that we need (Lev. 24:2-4; Dan. 2:17-23; cf. 5:12, 14).

God's Sanctuary Being in Our Spirit and in the Church

God's sanctuary is in our spirit and in the church (1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:22). When you get into your spirit and when you come into the church life, especially in the meetings of the church, you receive revelation, and you receive an explanation concerning all your problems. This is our experience. Sometimes when you are in a meeting, even though it has nothing to do with your problem, you get shined on, and you get an explanation and a solution to your problem or your situation.

In Daniel 2 Nebuchadnezzar dreamed concerning a great image, which signifies the totality of human government, and he wanted someone not only to interpret the dream but first to tell him the dream. Of course, those around him said, "No one can do this," and when Nebuchadnezzar heard this, he intended to kill all his wise men. Therefore, Daniel asked the king for a time, and then he went to his vital group—Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah—his companions, "that they might request compassions from before the God of the heavens concerning this mystery so that Daniel and his companions would not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of the heavens" (vv. 18-19). Thus, Jehovah saved Daniel and his companions as a result of their entering into the sanctuary of their spirit and, in New Testament terms, being in a vital group in the church life, where he could pray together with some companions and receive divine revelation.

Entering into the Sanctuary of God by Exercising Our Spirit and Living in the Church

We enter into the sanctuary of God by exercising our spirit and living in the church (1 Tim. 4:7; 3:15). This is why we have to exercise our spirit and live in the church. In our spirit and in the church, we receive the divine revelation and the explanation to all of our problems. How wonderful!

Once We Are in the Sanctuary—in the Spirit and in the Church—Our Receiving Another View, a Particular Perception

Once we are in the sanctuary—in the spirit and in the church—we receive another view, a particular perception (Psa. 73:17-20). Again,

verse 17 is the key verse in this psalm: "Until I went into the sanctuary of God; / Then I perceived their end."

Certain Secrets in the Bible Not Being Made Known to Us until We Come into the Twofold Sanctuary—Our Spirit as the Personal Sanctuary and the Church as the Corporate Sanctuary

Certain secrets in the Bible were not made known to us until we came into the twofold sanctuary—our spirit as the personal sanctuary and the church as the corporate sanctuary. This is wonderful!

I will never forget when the brothers first pointed out the two spirits in John 3:6: "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." They said, "Look, the first *Spirit* is capitalized, and the second *spirit* is lowercased." I said, "Wow, that's right. I never saw that before." Then they showed me John 4:24: "God is Spirit [with a capital *S*], and those who worship Him must worship in spirit [with a lowercase *s*]. I said, "Wow, that's right." Again, Romans 8:16 says, "The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit." I thought, "Where do these people get these things? How do they know this?" It was because they had come into the twofold sanctuary, and so they were able to show me that I had a human spirit, that God in Christ as the Spirit indwelt my human spirit, and that I could exercise my spirit to touch Him, realize Him, receive Him, enjoy Him, and know Him.

God's Way Being Made Known in the Sanctuary; When We Exercise Our Spirit and Live in the Church, God's Way Becoming Clear to Us

God's way is made known in the sanctuary; when we exercise our spirit and live in the church, God's way becomes clear to us (Psa. 77:13).

Psalm 73:25-26 Being the Revelation Given in the Sanctuary of God to the Suffering and Seeking Saints

"Whom Do I Have in Heaven but You? And Besides You There Is Nothing I Desire on Earth"

Psalm 73:25-26 is the revelation given in the sanctuary of God to the suffering and seeking saints. Verse 25 says, "Whom do I have in heaven but You? / And besides You there is nothing I desire on earth." Brother Watchman Nee testified that when he first read this verse, he prayed, "Lord, I cannot say this." He dealt with the Lord over this verse.

He told the Lord, "I cannot say that there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee, because there is one on earth whom I love" (*Watchman Nee's Testimony,* p. 22). At that time, he was a young believer, and he desired some things on this earth besides the Lord. Like our brother, we all need to pray over this verse, and we need to allow the Lord to penetrate our being so that we can say in faith, "Lord, whom do I have in heaven but You? And besides You there is nothing I desire on earth." He is the only permanent One, the only One who never disappoints. He is our first love. He is our Brother, our Father, our Companion, our Friend, our Counselor, and our Advocate. He is our peace, our joy, our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification, and our redemption. What more could we want? Whom do we have in heaven but Him? And besides Him there is nothing we desire on earth. Then the psalmist continues, "My flesh and my heart fail, / But God is the rock of my heart and my portion forever" (v. 26).

Verse 25 Revealing That God's Pure Seeker Would Have God as His Only Possession in Heaven and His Unique Desire on Earth

Verse 25 reveals that God's pure seeker would have God as his only possession in heaven and his unique desire on earth. We need to pray, "Lord, be my only possession, and be my unique desire on earth."

God Being the Psalmist's Unique Goal; the Psalmist Not Caring for Anything Except God and Gaining Him

God was the psalmist's unique goal; the psalmist did not care for anything except God and gaining Him.

In This Matter Paul Being the Same as the Psalmist, Counting All Things as Refuse in Order to Gain Christ

In this matter Paul was the same as the psalmist, counting all things as refuse in order to gain Christ (Phil. 3:8). *Gain Christ* in this verse may also be translated as "win Christ." Paul wanted to be found in Christ, and he wanted to gain Christ, to win Christ. To him, Christ was a prize. What is our prize? Christ must be our prize, our goal. We are here to gain Christ and to win Christ.

In Genesis 15:1 the Lord said to Abraham, "Do not be afraid, Abram; I am your shield and your exceedingly great reward." The Lord is our shield to defend us from the enemy, and His presence is our exceedingly great reward.

Paul said, "Brothers, I do not account of myself to have laid hold; but one thing I do: Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called me upward" (Phil. 3:13-14). We should never forget what our goal is. Paul's goal was the fullest enjoyment and gaining of Christ. May such an ambition stick in our being so that when we wake up in the morning, we have this unique goal—the fullest enjoyment and gaining of Christ. This is the goal, and the prize is the uttermost enjoyment of Christ in the millennial kingdom. Therefore, we have a goal, the fullest enjoyment and gaining of Christ in this age, so that we may obtain the prize, the uttermost enjoyment of Christ in the millennial kingdom. In this matter, Paul was the same as the psalmist, counting all things as refuse in order to gain Christ (v. 8).

The Psalmist Being Pure in Heart

To Be Pure in Heart Being to Have God as Our One Goal

The psalmist was pure in heart (Psa. 73:1). To be pure in heart is to have God as our one goal (Matt. 5:8).

A Pure Heart Being One That Is Set on Nothing but God

God Himself Being the Reality; Anything other than God Being Vanity

A pure heart is one that is set on nothing but God. God Himself is the reality; anything other than God is vanity.

If We Continue to Seek Something other than God, Our Heart Being Set on Vanity

If we continue to seek something other than God, our heart is set on vanity. Vanity is emptiness, futility, and vapor. So if we set our heart on something other than God, we are setting our heart on futility, vapor, and vanity.

Only a Seeker with a Pure Heart Being Able to Say That He Has Nothing but God and Desires Nothing Besides God

Only a seeker with a pure heart can say that he has nothing but God and desires nothing besides God. Because of this, we all need to pray, "Lord, I consecrate my heart to You. Grant me to be pure in heart. I want to be a person who sees God every day. Even now, Lord, I want

to see You. Make me one who is pure in heart. I want my heart set on nothing but God."

"My Flesh and My Heart Fail, but God Is the Rock of My Heart and My Portion Forever"

The Psalmist Realizing That God Was Working to Deprive Him of All Material Things So That He Might Enjoy God in an Absolute Way

Psalm 73:26 says, "My flesh and my heart fail, / But God is the rock of my heart and my portion forever." The psalmist realized that God was working to deprive him of all material things so that he might enjoy God in an absolute way. Through the revelation given in the sanctuary, he learned why God does not allow the seeking saints to prosper as the worldly people do. God intends that nothing should distract us from the absolute enjoyment of Himself. God's intention with the seeking saints is to remove all material blessings and physical enjoyments so that they may find everything in God.

When the Psalmist Went into the Sanctuary of God, His Receiving the Revelation That Nothing in Heaven or on Earth Can Be His Enjoyment but God Himself, and His Taking God as His All—the Rock of His Heart and His Portion Forever

When the psalmist went into the sanctuary of God, he received the revelation that nothing in heaven or on earth can be his enjoyment but God Himself, and he took God as his all—the rock of his heart and his portion forever (Deut. 32:4, 15, 18, 30-31; Psa. 18:2, 31, 46; 31:2-3; 61:2; 62:2, 6-7; 71:3; 78:35; 89:26; 92:15; 94:22; 95:1; Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 10:4; Eph. 3:17a; Col. 1:12; Eph. 3:8).

I would encourage you to read all these wonderful verses. Deuteronomy 32:4 speaks of God as "the Rock—perfect is His work." Verse 15 refers to Him as "the Rock of [our] salvation." Verse 18 refers to Him as "the Rock who begot you." We are living stones because the Rock begot us (cf. 1 Pet. 2:5). Psalm 18:2 says, "Jehovah is my crag and my fortress and my Deliverer; / My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge." Psalm 31:2-3 says, "Be to me a rock of protection, / A fortress, to save me. / For You are my crag and my fortress." In Psalm 61:2 the psalmist prays, "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I." Psalm 62:2 says, "He alone is my rock and my salvation, / My high retreat; I will not be greatly shaken." Verses 6 and 7 say, "He alone is my rock and my salvation, / My high retreat; I will not be shaken. / On God my salvation and my glory depend; / The rock of my strength, my refuge, is in God." Psalm 71:3 says, "Be to me a rock of habitation for me to come to continually. / You have given command to save me, / For You are my rock and my fortress." Psalm 78:35 says, "They remembered that God was their rock, / And the Most High God, their Redeemer." Psalm 89:26 says, "He will call upon Me, saying, You are My Father, / My God and the rock of My salvation."

Psalm 94:22 says, "Jehovah has been my high tower, / And my God the rock of my refuge." Psalm 95:1 says, "Come, let us sing for joy to Jehovah; / Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation." Then in Matthew 16:18 the Lord says, "Upon this rock I will build My church," and in 1 Corinthians 10:4 Paul speaks of Christ as a spiritual rock. This is the One who is making His home in our hearts (Eph. 3:17). Furthermore, as the unsearchable riches of Christ (v. 8), He is also our unique portion (Col. 1:12).

PSALM 80 REVEALING THAT RESTORATION COMES BY EXALTING CHRIST

In Verses 1 through 7 the Psalmist Praying That the Shepherd of Israel Would Give Ear; in Both Verses 3 and 7 His Praying, "O God, Restore Us; and Cause Your Face to Shine, and We Will Be Saved"

Psalm 80 reveals that restoration comes by exalting Christ. In verses 1 through 7 the psalmist prays that the Shepherd of Israel would give ear (v. 1); in both verses 3 and 7 he prays, "O God, restore us; / And cause Your face to shine, and we will be saved." We all need to pray, "O God, restore us; and cause Your face to shine, and we will be saved."

In Verses 8 through 13 the Psalmist Speaking Regarding God's Dealing with Israel as His Vine, Which He Brought out of Egypt and Planted; Whereas the Vine Once Was Flourishing, It Eventually Becoming Desolate

In verses 8 through 13 the psalmist speaks regarding God's dealing with Israel as His vine, which He brought out of Egypt and planted; whereas the vine once was flourishing, it eventually became desolate.

In Verses 14 through 19 the Psalmist Asking God to Visit His Vine (Israel) for the Sake of Christ as the Man of His Right Hand

In verses 14 through 19 the psalmist asks God to visit His vine (Israel) for the sake of Christ as the man of His right hand. Christ is the man of God's right hand.

Son *in Verse 15 Referring to the Lord Jesus; When He Became a Man, His Joining Himself to Israel—His Being "the Son Whom You Have Strengthened for Yourself"*

Son in verse 15 refers to the Lord Jesus; when He became a man, He joined Himself to Israel—He is "the son whom You have strengthened for Yourself" (Hosea 11:1; Matt. 2:15).

"Let Your Hand Be upon the Man of Your Right Hand, upon the Son of Man Whom You Have Strengthened for Yourself"; This Verse Revealing That Christ Is at the Right Hand of God, the Highest Place in the Universe; the First Place, the Highest Position, the Preeminence, Having Been Given to Christ

In Psalm 80:17 the psalmist goes on to say, "Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, / Upon the son of man whom You have strengthened for Yourself"; this verse reveals that Christ is at the right hand of God, the highest place in the universe; the first place, the highest position, the preeminence, has been given to Christ (Mark 16:19; Acts 2:33; 5:31; Phil. 2:9-11). God's hand is His exalting hand, His leading hand, His guiding hand, His directing hand, and His strengthening hand. God's hand causes man to take action. Hence, for God's hand to be on Christ as the man of His right hand refers to the exaltation of Christ. It refers to Christ being led, guided, directed, and strengthened by God and to God, causing Him to take action. Therefore, Psalm 80:17 reveals that Christ is at the right hand of God, the highest place in the universe and that the first place, the highest position, the preeminence, has been given to Christ. Acts 5:31 says, "This One God has exalted to His right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." *Leader* implies His authority, and by His authority He rules sovereignly over the earth so that the environment might be fitting for God's chosen people to receive His salvation.

Consider your own salvation or the way that you came into the church life. God ruled sovereignly over the earth with His authority so that the environment would be fitting for you to receive His salvation, for you to come into the church life, or even for you to come to the full-time training. This is just so wonderful.

When I graduated from college, the one place where I could find a job was Houston, Texas, because the oil business was booming at that time. So I moved to Houston for a job. Little did I know that God had arranged my environment so that the one place in the United States where I could get a job most easily was Houston. Actually, I went to Houston not to get a job but so that the Lord could save me and bring me into the church life. We all have our own story. I heard that one of the astronauts who went to the moon was so in awe when he looked back at the earth that he got saved. He then gave his whole life to Christ. God goes to a lot of trouble to get us saved.

The Way to Be Restored from Desolation Being to Exalt Christ as the Full Solution to Every Problem

The way to be restored from desolation is to exalt Christ as the full solution to every problem (1 Cor. 1:9, 24, 30). The church in Corinth had a lot of problems, but all the problems recorded in 1 Corinthians are solved by exalting Christ. Furthermore, when we exalt Christ, we enjoy Christ, for when we enjoy Christ, we must enjoy Him through the working of the cross. The cross works in us through the enjoyment of Christ to kill all the "germs" in our being. The enjoyment of Christ carries with it a divine and mystical antibiotic to kill all the germs in our being and to supply us with all the positive elements of the processed and consummated Triune God.

Whenever God's People Do Not Give Christ the Preeminence, the House of God, Signifying the Church, Becoming Desolate

Whenever God's people do not give Christ the preeminence, the house of God, signifying the church, becomes desolate.

Whenever God's People Exalt Christ, Giving Him the Preeminence in Every Aspect of Their Living, There Being Restoration and Revival

Whenever God's people exalt Christ, giving Him the preeminence in every aspect of their living, there is restoration and revival (Psa. 80:18-19). Verse 17 says, "Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right

hand, / Upon the son of man whom You have strengthened for Yourself." Then verses 18 through 19 say, "Then we will not turn back from You. / Revive us, and we will call upon Your name. / O Jehovah God of hosts, restore us; / Cause Your face to shine, and we will be saved."

Christ Being Now at the Right Hand of God, and Whoever Calls upon Him as Such a One Being Restored and Revived

Christ is now at the right hand of God (Rom. 8:34; Col. 3:1; 1 Pet. 3:22), and whoever calls upon Him as such a One will be restored and revived (Acts 2:33, 21; Rom. 10:12-13). When we call on the Lord, He is the One at the right hand of God. Therefore, when we call upon Him as such a One, we are restored and revived. I would like to impress you with something that is very simple: When we call, we say, "*Lord* Jesus." He is the Lord. When we say, "*Lord* Jesus," we are calling upon the One whom we want to be enthroned in our being as the Lord. We want Him to be enthroned in our being as the Ruler and the Decider of all things in our life for the church life and for God's economy. This is why we call, saying, "Lord Jesus. O Lord Jesus."

As Regenerated People, Our Needing to Come Together in the Meetings of the Church to Exalt Christ by Praising, Singing, and Shouting

As regenerated people, we need to come together in the meetings of the church to exalt Christ by praising, singing, and shouting (1 Cor. 14:26). We need to exalt Christ not by thinking but by praising.

Instead of Being Silent, Our Needing to Exercise Our Spiritual Birthright to Exalt Christ

Instead of being silent, we should exercise our spiritual birthright to exalt Christ.

The More We Exalt Christ, Giving Him the Preeminence in Everything, the More Our Being Revived and Restored

The more we exalt Christ, giving Him the preeminence in everything, the more we will be revived and restored. Praise the Lord. There is a great need for Christ to be our unique portion and to be properly appreciated and exalted by us.—E. M.

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OF THE PSALMS (2)

The Secret Revelation concerning the Enjoyment of Christ as the Incarnated Triune God, the God-man (Message 2)

Scripture Reading: Psa. 84

I. The deeper love and sweeter experience of the house of God in Psalm 84 come after the experience of God's dealing and stripping and are recovered by the experience of God as our unique portion and by Christ being given the unique position—vv. 1-12; 73:17, 25-26; 80:15, 17; Col. 1:17a, 18b:
   A. God's purpose in dealing with His holy people is that they would be emptied of everything to receive only God as their gain and be rebuilt with the Divine Trinity to become the masterpiece of God, fulfilling God's eternal economy for His expression—Job 10:13; Eph. 3:9-11; 2:10.
   B. God is faithful to take away all our idols and to lead us into His economy for us to enjoy Christ so that He may have a recovery purely and wholly of the person of Christ—1 Cor. 1:9; 1 John 5:21; cf. Jer. 2:13; Lam. 3:22-24.

II. The intrinsic content of Psalm 84 is the secret revelation concerning the enjoyment of Christ as the incarnated Triune God, the God-man—Col. 2:9; 1:12:
   A. The center of this secret revelation is the house of God (Psa. 84:4, 10a), typified by the tabernacle (Exo. 40:2-8) and by the temple (1 Kings 6:1-3; 8:3-11).
   B. Christ as the embodiment of the Triune God (Col. 2:9) is the fulfillment of the types of the tabernacle and the temple:
      1. This fulfillment commenced in His incarnation as the individual Christ (John 1:14; 2:21) and will continue (1 Tim. 3:15-16) until it consummates in the New Jerusalem as the corporate Christ, the great God-man (Rev. 21:2-3, 22).

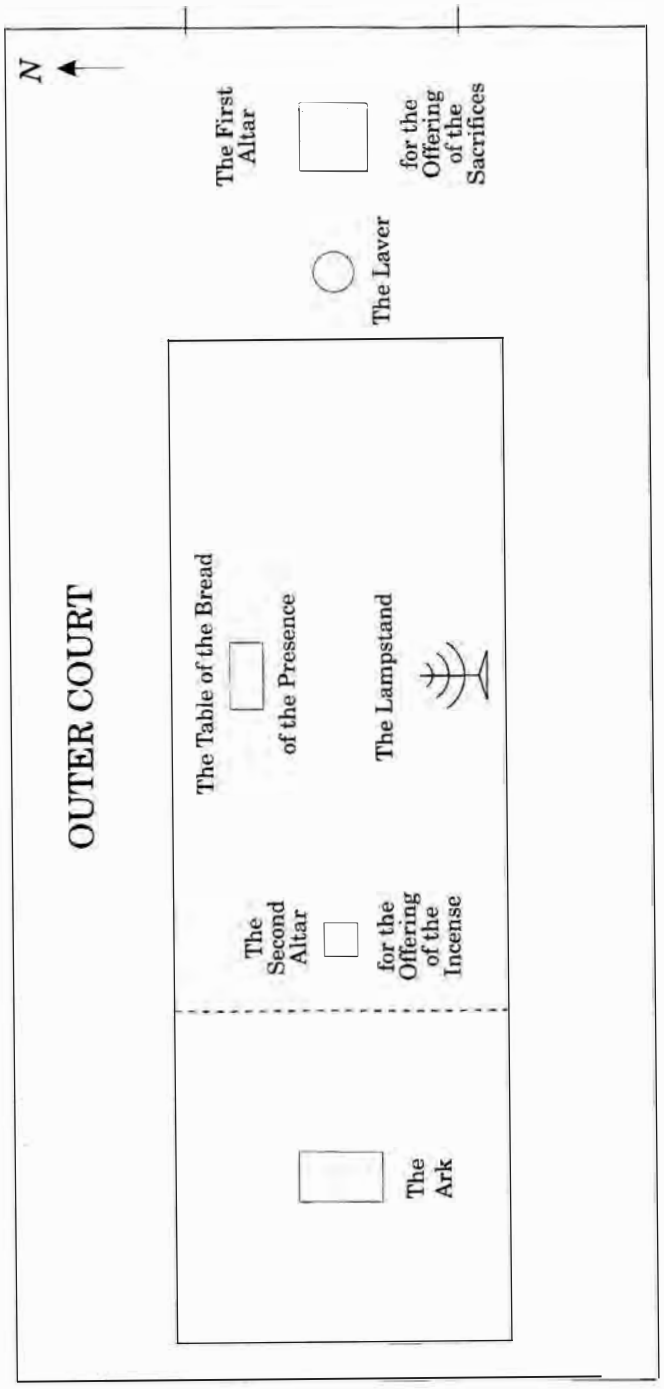
2. The New Testament, from Matthew through Revelation, covers the entire span of the incarnation of the Triune God and is a record of the divine incarnation.
3. The enjoyment of Christ as the incarnated Triune God in God's house is portrayed by the arrangement of the tabernacle and its furnishings (see diagram on p. 43).

III. The psalmist's longing and even fainting to be in God's tabernacles indicates to what extent the psalmist loved God's tabernacles; this love was matured through many trials—Psa. 84:2.

IV. "At Your two altars even the sparrow has found a home; / And the swallow, a nest for herself, / Where she may lay her young, / O Jehovah of hosts, my King and my God"—v. 3:

A. The two altars—the bronze altar for the sacrifices and the golden altar of incense—signify the leading consummations of the work of the incarnated Triune God, who is Christ as the embodiment of God for His increase—Exo. 40:5-6:

1. At the bronze altar, a type of the cross of Christ, our problems before God are solved through the crucified Christ as the sacrifices; this qualifies us to enter into the tabernacle, a type of Christ as the incarnated and enterable Triune God, and to contact God at the incense altar (the bronze altar for the sacrifices is related to God's judicial redemption accomplished by Christ in His earthly ministry)—Rom. 5:10a; 8:3; Heb. 9:14; 7:27; 10:10.
2. At the golden altar of incense in front of the Holy of Holies (9:4), the resurrected Christ in His ascension is the incense for us to be accepted by God in peace; through our prayer at the incense altar we enter into the Holy of Holies—our spirit—where we experience Christ as the Ark of the Testimony with its contents (the golden altar of incense is related to God's organic salvation carried out by Christ in His heavenly ministry)—Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25; 9:24; 10:19.
3. Through such an experience of Christ we are incorporated into the tabernacle, the incarnated Triune God, to become a part of the corporate Christ (1 Cor. 12:12) as God's testimony for His manifestation.



B. Through these two altars God's redeemed, the "sparrows" and "swallows," can find a nest as their refuge and a home with God in rest—cf. Psa. 90:1; 91:1:

1. The cross of Christ, typified by the bronze altar, is our "nest," our refuge, where we are saved from our troubles and where we "lay" our young, that is, produce new believers through the preaching of the gospel.
2. When we experience the resurrected Christ in His ascension, typified by the golden altar of incense, we are accepted by God in such a Christ and find a home, a place of rest, in the house of God.
3. This house is the processed and consummated Triune God united, mingled, and incorporated with all His redeemed, regenerated, and transformed elect (John 14:1-23) to be the Body of Christ in the present age and the New Jerusalem as the mutual dwelling place of God and His redeemed in eternity (Rev. 21:3, 22).

V. "Blessed are those who dwell in Your house; / They will yet be praising You. Selah... / O Jehovah of hosts, blessed is the man / Who trusts in You"—Psa. 84:4, 12:

A. In type, the house is the church as a totality (1 Tim. 3:15), and the tabernacles (Psa. 84:1) are the local churches (Rev. 1:11).

B. Praising the Lord should be our living, and our church life should be a life of praising—Psa. 22:3; 50:23; 1 Thes. 5:16-19; Phil. 4:4, 11-13.

C. In the church life we trust in God, not in ourselves or in our natural human ability to work out a solution to our difficult situations—2 Cor. 1:8-9, 12.

VI. "Blessed is the man whose strength is in You, / In whose heart are the highways to Zion"—Psa. 84:5; cf. Phil. 4:13; John 15:5:

A. The highways to Zion signify our intention to enter into the church as the house of God and are the blessed highways for seeking the incarnated Triune God in His consummations, typified by the furniture in the tabernacle—Heb. 10:19-22.

B. On the one hand, we have entered into God; on the other hand, we are still on the highways to enter into God.

C. That the highways to Zion are in our heart means that we need to take the way of the church internally, not merely externally; when we are deeply in the inner life, we will certainly be in the way of the church; the highways to Zion will be within our heart—cf. 1 John 1:3-4.

D. Zion is the very spot where God is, the Holy of Holies; the overcomers become Zion, and the Lord's recovery is to build up Zion—Rev. 21:16; cf. Exo. 26:2-8; 1 Kings 6:20; Rev. 2:7.

VII. "Passing through the valley of Baca, / They make it a spring; / Indeed the early rain covers it with blessings"—Psa. 84:6:

A. *Baca* means "weeping"; on the one hand, those on the highways to Zion are strengthened in God (v. 5); on the other hand, they are opposed by Satan, who causes them to suffer persecution.

B. The trouble and persecution caused by Satan can make the highways a valley of weeping; this special term indicates that the psalmist had been disciplined by God and had been stripped by Him.

C. The highways to Zion are not external, superficial, or cheap; we must pay a price to take the way of the church—Phil. 3:7-8; Matt. 25:9; Rev. 3:18; Acts 20:19, 31; Psa. 56:8.

D. When we pass through the valley of Baca, God makes this valley a spring (cf. Col. 1:24; Heb. 10:34); this spring is the Spirit (John 4:14; 7:38-39).

E. The more we weep on the highways to Zion, the more we receive the Spirit; while we are weeping, we are being filled with the Spirit, and the Spirit becomes our spring.

F. Those who come into the church life by passing through the valley of weeping find that this weeping eventually becomes a great blessing to them; this blessing is the Spirit.

G. The tears they shed are their own, but these tears issue in a spring, which becomes the early rain, the Spirit as the blessing—Zech. 10:1; Gal. 3:14; Eph. 1:3.

VIII. "They go from strength to strength; / Each appears before God in Zion... / For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand; / I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God / Than dwell in the tents of the wicked. / For Jehovah God is a sun and a shield; / Jehovah gives grace and glory"—Psa. 84:7, 10-11a:

A. The more we go on in the church life, the more strength we will gain—cf. Prov. 4:18; 2 Cor. 3:18.

B. If our service is intrinsically according to God's will in the

church life, each day will be worth many days in God's eyes—Joel 2:25a.

C. The blessings of our dwelling in the house of God are our enjoyment of the incarnated and consummated Triune God as our sun to supply us with life (John 1:4; 8:12), as our shield to protect us from God's enemy (Eph. 6:11-17), as grace for our inward enjoyment (John 1:14, 17), and as glory for the outward manifestation of God in splendor (Rev. 21:11, 23).

MESSAGE TWO

THE SECRET REVELATION CONCERNING THE ENJOYMENT OF CHRIST AS THE INCARNATED TRIUNE GOD, THE GOD-MAN

Prayer: Lord, we thank You that we can come together again. Lord, thank You that in Your recovery Your word is not rare. You have been speaking to us in such a rich way. Lord, tonight we tell You how much we need You. We are just little sparrows and swallows who are in need of You. We find our rest in Your house. We want to be those who enter into You. O Lord, we praise You! How lovely is Your dwelling place! Open Psalm 84 to us in this meeting. We yearn for and long after You. Grant us all a spirit of wisdom and revelation. Cause us to see something deeper, something beyond what is on the surface. Lord, bring us to know You as the incarnated Triune God. We want to know You as the enterable, enjoyable Triune God who wants to be mingled and even incorporated with us. Tonight we just open our being to You. Lord, we want to be here with You, touching and enjoying You under the shining of Your shekinah glory as You are making us the same as You. Lord, make us the enlarged tabernacle to be just who You are, fully one with You. Anoint the word in this meeting. Amen.

In this message we come to Psalm 84, a very lovely psalm. When I was a young believer, I enjoyed this psalm very much because it is so sweet and lovely due to the inspiration and appreciation of the psalmist toward the house of God. I enjoyed this very much because in those years I was enjoying the church life tremendously. I loved the church life, and I could identify with the psalmist in his appreciation of the house of God as the church.

Nevertheless, I did not realize that the house of God revealed in this psalm is not merely the church. Actually, it first signifies Christ in two aspects—the individual Christ, who is the Head of the church, His Body, and the corporate Christ, who is the Body. Thus, we can see that there is something much deeper in this psalm concerning the church as the house of God. It is not merely a sweet, lovely church life, for this house

of God, as typified by both the tabernacle and the temple, signifies first the Christ who is the Head as the individual Christ and then the Body as the corporate Christ.

The church as the corporate Christ is the actual enlargement of the individual Christ, and the individual Christ, when He is enlarged, becomes the Body, the corporate Christ. Thus, if we would enjoy this corporate Christ, we must enjoy the very Christ who is the reality and intrinsic significance of the tabernacle. We must have much enjoyment and experience of this Christ in order for Him to be enlarged to become the corporate Christ, the Body. Without our enjoying Him, without our experiencing Him, there cannot be the enlargement of this Christ, for the church as the Body of Christ is actually the issue of much enjoyment and experience of Him.

In order to dive into the intrinsic content of Psalm 84, we need to see the profound significance of the tabernacle. In John 1:14 we are told that the Triune God as the eternal Word became flesh and tabernacled among us. I really appreciate this accurate translation. He did not merely *dwell* among us; He *tabernacled* among us. The tabernacle was revealed in the Old Testament. It was the very place where God dwelt. It was the place where God's people were allowed to worship God and even enter to meet with God.

Eventually, Christ came to be a tabernacle among men on the earth. His desire was not merely to dwell among us. Rather, He came as a tabernacle into whom we all can enter. He wants us to enter into Him. He is not merely the One dwelling among us; He is a tabernacle into whom we can enter, and within Him is grace and reality (v. 17). He is full of grace and reality, which are for our enjoyment and realization. The Old Testament tabernacle was a place full of enjoyment. There was the bread of the Presence, the lampstand, and the golden incense altar, and if you entered into the Holy of Holies, there was the Ark of the Covenant, containing the tablets of the Covenant, Aaron's rod that budded, and the hidden manna in the golden pot. The tabernacle contained many riches for us to enjoy. As today's tabernacle, Christ surely is full of grace and reality for our enjoyment. He came to be such a tabernacle.

We have to realize that when Christ was incarnated in the flesh, He was not just the Son of God, not just the second of the Godhead. Colossians 2:9 says, "In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." When Jesus Christ came, the entire Divine Trinity came. The

Father came with Him, and the Spirit came with Him. It was not just the Son's incarnation; it was the incarnation of the entire Triune God. Therefore, the very One who came to tabernacle among us was, on one hand, Jesus Christ, but on the other hand, He was the embodiment of the entire Triune God. He was the very Triune God Himself incarnated in the flesh to become such a tabernacle for His people to enter into. Hence, the real significance of the tabernacle is that it is the incarnated Triune God for us to enter into, for us to partake of, and for us to enjoy. It is not merely a picture of the sweet church life, although that is one aspect, but first and foremost, when we come to the matter of the tabernacle, we have to see that it signifies the incarnated Triune God. The entire Triune God has been incarnated as a man to become an enterable, enjoyable tabernacle. When Christ was incarnated, He became the fulfillment of the tabernacle pictured in the Old Testament. He was the reality.

The birth of Jesus, at the beginning of the New Testament, was the beginning of the incarnation, but we need to realize that the incarnation was not just a one-time event. Actually, the incarnation is something that continues throughout the entire New Testament period until it reaches its consummation in the New Jerusalem, which is the eternal, universal tabernacle.

Actually, the entire New Testament age is the period of the divine incarnation. We need Matthew through the end of Revelation to see how the Triune God incarnated Himself—first, He was incarnated as the individual Christ, and then He continued this incarnation by bringing all His believers, including us, into that incarnation. Ultimately, we see the consummation of His incarnation in the New Jerusalem as the eternal, universal tabernacle that includes not just the Triune God but also all His believers. Thus, we are being incorporated into that divine incarnation to become the consummate tabernacle, where God dwells in man and man dwells in God.

This is indeed a marvelous view. We need to have this view when we come to Psalm 84, in order to see what the tabernacle really is. It is not just a sweet, enjoyable church life, but it is actually the incarnated Triune God who became enterable, enjoyable, and experienceable so that we could enter into Him and partake of all His riches until we become fully united, mingled, and incorporated with Him as one great corporate tabernacle. This is a very lovely place, yet this is much deeper than what I saw as a young believer.

Now with this as a base, we can turn to the message outline. This message is entitled "The Secret Revelation concerning the Enjoyment of Christ as the Incarnated Triune God, the God-man." There is definitely something secret, something hidden here. A secret revelation is not so evident for people to see right away, especially when it concerns the enjoyment of Christ as the incarnated Triune God who is typified by the tabernacle. We need to pray that the Lord would grant us a spirit of wisdom and revelation so that we may see this secret revelation.

THE DEEPER LOVE AND SWEETER EXPERIENCE OF THE HOUSE OF GOD IN PSALM 84 COMING AFTER THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S DEALING AND STRIPPING AND BEING RECOVERED BY THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD AS OUR UNIQUE PORTION AND BY CHRIST BEING GIVEN THE UNIQUE POSITION

The deeper love and sweeter experience of the house of God in Psalm 84 come after the experience of God's dealing and stripping and are recovered by the experience of God as our unique portion and by Christ being given the unique position (vv. 1-12; 73:17, 25-26; 80:15, 17; Col. 1:17a, 18b). We first have to appreciate that in Psalm 84 the psalmist's feeling toward the house of God is both deeper and sweeter. In earlier psalms the psalmists expressed their longing to be in the house of Jehovah all the days of their life. No doubt that also was an expression of the psalmist's longing, desire, and appreciation for the house of God. But when we come to Psalm 84, the psalmist says, "How lovely are Your tabernacles, / O Jehovah of hosts! / My soul longs, indeed even faints, / For the courts of Jehovah; / My heart and my flesh cry out / To the living God" (vv. 1-2). Surely this is something deeper and sweeter.

This means that our appreciation and enjoyment of the house of God typified by the tabernacle are a matter of degree. Ten years ago we may have enjoyed the tabernacle, the house of God, to one degree, but now after some time, especially after passing through certain experiences, our appreciation and enjoyment of the house of God have deepened. This is like the experience of a married couple. When a man and a woman are first married, they love each other. They fell in love with each other, and they feel that it is the greatest thing on the whole earth. Of course, they love one another, but after twenty, thirty, forty, or even fifty years, many couples can testify that their love is no longer the same as when they first met. Their love has grown deeper and become

sweeter. Especially as a couple passes through some experiences together, their love deepens and grows sweeter. In the same way, in the matter of our appreciation of the house of God, we need to pass through some experiences in order to come to the level of Psalm 84. Through the progression of all the earlier psalms up to Psalm 84, there has been a process with many experiences, causing the psalmist to come to a deeper and sweeter appreciation and enjoyment of the house of God.

This kind of appreciation can only follow our experience of God's dealing and stripping. In the first two books of Psalms, which we covered in the previous training, the highest revelation was that of Christ with the house and the city as the steppingstones for Christ to come and regain His right over the whole earth. That was marvelous! But when we come to Psalm 73, it seems that the entire situation has changed. Brother Lee once said that if there is a day, there will be a night. After a glorious day, the evening will come. At the beginning of the third book of Psalms, we see troubles, disappointment, and dissatisfaction. These feelings become a kind of test to God's seekers. When they first came to the church life, it was like a honeymoon. Most of us have had such an experience. When we touched the church life in the Lord's recovery, it was heaven on earth. To us, all the brothers were heroes, and all the sisters were angels, but after six months or a year, suddenly the heroes became gophers, and the angels became scorpions. Even the elders and co-workers were no longer so lovable. What happened? Our honeymoon suddenly became a "vinegar-moon." The church life was not so sweet anymore. Then we began to face a lot of disappointment and discouragement. Most of us have had such an experience.

Eventually, things come in, things happen, and there is disappointment and discouragement. However, all these are used by the Lord as a kind of test to help deepen our enjoyment and appreciation of the house of God. Everything we brought with us to the church life that was natural needed to be stripped away. In order for us to enjoy Christ and become His house, His enlargement, all the natural things that we brought with us have to be stripped off. The Lord uses all the negative things that happen around us to strip away the natural things so that He can gain the pure Christ within us, and we can truly become His enlargement as His house.

A deeper love and a sweeter experience of the house of God are recovered by our experience of God as our unique portion and by Christ being given the unique position. When we are passing through

these disappointments and negative situations, instead of looking at our environment or giving up and murmuring and criticizing, we need to say, "Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is no one on earth that I desire besides You." If we can say this in the midst of these trials, we have made much progress, for our enjoyment and appreciation of the house of God have definitely deepened. Instead of looking at our environment, we are looking at the unique One in the heavens and on the earth who is our unique portion. We have no one besides Christ in the heavens or on the earth. The Lord desires to gain this deeper love and sweeter appreciation in each of us.

God's Purpose in Dealing with His Holy People Being That They Would Be Emptied of Everything to Receive Only God as Their Gain and Be Rebuilt with the Divine Trinity to Become the Masterpiece of God, Fulfilling God's Eternal Economy for His Expression

God's purpose in dealing with His holy people is that they would be emptied of everything to receive only God as their gain and be rebuilt with the Divine Trinity to become the masterpiece of God, fulfilling God's eternal economy for His expression (Job 10:13; Eph. 3:9-11; 2:10).

We should never forget that the central focus of God's economy is that Christ would become our all in all, that Christ would become everything to us. Whatever we carry with us that is natural—our ambition, our self-exaltation, and everything of the old creation—needs to be stripped away until this Christ becomes all in all to us. This is the story of Job; he thought that he was an upright, perfect person, but God wanted to tell him, "Job, maybe you are upright in yourself. You have your integrity, but that has nothing to do with My economy. For My economy you need to be rebuilt, reorganized, and reconstituted with Myself." So God allowed many calamities and mishaps to take place in Job's life, not to punish him or to discipline him but to reconstruct him with God Himself. This is God's desire and purpose so that we could be reconstituted with Christ and Christ alone.

God Being Faithful to Take Away All Our Idols and to Lead Us into His Economy for Us to Enjoy Christ So That He May Have a Recovery Purely and Wholly of the Person of Christ

God is faithful to take away all our idols and to lead us into His economy for us to enjoy Christ so that He may have a recovery purely and wholly of the person of Christ (1 Cor. 1:9; 1 John 5:21; cf. Jer. 2:13; Lam. 3:22-24). I am so glad that God is faithful. Even though we are often not faithful, God is faithful. We are not so faithful to follow Him absolutely. We fail many times, but God is faithful to arrange all the situations and persons around us to take away our idols. As we heard in Message 1, these idols do not refer mainly to outward images but to the many hidden things within us. The things that replace Christ and take the place of God within us are the idols. God is faithful. He calls us into the fellowship of His Son, and He arranges by His sovereignty all the persons, situations, matters, and things around us so that we would be stripped of all our idols, our ambition, our pride, our self-confidence, and so forth so that we can be led to enjoy Christ and become a recovery that is purely and wholly of the person of Christ.

This is why the first two pieces of furniture outside the tabernacle in the outer court are the bronze burnt-offering altar and the laver. Both of these are for taking away our sins, our uncleanness, our worldliness, and our natural contamination so that we can enter into the tabernacle to enjoy all the riches within. We all must realize that outside the entrance to the church life, there is not a welcome sign but a big cross. To enter into the reality of the church life, we must first pass through the cross. All our ambition, pride, attainments, and achievements have to be crossed out and left outside the church. Then we can enter through the altar, the cross, and through the laver, the washing Spirit, to be stripped of all those negative things so that we can enter into the church life with Christ and Christ alone.

THE INTRINSIC CONTENT OF PSALM 84 BEING THE SECRET REVELATION CONCERNING THE ENJOYMENT OF CHRIST AS THE INCARNATED TRIUNE GOD, THE GOD-MAN

The Center of This Secret Revelation Being the House of God, Typified by the Tabernacle and by the Temple

The intrinsic content of Psalm 84 is the secret revelation concerning the enjoyment of Christ as the incarnated Triune God, the God-man (Col. 2:9; 1:12). The center of this secret revelation is the house of God

(Psa. 84:4, 10a), typified by the tabernacle (Exo. 40:2-8) and by the temple (1 Kings 6:1-3; 8:3-11).

In order to see this secret revelation, we have to pay attention to the matter of the house of God, which is the center of this revelation. Actually, the house of God is the central focus of the entire Bible. In Genesis 28 Jacob's dream was God's first vision to man. In that dream God revealed His desire to gain a dwelling place on the earth. Then in Exodus, after God rescued His people out of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness, He gave the revelation of the tabernacle to Moses on the mountain. God called Moses up to the mountain for forty days and forty nights. What was Moses doing there? God mainly revealed the pattern of the tabernacle to him in great detail. This clearly implies that the tabernacle was a deep longing that had been hidden in God's heart. He desires to have a dwelling place. Therefore, God met with Moses for forty days and forty nights on the mountain to reveal to him the pattern, the blueprint, of the tabernacle. He revealed to Moses how he was to build the tabernacle and specified all the materials that were to be used and all the exact measurements. You may think that God surely had more important things, greater things, to talk about with Moses than the building of a tent in the desert, yet this shows how crucial and how deep in God's heart is the matter of God's house.

We first see this in Genesis 28 with Jacob's dream. Later, God spoke about this with Moses on the mountain. With David and Solomon the tabernacle was enlarged to be the temple. The entire Old Testament concerning God's relationship and dealing with His people is centered around the tabernacle and the temple. The tabernacle and later the temple became the reference point for all God's dealings and transactions in His relationship with His people.

In the New Testament the Triune God embodied in Christ came through incarnation as a tabernacle. He became the very fulfillment of the tabernacle revealed in the Old Testament. At the end of the Bible, we see the New Jerusalem, the ultimate consummation of God's economy, which is the eternal tabernacle. In the eternal tabernacle we see not only the Triune God but also His redeemed, regenerated, transformed, and glorified people. They all have been incorporated into that tabernacle with God. This is the very house of God as the central revelation of the whole Bible and the center of this secret revelation covered here in Psalm 84.

Christ as the Embodiment of the Triune God Being the Fulfillment of the Types of the Tabernacle and the Temple

This Fulfillment Commencing in His Incarnation as the Individual Christ and Continuing until It Consummates in the New Jerusalem as the Corporate Christ, the Great God-man

Christ as the embodiment of the Triune God (Col. 2:9) is the fulfillment of the types of the tabernacle and the temple. This fulfillment commenced in His incarnation as the individual Christ (John 1:14; 2:21) and will continue (1 Tim. 3:15-16) until it consummates in the New Jerusalem as the corporate Christ, the great God-man (Rev. 21:2-3, 22).

The New Testament, from Matthew through Revelation, Covering the Entire Span of the Incarnation of the Triune God and Being a Record of the Divine Incarnation

The New Testament, from Matthew through Revelation, covers the entire span of the incarnation of the Triune God and is a record of the divine incarnation. I believe that few of us have this kind of realization. Many Christians today consider that Christ's incarnation happened two thousand years ago, and once a year on December 25, they celebrate that incarnation, that birth. But we have good news for them. Christ's incarnation is continuing every day. Every time a sinner calls on the name of the Lord and receives the Lord Jesus into them, the Triune God is incarnated once again. Furthermore, every time a believer opens his being to receive more of the divine dispensing of the Triune God into his being, a further incarnation of God is taking place in his being. This incarnation covers the entire New Testament age, from Matthew to Revelation, until it reaches the consummate stage with the New Jerusalem. In that holy city God's people will be filled, mingled, and incorporated together with the processed and consummated Triune God to become the eternal tabernacle of God as the consummate incarnation of the Triune God in the house of God.

The Enjoyment of Christ as the Incarnated Triune God in God's House Being Portrayed by the Arrangement of the Tabernacle and Its Furnishings

The enjoyment of Christ as the incarnated Triune God in God's house is portrayed by the arrangement of the tabernacle and its furnishings

(see diagram on p. 43). The tabernacle with its furnishings typifies the incarnated Triune God, whose incarnation covers the entire New Testament. The diagram of the tabernacle should help us see this, especially the new ones and young ones. We all need to be impressed with this picture. This is the tabernacle as a type of the incarnated Triune God—the enterable, enjoyable Triune God. The tabernacle was there for God's people to enter into. Our God does not want His people to merely worship or fear Him objectively. Our Triune God desires that His people would enter into Him, just as His people entered into the tabernacle in the Old Testament.

In the outer court there is the first altar, the bronze altar, which is for the offering of the sacrifices, and there is the laver for the priests, the serving ones, to wash themselves from all the filth of the earth. The cleansing from the altar and the laver qualified them to enter into the actual tabernacle itself. The first part of the tabernacle is called the Holy Place, in which are three pieces of furniture—the table of the bread of the Presence, the lampstand for light, and the second altar, the golden altar, for offering incense. Then there is the second veil, through which is the Holy of Holies with the Ark of the Covenant, and hidden within the Ark are the Tablets of the Covenant, Aaron's rod that budded, and a golden pot containing the hidden manna.

These are not merely furnishings, nor are they for some kind of display; these are types signifying that the tabernacle is the incarnated Triune God Himself for God's people to enter into and enjoy. We must enjoy Him at the bronze altar for the taking away of our sins and all negative things, and we must enjoy Him at the laver to be cleansed of every earthly touch. Then we need to enter into the tabernacle to enjoy Him as the bread of the Presence to satisfy our hunger, as the light of the lampstand to shine upon us, and as the golden incense altar, where we offer Christ as the incense to God for His acceptance.

Our experience at the golden altar ushers us into the Holy of Holies, where we enjoy Christ as the Ark. The lid of the Ark is the propitiation cover, or the propitiation place. This is the place where God's glory is and where God meets with and speaks to His people. We can enter into the reality of God Himself upon the Ark in the propitiation place, enjoying God's speaking, God's presence, God's infusion and transfusion, and all the items hidden within the Ark. This is all for our enjoyment, and we need to learn to enjoy our Triune God in such a detailed way. This is not for us to merely study; this picture portrays

the incarnated Triune God; He has become enterable. He wants us to enter into Him, not merely to know about Him or fear Him. He wants us to enter into Him and to partake of all the riches signified by all these furnishings.

THE PSALMIST'S LONGING AND EVEN FAINTING TO BE IN GOD'S TABERNACLES INDICATING TO WHAT EXTENT THE PSALMIST LOVED GOD'S TABERNACLES; THIS LOVE BEING MATURED THROUGH MANY TRIALS

The psalmist's longing and even fainting to be in God's tabernacles indicates to what extent the psalmist loved God's tabernacles; this love was matured through many trials (Psa. 84:2). I do not know if you have ever longed for something to the point of fainting, yet here the psalmist loved and yearned for God's tabernacle to such an extent that he longed to the point of fainting. This shows the deep subjective experience that the psalmist had with the tabernacle. This is much more than a common desire, for he says, "My soul longs, indeed even faints, / For the courts of Jehovah; / My heart and my flesh cry out / To the living God." May we all be brought into such a subjective experience with the Triune God as the tabernacle.

"AT YOUR TWO ALTARS EVEN THE SPARROW HAS FOUND A HOME; AND THE SWALLOW, A NEST FOR HERSELF, WHERE SHE MAY LAY HER YOUNG, O JEHOVAH OF HOSTS, MY KING AND MY GOD"

"At Your two altars even the sparrow has found a home; / And the swallow, a nest for herself, / Where she may lay her young, / O Jehovah of hosts, my King and my God" (v. 3). The first highlight of the psalmist's enjoyment and experience of the tabernacle was the two altars mentioned in this verse. One was the bronze altar in the outer court, and the other was the golden altar in the Holy Place. These were two crucial pieces of furniture in the tabernacle.

The Two Altars—the Bronze Altar for the Sacrifices and the Golden Altar of Incense—Signifying the Leading Consummations of the Work of the Incarnated Triune God, Who Is Christ as the Embodiment of God for His Increase

The two altars—the bronze altar for the sacrifices and the golden

altar of incense—signify the leading consummations of the work of the incarnated Triune God, who is Christ as the embodiment of God for His increase (Exo. 40:5-6). When Christ came to the earth, the two main things that He accomplished were His crucifixion, His death, and His resurrection. The bronze altar is a type of the cross of Christ, and it is at the cross that all our problems are solved. It is at the cross that all our sins were taken away and all the negative problems were dealt with so that we could enter into God. Without the bronze altar how could we vile sinners enter into the holy tabernacle? We praise the Lord for the bronze altar. For eternity we will never forget the cross of Christ, which is the reality of this bronze altar, where all negative things were terminated and solved and where we were set free, emancipated, to enter into the incarnated Triune God.

The psalmist mentions these two altars together because there is an intimate relationship between them. Exodus 40:5-6 mentions them together: "You shall put the golden altar for incense before the Ark of the Testimony and set up the screen of the entrance to the tabernacle. And you shall put the altar of burnt offering before the entrance of the tabernacle of the Tent of Meeting." Although there seems to be a distance between the two altars, in our experience they are intimately related.

At the Bronze Altar,
a Type of the Cross of Christ,
Our Problems before God Being Solved
through the Crucified Christ as the Sacrifices;
This Qualifying Us to Enter into the Tabernacle,
a Type of Christ as the Incarnated and Enterable Triune God,
and to Contact God at the Incense Altar
(the Bronze Altar for the Sacrifices Being Related to
God's Judicial Redemption Accomplished by Christ
in His Earthly Ministry)

At the bronze altar, a type of the cross of Christ, our problems before God are solved through the crucified Christ as the sacrifices; this qualifies us to enter into the tabernacle, a type of Christ as the incarnated and enterable Triune God, and to contact God at the incense altar (the bronze altar for the sacrifices is related to God's judicial redemption accomplished by Christ in His earthly ministry) (Rom. 5:10a; 8:3; Heb. 9:14; 7:27; 10:10).

At the Golden Altar of Incense in Front of the Holy of Holies,
the Resurrected Christ in His Ascension
Being the Incense for Us to Be Accepted by God in Peace;
through Our Prayer at the Incense Altar
Our Entering into the Holy of Holies—Our Spirit—
Where We Experience Christ as the Ark of the Testimony
with Its Contents (the Golden Altar of Incense
Being Related to God's Organic Salvation
Carried Out by Christ in His Heavenly Ministry)

At the golden altar of incense in front of the Holy of Holies (9:4), the resurrected Christ in His ascension is the incense for us to be accepted by God in peace; through our prayer at the incense altar we enter into the Holy of Holies—our spirit—where we experience Christ as the Ark of the Testimony with its contents (the golden altar of incense is related to God's organic salvation carried out by Christ in His heavenly ministry) (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25; 9:24; 10:19). The bronze altar is located before the entrance to the tabernacle in order to take care of all our problems so that we can be qualified to enter in. The second altar, which is the golden altar for offering incense, is located before the second veil just before the Holy of Holies. What is offered at the second altar has nothing to do with sin. The incense offered there signifies the fragrant Christ for God's acceptance of us.

Our sins were taken care of at the bronze altar, and they are no more. Now we are within the tabernacle. We can now come to the golden altar at which we offer Christ as our incense. He is our acceptance so that we may be accepted by God to enter all the way, not merely into the Holy Place but into the Holy of Holies. God intends that we would enter into the Holy of Holies where the Ark is, where God's shekinah glory is, and where God can meet with us, speak to us, and infuse us with Himself. The golden altar signifies the resurrected Christ in His ascension. He is the fragrant incense for our acceptance before God so that we can enter all the way into the Holy of Holies to partake of the Ark of God's Testimony and be infused and transfused by Him and with Him as the shekinah glory of God.

It is worthwhile to spend some time to consider the location of the golden incense altar. Exodus 30 says, "You shall make an altar on which to burn incense…And you shall overlay it with pure gold…And you shall put it before the veil that is over the Ark of the Testimony, before

the expiation cover that is over the Testimony, where I will meet with you" (vv. 1, 3, 6). According to verse 6, the golden incense altar was outside the veil, in the Holy Place. However, Hebrews 9:3-4 says, "After the second veil, a tabernacle, which is called the Holy of Holies, having a golden altar and the Ark of the Covenant covered about everywhere with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna and Aaron's rod that budded and the tablets of the covenant." According to these verses, it seems that the golden altar and the Ark were both in the Holy of Holies. According to Exodus, the incense altar was located in the Holy Place outside the Holy of Holies (see diagram, p. 43). Why then does Hebrews 9 say that the incense altar and the Ark both belong to the Holy of Holies? This appears to be a discrepancy, but this seeming discrepancy is very meaningful and full of significance.

There are three points that will help us to see this significance. First, we need to see that the golden altar was located very close to the Ark. The only thing that separated them was the veil. That the incense altar was so close to the Ark indicates that it was very intimately related to the Ark. According to location, the incense altar was in the Holy Place, and the Ark was in the Holy of Holies. These two were separated by the veil, yet they were very close, even right next to each other.

Second, 1 Kings 6:22 says, "The whole altar, which belonged to the innermost sanctuary, he overlaid with gold." Some translations refer to the innermost sanctuary as the oracle. The golden incense altar belonged to the innermost sanctuary, the Holy of Holies, the oracle. The oracle refers to the place of God's speaking. It refers particularly to the propitiation cover, or the mercy seat, upon the Ark with the observing cherubim. It is there at that oracle that God spoke with His people. According to verse 22, the golden altar belonged to the innermost sanctuary, to God's oracle. This indicates that the function of the golden altar was related to God's speaking to His people. At this golden altar, we offer Christ as the incense for our acceptance not only to remain in the Holy Place but also to receive Christ as our acceptance by God to enter into the Holy of Holies to receive God's speaking, transfusing, and infusing at His oracle. On the Day of Expiation, the Day of Atonement, in the Old Testament, the blood of the sacrifice from the bronze altar of burnt offering was brought into the Holy Place and sprinkled upon the golden incense altar and then carried into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled on the propitiation cover. The same blood was sprinkled on these two pieces of furniture.

Third, the incense altar is actually related to our prayer. Revelation 8:3-4 says, "Another Angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and much incense was given to Him to offer with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense went up with the prayers of the saints out of the hand of the Angel before God." The offering of incense to God signifies our prayer. Prayer is the unique way for us to enter into the Holy of Holies and come before the throne of grace. In the book of Hebrews we are encouraged to come forward and to enter into the Holy of Holies. In 10:19-20 Paul says, "Having therefore, brothers, boldness for entering the Holy of Holies in the blood of Jesus, which entrance He initiated for us as a new and living way through the veil, that is, His flesh." In verse 22 he says, "Let us come forward to the Holy of Holies with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water." The blood of Jesus has opened for us a new and living way. The way has now been opened. The offering of incense on the golden altar to God for our acceptance is not for us to remain in the Holy Place. As we exercise to pray, which is to offer Christ as the incense to God for our acceptance, our goal is to enter into the Holy of Holies. We need to come forward. We are not of those who shrink back. We are those who come forward to the throne of grace. This is very experiential.

We are not speaking something that is mere doctrine concerning the incense altar. This piece of furniture—the golden altar where the incense was offered—is related to our prayer. Through our experience at the incense altar, we enter into the holiest place, the Holy of Holies, and come particularly to the oracle of God above the propitiation cover so that we may behold and reflect the glory of the Lord. Thus, we are being transformed from one stage of glory to another stage of glory. Through our prayer we enter into our spirit and also into the Holy of Holies and come to the propitiation place, the mercy seat, the throne of grace, to be under the shining and infusing of God's glory. It is here that God is transfused into us, and we are united, mingled, and incorporated with Him.

This is the purpose of the two altars. The first altar, the bronze altar of burnt offering, qualifies us to enter into the tabernacle. The offering of the incense for God's acceptance at the second altar, the golden incense altar, allows us to enter into the Holy of Holies, which is our spirit, where we find God's oracle, where God speaks and shines, and

where we are transformed from glory to glory. It is here that God can gain us and we can become Him, being filled unto glory and glorified by Him. Thus, in an experiential way we are incorporated with the Triune God into the consummate, eternal, universal tabernacle.

Through Such an Experience of Christ Our Being Incorporated into the Tabernacle, the Incarnated Triune God, to Become a Part of the Corporate Christ as God's Testimony for His Manifestation

Through such an experience of Christ we are incorporated into the tabernacle, the incarnated Triune God, to become a part of the corporate Christ (1 Cor. 12:12) as God's testimony for His manifestation. I hope that we now see something more concerning the preciousness of these two altars. One qualifies us by taking care of all the negative things so that we can enter into the tabernacle. The other, as a type of the resurrected and ascended Christ, allows us to enter into the Holy of Holies by the exercise of our prayer so that we can be fully united, mingled, and incorporated with the Triune God to become part of the tabernacle.

Through These Two Altars God's Redeemed, the "Sparrows" and "Swallows," Finding a Nest as Their Refuge and a Home with God in Rest

Through these two altars God's redeemed, the "sparrows" and "swallows," can find a nest as their refuge and a home with God in rest (cf. Psa. 90:1; 91:1). We are the little swallows and sparrows. We are nothing, yet we have found a home. Our home is in the house of God with these two altars. Here we have found a refuge from all troubles and attacks. Here we are safe and at rest.

The Cross of Christ, Typified by the Bronze Altar, Being Our "Nest," Our Refuge, Where We Are Saved from Our Troubles and Where We "Lay" Our Young, That Is, Produce New Believers through the Preaching of the Gospel

The cross of Christ, typified by the bronze altar, is our "nest," our refuge, where we are saved from our troubles and where we "lay" our young, that is, produce new believers through the preaching of the gospel. The bronze altar, typifying the cross of Christ, has two functions: one for refuge and the other for reproduction.

When We Experience the Resurrected Christ in His Ascension, Typified by the Golden Altar of Incense, Our Being Accepted by God in Such a Christ and Finding a Home, a Place of Rest, in the House of God

When we experience the resurrected Christ in His ascension, typified by the golden altar of incense, we are accepted by God in such a Christ and find a home, a place of rest, in the house of God.

This House Being the Processed and Consummated Triune God United, Mingled, and Incorporated with All His Redeemed, Regenerated, and Transformed Elect to Be the Body of Christ in the Present Age and the New Jerusalem as the Mutual Dwelling Place of God and His Redeemed in Eternity

This house is the processed and consummated Triune God united, mingled, and incorporated with all His redeemed, regenerated, and transformed elect (John 14:1-23) to be the Body of Christ in the present age and the New Jerusalem as the mutual dwelling place of God and His redeemed in eternity (Rev. 21:3, 22). This is the very house that the Lord Jesus spoke of in John 14. In verse 2 He said, "In My Father's house are many abodes." These many abodes are not many apartments in a golden mansion in the heavens. These abodes are you and I, the many believers, the many branches of the vine tree. We are the many abodes in the Father's house. The Lord said that He was leaving the disciples and was going to the Father. Then in verse 10 He said, "Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak from Myself, but the Father who abides in Me does His works." This shows that the Son and Father are incorporated together and coinhere with one another to be this abode and mutual dwelling place. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit coinhere eternally within one another to be this mutual dwelling place as a divine incorporation. Among the three of the Godhead, the Father is in the Son, the Son is in the Father, and the Son is the Spirit; They mutually indwell one another.

In verse 20 the Lord said, "In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you." He was saying that on the day of resurrection, after He had passed through death and resurrection, we would know that He is in the Father, that we are in Him, and that

He is in us. Through His death and resurrection He was going to the Father to prepare a place for all of us. This place is not a physical mansion with a golden golf course. He prepared a mutual dwelling place where He as the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—can dwell in all the believers, and all the believers can dwell in Him. Thus, we become this universal, mutual dwelling place. This is the very house of God revealed in Psalm 84. This is the experience of the universal, divine-human incorporation of God and man that is the issue of our experience of these two altars. This is very precious.

"BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO DWELL IN YOUR HOUSE; THEY WILL YET BE PRAISING YOU. SELAH... O JEHOVAH OF HOSTS, BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO TRUSTS IN YOU"

In Type, the House Being the Church as a Totality, and the Tabernacles Being the Local Churches

Psalm 84:4 and 12 say, "Blessed are those who dwell in Your house; / They will yet be praising You. Selah... / O Jehovah of hosts, blessed is the man / Who trusts in You." In type, the house is the church as a totality (1 Tim. 3:15), and the tabernacles (Psa. 84:1) are the local churches (Rev. 1:11).

Praising the Lord Needing to Be Our Living, and Our Church Life Needing to Be a Life of Praising

Praising the Lord should be our living, and our church life should be a life of praising (Psa. 22:3; 50:23; 1 Thes. 5:16-19; Phil. 4:4, 11-13). Our church life should be a life of praising. If we really see the preciousness and the enjoyment involved in the tabernacle and its furnishings that lead us to this incorporation with the Triune God to become part of this tabernacle, we will surely praise Him. We can only say, "Praise the Lord!" We are incorporated with the Triune God. The only thing left for us to do is praise Him. Our praises are a testimony that everything is done. God has won the victory, and He has done everything. All we need to do is praise Him.

We not only need to pray to Him; we have to praise Him. Praising is a sign and an indication of victory. In our meetings there should be more praising than praying or speaking. In all the churches the meetings should be full of praises.

In the Church Life Our Trusting in God, Not in Ourselves or in Our Natural Human Ability to Work Out a Solution to Our Difficult Situations

In the church life we trust in God, not in ourselves or in our natural human ability to work out a solution to our difficult situations (2 Cor. 1:8-9, 12). The way to dwell in the house of God is not by begging or merely asking but by praising. The real trust in God is to praise the Lord. Before coming into the church, we may have had the experience of someone saying, "Trust in the Lord." We then tried our best to trust in the Lord. After trusting for one day, we might have said, "Why hasn't the Lord done what I needed? Why don't I have it yet?" Then we may have tried to trust some more. The real trust in the Lord is when we start praising the Lord.

You may be without a job or sick, and you may have prayed, trying to get some recompense or receive some healing. Sometimes it seems that the Lord is not hearing your prayer. But if you are really enjoying the tabernacle, you will be praising Him. Our real trust in the Lord is when we begin to praise Him. You might say, "Lord, I'm unemployed. I'm out of a job, but I praise You. Lord, my health is not so good, but I praise You!" Your praising the Lord includes your trusting. You are committing everything to Him not merely by asking Him but by praising Him.

"BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE STRENGTH IS IN YOU, IN WHOSE HEART ARE THE HIGHWAYS TO ZION"

Psalm 84:5 says, "Blessed is the man whose strength is in You, / In whose heart are the highways to Zion" (cf. Phil. 4:13; John 15:5). Psalm 84 speaks of our praising, our trusting in Jehovah, and our having our strength in Him. When we praise the Lord, we suddenly realize that our strength is not in ourselves but in Him. When we start praising the Lord, we touch real strengthening from Him and in Him. These three things—praising, trusting, and being strengthened—are tied together. The psalmist seems to be saying, "Blessed is the man who dwells in Your house, because he praises You, he trusts in You, and his strength is in You. In his heart are the highways to Zion." Ones like this praise the Lord, trust in the Lord, and are strengthened in the Lord, not for themselves because in their hearts are the highways to Zion. Highways should be something on the outside, something that we take as a pathway or a road for our journey. However, the psalmist says that these

highways are inside of us. The highways to Zion are in our hearts; they are within us.

The Highways to Zion Signifying Our Intention to Enter into the Church as the House of God and Being the Blessed Highways for Seeking the Incarnated Triune God in His Consummations, Typified by the Furniture in the Tabernacle

The highways to Zion signify our intention to enter into the church as the house of God and are the blessed highways for seeking the incarnated Triune God in His consummations, typified by the furniture in the tabernacle (Heb. 10:19-22). These highways to Zion indicate, or imply, our intention to enter into the church life. Before we came into the church life, our Christian life was a wandering life. We wandered from one denomination to a free group to another sect. We were never satisfied until we touched the local churches in the Lord's recovery. Eventually, the Lord touched us that we needed to exercise a strong intention to take this way. This is not a place where a person can just wander about according to his preference and choice. Here there is a highway, implying our strong intention. Anyone who takes the way of Zion must be absolute. There is a highway, and this highway leads to Zion. My heart is full of this highway. For anyone to take the way of the Lord's recovery requires a strong intention to take the way of the local churches. There needs to be a highway in our heart.

These blessed highways also imply our seeking the incarnated Triune God as typified by the tabernacle. Every day we need to take this journey; we need to travel on this highway to Zion by passing through the bronze altar, the laver, the table of the bread of the Presence, and the lampstand in order to offer Christ as the incense. Through prayer we enter into the Holy of Holies, which is Zion. This is where God is, where God's glory is, and where God's presence is.

On the One Hand, Our Having Entered into God; on the Other Hand, Our Still Being on the Highways to Enter into God

On the one hand, we have entered into God; on the other hand, we are still on the highways to enter into God. On one hand, we are already in Zion. We are in the Lord's recovery; we are in the church life, but every day we still need to journey on the highways to Zion. We

have gathered here for another six days of training because we are on a highway to Zion. We are making the ascent to Zion. This is just the first day. After six days we will reach the peak. We are on this journey on the highways to Zion. This is wonderful. Do not stop; do not be content with where you are. Twice a year we come together to journey together, to enter in a little bit more, to come forward a little bit more into God.

That the Highways to Zion Are in Our Heart Meaning That We Need to Take the Way of the Church Internally, Not Merely Externally; When We Are Deeply in the Inner Life, Our Certainly Being in the Way of the Church; the Highways to Zion Being within Our Heart

That the highways to Zion are in our heart means that we need to take the way of the church internally, not merely externally; when we are deeply in the inner life, we will certainly be in the way of the church; the highways to Zion will be within our heart (cf. 1 John 1:3-4). There are Christians who consider the practice of the church and the experience of the inner life to be two separate things. But our practice of the church life, our taking this highway to Zion, must be something internal, in our heart. We should not think that we can say, "I'm standing on the ground of 'one city, one church' according to the teaching of Watchman Nee and according to the teaching of the New Testament. I am fine." No, you are not fine. The practice of the church is not merely outward according to some principles, some rules. Once, a brother came to me with a map to show me, or to convince me, that his practice of the local church was fully legal because he was going to establish a church outside the boundary of any existing church. He wanted to make it clear that he would not interfere with us and that he was keeping the principle of "one city, one church." His view was totally outward and doctrinal.

The highways to Zion must be something in our heart. There is no way for us to take these highways to Zion, to take the way of the church, without internally touching the Lord and experiencing Him as life. Conversely, if you are experiencing Him as life, He will lead you to the church. The experience of Christ as the inner life and the practice of the church—these are not two separate things. In Song of Songs the seeker says, "Draw me; we will run after you" (1:4). Then the beloved

tells her, "Go forth on the footsteps of the flock" (v. 8). She was drawn by the Lord. She was seeking the Lord and enjoying the Lord's love, but the Lord told her to go forth on the footsteps of the flock. As we enjoy Christ as the inner life, He will lead us to the church life. The highways to Zion must be something taken internally.

Zion Being the Very Spot Where God Is, the Holy of Holies; the Overcomers Becoming Zion, and the Lord's Recovery Being to Build Up Zion

Zion is the very spot where God is, the Holy of Holies; the overcomers become Zion, and the Lord's recovery is to build up Zion (Rev. 21:16; cf. Exo. 26:2-8; 1 Kings 6:20; Rev. 2:7). Eventually, we will see that Zion is the peak. We are now climbing; we are on this journey. Zion is the very spot where God is, it refers first to the Holy of Holies. The Holy of Holies was a cube both in the tabernacle and in the temple. Eventually, the New Jerusalem is a holy cube. The entire city is just the enlargement of the Holy of Holies, the inner sanctuary. This is Zion. This is where God is, and the Lord's recovery is for building up Zion. The vital groups, the overcomers, are part of Zion. So we all have to make this journey.

"PASSING THROUGH THE VALLEY OF BACA, THEY MAKE IT A SPRING; INDEED THE EARLY RAIN COVERS IT WITH BLESSINGS"

"Passing through the valley of Baca, / They make it a spring; / Indeed the early rain covers it with blessings" (Psa. 84:6). This highway passes through a valley that is called "the valley of Baca." *Baca* means "weeping." On the one hand, this highway is glorious, heading toward Zion, but on the other hand, it passes through the valley of weeping.

Baca Meaning "Weeping"; on the One Hand, Those on the Highways to Zion Being Strengthened in God; on the Other Hand, Their Being Opposed by Satan, Who Causes Them to Suffer Persecution

Baca means "weeping"; on the one hand, those on the highways to Zion are strengthened in God (v. 5); on the other hand, they are opposed by Satan, who causes them to suffer persecution. Anyone who takes the way of the Lord's recovery will suffer opposition. We all can testify that before we came into the church, our Christian life was relatively smooth

and peaceful. But once we touched the recovery, once we touched the church, all kinds of opposition came to us. From within our family, from our relatives, from our friends, we faced all kinds of attacks and persecution. It is true that if you remain in the world, if you remain in today's Christianity, you will not be bothered so much, but when you begin to take the highways to Zion, you will pass through a valley of weeping. There will be suffering and persecution. It is somewhat ironic; on the one hand, we are being strengthened, we are praising the Lord, and we are trusting in Him, but on the other hand, we are facing opposition.

The Trouble and Persecution Caused by Satan Making the Highways a Valley of Weeping; This Special Term Indicating That the Psalmist Had Been Disciplined by God and Had Been Stripped by Him

The trouble and persecution caused by Satan can make the highways a valley of weeping; this special term indicates that the psalmist had been disciplined by God and had been stripped by Him.

The Highways to Zion Not Being External, Superficial, or Cheap; Our Needing to Pay a Price to Take the Way of the Church

The highways to Zion are not external, superficial, or cheap; we must pay a price to take the way of the church (Phil. 3:7-8; Matt. 25:9; Rev. 3:18; Acts 20:19, 31; Psa. 56:8). In Colossians 1:24 Paul speaks of filling up that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ for His Body. We partake of the afflictions of Christ for the sake of the church. If we do not care for the church, we do not have to suffer that much, but if we take care of the church, there will be suffering involved. Christ suffered first for the accomplishment of redemption, but there is still another category of His sufferings that needs to be partaken of by His seekers and His lovers. These are the sufferings needed for the building up of the church, His Body.

When We Pass through the Valley of Baca, God Making This Valley a Spring; This Spring Being the Spirit

When we pass through the valley of Baca, God makes this valley a

spring (cf. v. 24; Heb. 10:34); this spring is the Spirit (John 4:14; 7:38-39).

The More We Weep on the Highways to Zion, the More Our Receiving the Spirit; While We Are Weeping, Our Being Filled with the Spirit, and the Spirit Becoming Our Spring

The more we weep on the highways to Zion, the more we receive the Spirit; while we are weeping, we are being filled with the Spirit, and the Spirit becomes our spring. Our weeping is the expression of our sorrow and pain to the point that we cannot hold it in; something simply bursts out. This results from a deep suffering, a deep sorrow. But Psalm 84:6 reveals that the valley of weeping can be turned into a spring, a place full of the Spirit. Surely we have all suffered, but much of our suffering was because of our mistakes. We are speaking here of sufferings related to the church, sufferings related to God's economy. When some in your family misunderstand you because of your standing for the church and for God's purpose, this will cause you to weep. But the Lord will turn those tears into a spring, into the enjoyment of the Spirit. There were times when I suffered to the point that I said, "Lord, I cannot speak another message"; I was touched deeply. But then my speaking after those experiences was the most released. I touched the flowing of the Spirit in a way that I could never have imagined. My tears somehow were turned into a spring. If you have never touched what it is to suffer on behalf of God's economy, on behalf of God's building, you will never know the fullness of the Spirit. The more we weep on the highways to Zion, the more we receive the Spirit. While we are weeping, we are being filled with the Spirit, and the Spirit becomes our spring.

Those Who Come into the Church Life by Passing through the Valley of Weeping Finding That This Weeping Eventually Becomes a Great Blessing to Them; This Blessing Being the Spirit

Those who come into the church life by passing through the valley of weeping find that this weeping eventually becomes a great blessing to them; this blessing is the Spirit. How does the valley of Baca become a spring? How do you turn weeping into a spring? You cannot do it. However, it is interesting that Psalm 84:6 says, "Passing through the valley of Baca, / They make it a spring." *They* in this verse refers to the saints. It is the saints who make it a spring. Of course, humanly speaking, we cannot make anything a spring; it has to be God who does it. So, who is it that makes it a spring? In our experience, when we encounter suffering and persecution, there is often weeping, but what is our attitude when we are passing through these sufferings? Are we pitying ourselves, sympathizing with ourselves, blaming others, or just blaming the situation? If this is our attitude, we will just remain in the valley of weeping, but if in spite of all the misunderstandings and opposition, we are not pitying ourselves, then our eyes are on Zion. We are not giving up; we are not saying, "Forget about it. I quit. This church is not real. These saints don't have love." If instead of looking at others or at our environment, our eyes are set on Zion, immediately our tears will become a spring. In such a way, we can turn our situation into a spring. What is our attitude? How do we receive it when suffering comes? Do we shrink back, throw in the towel, or complain? Or do we say, "Lord, I will keep coming forward. I am on the highway to Zion"? Then our tears will become a spring.

The Tears They Shed Being Their Own, but These Tears Issuing in a Spring, Which Becomes the Early Rain, the Spirit as the Blessing

The tears they shed are their own, but these tears issue in a spring, which becomes the early rain, the Spirit as the blessing (Zech. 10:1; Gal. 3:14; Eph. 1:3).

"THEY GO FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH;
EACH APPEARS BEFORE GOD IN ZION...FOR A DAY
IN YOUR COURTS IS BETTER THAN A THOUSAND;
I WOULD RATHER STAND AT THE THRESHOLD
OF THE HOUSE OF MY GOD THAN DWELL
IN THE TENTS OF THE WICKED. FOR JEHOVAH GOD
IS A SUN AND A SHIELD; JEHOVAH GIVES GRACE AND GLORY"

The More We Go On in the Church Life, the More Our Gaining Strength

"They go from strength to strength; / Each appears before God in Zion... / For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand; / I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God / Than dwell in the tents of the wicked. / For Jehovah God is a sun and a shield; / Jehovah gives grace and glory" (Psa. 84:7, 10-11a). The more we go on in

the church life, the more strength we will gain (cf. Prov. 4:18; 2 Cor. 3:18).

If Our Service Is Intrinsically according to God's Will in the Church Life, Each Day Being Worth Many Days in God's Eyes

If our service is intrinsically according to God's will in the church life, each day will be worth many days in God's eyes (Joel 2:25a). Each day in God's house is worth more than a thousand days in the tents of the wicked. This means that by spending our days in the house of God, journeying in this tabernacle, we are redeeming those days. We are redeeming the time. The days that have been eaten by locusts need to be redeemed so that one day may be counted as a thousand.

The Blessings of Our Dwelling in the House of God Being Our Enjoyment of the Incarnated and Consummated Triune God as Our Sun to Supply Us with Life, as Our Shield to Protect Us from God's Enemy, as Grace for Our Inward Enjoyment, and as Glory for the Outward Manifestation of God in Splendor

The blessings of our dwelling in the house of God are our enjoyment of the incarnated and consummated Triune God as our sun to supply us with life (John 1:4; 8:12), as our shield to protect us from God's enemy (Eph. 6:11-17), as grace for our inward enjoyment (John 1:14, 17), and as glory for the outward manifestation of God in splendor (Rev. 21:11, 23).

I would ask you all to pray concerning what you have read, but do not just pray in a routine way. This is not a routine message. I believe that through this word each of you has been touched by the Lord concerning something. You have to pray from deep within according to what the Lord has touched you with. Pray that thing back to Him, expressing your desire, your yearning, that the highways of Zion would be in your heart. Express your desire to journey through the tabernacle to become incorporated into the incarnated Triune God.—J. L.

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OF THE PSALMS (2)

God's Desire for Zion with Christ (Message 3)

Scripture Reading: Psa. 87; 2:6; 48:1-2

I. Psalm 87 reveals that God's heart is set on Zion, the city of God, with Christ within it—vv. 2-3:
   A. Zion is central in God's heart—2:6; 48:1-2; 50:2; 99:2; 132:13; 135:21.
   B. Restoration, salvation, and release from sufferings are the desires of the saints, but God's desire is for Zion with His Christ—85:4; 86:2; 88:1-3; 87:2-3:
      1. Salvation is not for ourselves—salvation is for God's purpose and economy.
      2. God saves people for His Christ, for His house, and for Zion, the city of God, in order that one day He might gain the entire earth through Christ with His overcomers—51:18; Eph. 2:4-6, 8, 10, 21-22; Rev. 11:15.

II. "His foundation is in the holy mountains"—Psa. 87:1:
   A. This divine foundation, typifying Christ as God's unique foundation for the building up of His house, the church, is built in the "holy mountains," which typify the local churches—1 Cor. 3:11.
   B. As the Christ and the Son of the living God, the Lord Jesus is the unique foundation laid by God for His building—Matt. 16:16, 18; 1 Cor. 3:11.
   C. According to Paul's word in 1 Corinthians 3, Christ is a living foundation, a foundation that grows:
      1. God gives the growth, and to give growth is a matter of growing Christ; the Christ who grows within us is a living, growing foundation—vv. 6-7, 11.
      2. The foundation grows in us, and this growth produces

gold, silver, and precious stones for the building up of the church—v. 12a.

D. As Christ, the unique foundation, holds and supports God's building, He dispenses Himself into every part of the building, imparting His element into all the believers—Col. 2:19.

III. "Jehovah loves the gates of Zion"—Psa. 87:2a:

A. Gates are for coming in and going out, signifying fellowship—1 Cor. 1:9.

B. Fellowship is related to oneness; fellowship brings all the members of the Body of Christ into oneness—10:16-17; Eph. 4:3-6:

1. The fellowship among the churches is the fellowship of the body of Christ—1 Cor. 10:16.
2. Fellowship is the reality of living in the Body of Christ—12:12-13, 27.

C. The fact that the New Jerusalem has twelve gates indicates that God's holy city will be full of fellowship—Rev. 21:12, 21.

IV. "Glorious things are spoken of you, / O city of God"—Psa. 87:3:

A. *Zion* is a poetic title of the church in both the universal sense and the local sense—v. 2.

B. Zion was the city of King David (2 Sam. 5:7), the center of the city of Jerusalem as God's dwelling place on earth:

1. Zion within Jerusalem typifies the body of overcomers, the perfected and matured God-men, within the church as the heavenly Jerusalem—Heb. 12:22; Rev. 14:1-5.
2. As the highlight and beauty of the holy city Jerusalem, Zion typifies the overcomers as the high peak, the center, the uplifting, the strengthening, the enriching, the beauty, and the reality of the church—Psa. 48:1-2, 11-12; 50:2; 20:2; 53:6a; 87:2.
3. The overcomers as Zion are the reality of the Body of Christ and consummate the building up of the Body in the local churches to bring in the consummated holy city, New Jerusalem, the Holy of Holies as God's dwelling place, in eternity—Rev. 21:1-3, 16, 22.

C. For the Lord to do good in His good pleasure unto Zion is for Him to build up the church, fill the church with His glory, and grant the church His rich presence with Himself as joy,

peace, life, light, security, and every spiritual blessing—Psa. 51:18; cf. Eph. 1:3.

D. Although the Lord has the right, the title, to the earth, today the earth is usurped by His enemy; yet on this usurped earth there is the mountain of Jehovah, Mount Zion, which is absolutely open to the Lord and absolutely possessed by Him—Psa. 24:1-3, 7-10; 2:6; 87:3.

E. In the new heaven and new earth the entire New Jerusalem will become Zion, with all the believers as overcomers—Rev. 14:1; 21:1-2, 16.

V. "But of Zion it will be said, / This one and that one were born in her, / And the Most High Himself will establish her. / Jehovah will count / When He records the peoples: / This One was born there"—Psa. 87:5-6:

A. In verses 5 and 6 God's intention is to make a contrast, a comparison, of all other places with Zion.

B. Psalm 87 unveils Christ with all the saints to be God's house for God's city and for God to gain the whole earth—27:4; 36:8-9; 48:1-2; 72:8.

C. *This One* in 87:6 and *this one* and *that one* in verse 5 indicate that Christ Himself and all the saints were born in the heavenly Zion—Matt. 1:20; Gal. 4:26-31; Heb. 12:22-23a.

D. *This One* is the unique One, Christ, who is the totality of all the saints (Psa. 87:5) as the One who is all the saints and in all the saints—Col. 3:11.

E. In resurrection God begot a Son, Jesus Christ, and in resurrection God regenerated many sons; this shows us that the resurrection of Christ was a great delivery—Acts 13:33; Rom. 1:3-4; John 20:17; 1 Pet. 1:3:

1. Christ was born as the Firstborn, and we were regenerated as His many brothers, the many sons of God; hence, that birth in resurrection was a corporate birth—the birth of the firstborn Son and His many brothers—Rom. 8:29; Heb. 1:6; 2:10-11.
2. The birth of a new corporate child comprising Christ and His believers was the birth of the new man—Col. 3:10:
   a. The corporate man brought forth by Christ's work in His resurrection is the new man spoken of in Ephesians 2:15.

b. The Head is the firstborn Son of God, and the Body is a composition of all the many sons of God, the many brothers of the Lord—1:22-23.

c. This child, this corporate new man, was brought forth through Christ's work in resurrection—John 16:20-22.

VI. "All my springs are in you"—Psa. 87:7b:

A. *You* is the city of God; all the springs are in Zion.

B. The processed Triune God is the fountain, the springs, and the river of water of life; the Father is the fountain, the Son is the springs, and the Spirit is the river of water of life—John 4:14; 7:38; Isa. 12:2-3.

C. In eternity the Lamb will shepherd God's redeemed and guide them to springs of waters of life—Rev. 7:17:

1. As our Shepherd, Christ will lead us into Himself as the springs of water of life so that we may enjoy the eternal dispensing of the Triune God.

2. *Springs of waters of life* refers to the unique water of life in different aspects—v. 17; John 7:38; Rev. 22:1.

3. In the New Jerusalem, the eternal Mount Zion, we will drink of many springs and enjoy many different waters; for eternity we will be able to declare, "All my springs are in you."

MESSAGE THREE

GOD'S DESIRE FOR ZION WITH CHRIST

In this message we come to an awesome matter—God's desire for Zion with Christ. Regarding Zion, Psalm 48:1-2 says,

Great is Jehovah,
And much to be praised
In the city of our God,
In His holy mountain.

Beautiful in elevation,
The joy of the whole earth,
Is Mount Zion, the sides of the north,
The city of the great King.

Praise the Lord for Zion in the city of our God and the mountain of His holiness!

PSALM 87 REVEALING THAT GOD'S HEART IS SET ON ZION, THE CITY OF GOD, WITH CHRIST WITHIN IT

Psalm 87 reveals that God's heart is set on Zion, the city of God, with Christ within it (vv. 2-3). Psalm 22 unveils Christ in His crucifixion and Christ in His resurrection as the regenerating One. In Psalm 23 He is the Shepherd leading us all into the house of God for our lifelong enjoyment of Him. Then in Psalm 24 He is the King, and the earth is Jehovah's. Thus, in Psalms 22 through 24 we can see the progression of Christ, house, city, and earth, and we can also see that God's heart is set on Zion.

In the previous message we were all infused with the desire that our heart would be filled with the highways to Zion and that our heart would match and line up with God's heart. Every day we should ask ourselves, "Where is my heart?" We want our heart to match God's heart, and Psalm 87 clearly reveals that God's heart is set on Zion. Zion is the city of God, and this city must have Christ within it. If it did not have Christ within, it would be an empty Zion. Zion must have Christ

within it, for Christ is the center, the reality, and everything in God's economy.

Zion Being Central in God's Heart

Zion is central in God's heart (2:6; 48:1-2; 50:2; 99:2; 132:13; 135:21). Psalm 2:6 says, "I have installed My King / Upon Zion, My holy mountain." Zion is central in God's heart because this is where Christ is installed as King. God's heart is focused on nothing but Christ. In Matthew 17, when Jesus was transfigured and Moses and Elijah appeared with Him, Peter became excited and suggested that they make a tent for each of them, indicating that he put Moses and Elijah on the same level as Christ. This offended God, for it meant that the disciples had completely missed His heart. Therefore, God had to speak boldly, saying, "This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight. Hear Him!" (v. 5). In other words, the Father was saying, "This is My Son, and this is where My heart is! This Son is Jesus, who I have installed as King on the holy mountain of Zion."

Psalm 48:2 says that Zion is "beautiful in elevation." Mount Zion is the highest point in the city of Jerusalem, the place where the temple with the Holy of Holies stood. This mountain is beautiful in elevation and the joy of the whole earth. Within Jerusalem is a mountain called Zion. Since Zion is the highest peak within Jerusalem, it is a type of the highest peak in the universe, where Christ Himself is seated. This peak is actually in our spirit. We want to remain on this peak. Whenever we praise the elevated Christ, we automatically become part of this elevated peak.

In Ephesians 1:19-23 we see Christ's resurrection, His being seated in ascension in the heavenlies, the subjection of all things under His feet, and His being made Head over all things to the church. These verses demonstrate that He is truly the installed King and that what He needs and deserves is nothing but praise.

Restoration, Salvation, and Release from Sufferings Being the Desires of the Saints, but God's Desire Being for Zion with His Christ

Restoration, salvation, and release from sufferings are the desires of the saints, but God's desire is for Zion with His Christ (Psa. 85:4; 86:2; 88:1-3; 87:2-3). Matthew 1:1, the first verse of the New Testament, says, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ." The first name in the New Testament is Jesus, which means "Jehovah the Savior" or "the

salvation of Jehovah." Thus, Matthew reveals the matter of salvation. However, the main emphasis of the entire book of Matthew is God's kingdom, indicating that the ultimate purpose of salvation is not merely that we would be rescued or delivered from Satan's tyranny and God's judgment but that we would be saved and restored for the city of Zion, which signifies the kingdom of God. Salvation is not for itself but for Zion because God's desire is for Zion with His Christ.

Salvation Not Being for Ourselves—Salvation Being for God's Purpose and Economy

Salvation is not for ourselves—salvation is for God's purpose and economy. As believers we all have been saved, but we still need more salvation. Salvation has a goal—that we would be constituted with Christ to become His house and His city as His enlargement so that we could be one with Him for His testimony on the whole earth. As we saw in Message 2, Christ is the incarnated King who tabernacled among us and eventually became enterable. Now all of us, the little sparrows and swallows, are in Him, dwelling within our enterable Triune God.

Through His death and resurrection He became the pneumatic Christ, the life-giving Spirit, so that He could enter into us and saturate us with Himself as the King. Every time He is wrought into us a little bit more, Christ, the King, is being wrought into us, the "dom," for more kingdom. Thus, we are being ever increasingly united and mingled with Him so that we could become the kingdom. In other words, every time we give Him a little more ground, His kingdom comes a little more. Thus, God's desire is altogether for Christ and for Christ to be expanded, enlarged, and constituted into His people for His house and His city for the sake of the whole earth.

God Saving People for His Christ, for His House, and for Zion, the City of God, in Order That One Day He Might Gain the Entire Earth through Christ with His Overcomers

God saves people for His Christ, for His house, and for Zion, the city of God, in order that one day He might gain the entire earth through Christ with His overcomers (Psa. 51:18; Eph. 2:4-6, 8, 10, 21-22; Rev. 11:15). The focus of the Lord's recovery is to make us the elevated peak, the holy city of Zion, by constituting us with Christ. This is for the testimony of Jesus. In Matthew 16 the Lord asked Peter, "Who do you say that I am?" and Peter answered, "You are the Christ,

the Son of the living God" (vv. 15-16). Then the Lord said, "I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (v. 18). And in verse 19 He said, "I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in the heavens." Even in these few verses we can see Christ, the house (the church), the city (the kingdom), and the earth. Thus, the greatest prophecy uttered by the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 16 reveals that His burden is that He would be enlarged, expanded, and constituted into us so that we would become His house, the church, and His city, the kingdom, for the sake of the entire earth.

Moreover, Matthew 24:14 says, "This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole inhabited earth for a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come." The Lord's gaining of Zion is a great matter. We need to be brought into God's desire for Zion with Christ. If we see this vision and cooperate with Him to gain this elevated city, to become this city, and to live in this city, He will have a way to retake this usurped earth. The earth is the Lord's! Many times we look for the outward signs of God's move to take the earth, but what God really needs is Zion. He needs the city of God as His testimony for the sake of His kingdom on this earth, and then the end will come. Revelation 11:15 says, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever."

"HIS FOUNDATION IS IN THE HOLY MOUNTAINS"

This Divine Foundation, Typifying Christ as God's Unique Foundation for the Building Up of His House, the Church, Being Built in the "Holy Mountains," Which Typify the Local Churches

Psalms 87:1 says, "His foundation is in the holy mountains." This divine foundation, typifying Christ as God's unique foundation for the building up of His house, the church, is built in the "holy mountains," which typify the local churches (1 Cor. 3:11). All the local churches are the holy mountains. Furthermore, Christ as God's foundation is in the holy mountains. This implies that Christ, who is the living, organic, growing, spreading, and dispensing foundation, is making us the same as He is. He is holy, and He is making the mountains holy. By experiencing Christ and His dispensing by loving Him and enjoying Him, we are becoming the holy mountains. The holy mountains are not a thing; rather, they are the many peaks, the many churches that are constituted

with Christ as the holy One. This is the reason that this message is entitled, "God's Desire for Zion with Christ," for the city of Zion, the city of God, is constituted with nothing but Christ.

As the Christ and the Son of the Living God, the Lord Jesus Being the Unique Foundation Laid by God for His Building

As the Christ and the Son of the living God, the Lord Jesus is the unique foundation laid by God for His building (Matt. 16:16, 18; 1 Cor. 3:11). First Corinthians 3:11 clearly states that Christ is the foundation and that no other foundation may be laid. Christ is the unique foundation of God's house.

According to Paul's Word in 1 Corinthians 3, Christ Being a Living Foundation, a Foundation That Grows

According to Paul's word in 1 Corinthians 3, Christ is a living foundation, a foundation that grows. Usually, one considers a foundation as being something static, a mere base upon which everything else is built. However, our Christ is a living foundation, a foundation that grows; the entire building of God comes out of this foundation.

God Giving the Growth, and to Give Growth Being a Matter of Growing Christ; the Christ Who Grows within Us Being a Living, Growing Foundation

God gives the growth, and to give growth is a matter of growing Christ; the Christ who grows within us is a living, growing foundation (vv. 6-7, 11). Even right now our Christ is living and growing within us.

The Foundation Growing in Us, and This Growth Producing Gold, Silver, and Precious Stones for the Building Up of the Church

The foundation grows in us, and this growth produces gold, silver, and precious stones for the building up of the church (v. 12a). All the contents and materials of God's house come out of the foundation. This is a new view of Christ as the foundation. How we love our awesome, wonderful foundation! Everything of God's building develops from and comes out of this foundation. All of the contents of God's building come out of this living, growing, organic foundation.

In Ephesians 3, a chapter that is very subjective and full of burden,

Paul prays that the Father would grant us, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into our inner man so that Christ may make His home in our hearts (vv. 14-17a). This is Christ, the foundation, building Himself into our being. He is not only the foundation; He is also the gold, the silver, and the precious stones. Thus, He is all the materials in God's building; He is everything. Even now, the Lord's desire is that we would all be experiencing God's desire for Zion by allowing Christ to build His home in our hearts. Thus, we should pray, "Lord, make home in me right now."

As Christ, the Unique Foundation, Holds and Supports God's Building, His Dispensing Himself into Every Part of the Building, Imparting His Element into All the Believers

As Christ, the unique foundation, holds and supports God's building, He dispenses Himself into every part of the building, imparting His element into all the believers (Col. 2:19). This statement is concerning Christ as the foundation, but Colossians 2:19 refers to our "holding the Head." This foundation is also the Head, and out from this living, growing, organic, spreading, and dispensing foundation grows the whole Body. Usually we consider a foundation as being under us, but this living, organic, moving, and dispensing foundation is over us. What a foundation! Thus, Colossians 2:19 reveals that the way for us to experience Christ as the foundation is by holding Him as the Head. We should even cling to Him, saying, "O Lord Jesus, I love You. Lord, keep me one spirit with You every moment." This is to cling to the Lord, holding Him as the Head, the foundation. This One who is under us as our foundation is also the One who is over us as our Head. The entire building develops from the wonderful foundation, Christ, who is living. Today He is constituting us with Himself to make all the mountains the holy mountains. This very moment He is busy constituting us with Himself so that all of us as the churches would be the holy mountains for the testimony of Jesus.

To hold Christ as the Head is actually to take care of the highest principle in our Christian life and church life, which is to give Him the preeminence. This is to declare, "Lord Jesus, You are 'number one.' You are my first and best love." We should not exalt so many other things. Instead, we should exalt and hold Christ and Christ alone, for God's desire is for Zion ***with Christ.***

As we hold Christ as the Head and love Him as our foundation, He

is making us the church, the pillar and base of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15). In a sense, He as the foundation is making us His duplication as the pillar and base of the truth. God's foundation is in the holy mountains, and that foundation is Christ.

"JEHOVAH LOVES THE GATES OF ZION"

Gates Being for Coming In and Going Out, Signifying Fellowship

Psalm 87:2 says, "Jehovah loves the gates of Zion." Gates are for coming in and going out, signifying fellowship (1 Cor. 1:9). First Corinthians 1:9 says, "God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." Thus, the gates in Psalm 87:2 signify fellowship. The first kind of fellowship we have is with His Son, Jesus Christ, who is the Triune God Himself. God's desire is that we, both as individual believers and as local churches, would be loaded with gates, that is, have an abundance of fellowship.

Psalms 87:2 in its entirety says, "Jehovah loves the gates of Zion / More than all the dwellings of Jacob." To have a heart for Zion means that we are not for our own dwelling but are loaded with gates. We are here not for ourselves, for our own little dwelling; we are here for Zion. We are here for God's desire and God's interest. We are here for His house and His city. We are here so that God's desire would become a reality, that the earth would be the Lord's. We are here not merely for our own existence but for Zion. God loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of any individual.

First Corinthians 1:9 says that we were called into the fellowship of God's Son. God's desire is that our gates would be open. He wants us to live an open-gate life, a life in the fellowship of the all-inclusive Christ who is our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification, and our everything. This One, who is the life-giving Spirit, wants us to enjoy Him as the reality of every positive thing in the whole universe.

In verse 10 Paul continues, "Now I beseech you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be attuned in the same mind and in the same opinion." That this verse immediately follows verse 9 indicates that fellowship is related to oneness. Wherever there are gates, there is oneness; wherever there is fellowship, there is oneness. The deep burden on the Lord's heart is oneness. This is evidenced by the Lord's prayer in John 17, the deepest prayer in the Bible. In verse 21 the

Lord says, "That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me." Jehovah loves the gates of Zion; that is, He loves the oneness. As Psalm 133:1 and 3 say, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is / For brothers to dwell in unity!... / For there Jehovah commanded the blessing: / Life forever." Jehovah loves the gates of Zion because the gates signify fellowship, and fellowship is for the oneness. Without fellowship there is no oneness.

Fellowship Being Related to Oneness; Fellowship Bringing All the Members of the Body of Christ into Oneness

The Fellowship among the Churches Being the Fellowship of the Body of Christ

Fellowship is related to oneness; fellowship brings all the members of the Body of Christ into oneness (1 Cor. 10:16-17; Eph. 4:3-6). The fellowship among the churches is the fellowship of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 10:16). There is one Body and one bread (v. 17).

Fellowship Being the Reality of Living in the Body of Christ

Fellowship is the reality of living in the Body of Christ (12:12-13, 27). Verse 12 indicates that the Body is one and has many members. Then it concludes, "So also is the Christ." First Corinthians clearly reveals that Christ is the Head of the Body and that Christ is the Body of the Head. To have gates in our living, to maintain a living of fellowship, means that our fellowship is with Christ as the Head of the Body and with Christ as the Body of the Head. We must have not only vertical fellowship with the Lord but also horizontal fellowship with the brothers and sisters, and with the churches. Zion is a fellowship city.

Ephesians 4:3 says, "Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit." To be diligent, even eager, to keep the oneness of the Spirit is to maintain our fellowship with Christ as the life-giving Spirit. It is to desire to keep Him and to be in union with Him every moment. We want to be one with Him by being diligent, eager, and aggressive to maintain the fellowship.

If we are not people or local churches who are loaded with gates of fellowship, by default, automatically, spontaneously, we become those who are under the attack of the gates of Hades. We are believers and churches who are loaded with gates; otherwise, by default, we become those under the attack of the gates of Hades. May the Lord load us with

gates of much fellowship with Christ as the Head of the Body and with Christ as the Body of the Head.

It is a great joy to come together to have fellowship with one another, especially during one of these "seven feasts." As a result of our fellowship here, I am even more grateful that we can be those who are loaded with gates. This fellowship is for the sake of the oneness, which is the deepest burden on God's heart so that we, as Zion, could be the proper testimony of Jesus.

The Fact That the New Jerusalem Has Twelve Gates Indicating That God's Holy City Will Be Full of Fellowship

The fact that the New Jerusalem has twelve gates indicates that God's holy city will be full of fellowship (Rev. 21:12, 21). If there are no gates, there is no oneness and no testimony. The New Jerusalem is loaded with gates. It has three gates on each of the four sides. Four times three is a total of twelve gates. The number twelve indicates eternal completeness. This is a picture of the Lord's desire that we would be those who are loaded with gates. We should take every opportunity to have fellowship vertically with Christ as the Head of the Body and horizontally with Christ as the Body of the Head. We would be those who live a life of fellowship. Jehovah loves the gates. A big key to being Zion is to be loaded with gates.

"GLORIOUS THINGS ARE SPOKEN OF YOU, O CITY OF GOD"

Psalm 87:3 says, "Glorious things are spoken of you, / O city of God." Because we are constituted with this Christ to be built up to be the city of God, the issue will be the kingdom of God, in which the whole earth will speak glorious things about our wonderful God. The Lord needs His testimony. He needs us not only to be His house for His dwelling; He also needs us to be His city, full of Him as the living, organic foundation and one with Him by being saturated with Him as the fellowshipping One. He needs us to be full of gates to be constituted with Him so that we can be the holy city.

City of God in verse 3 indicates that the city is God. Who is God? God is Jesus Christ. When God was incarnated in Jesus, the entire Triune God was involved. The city of God is the wonderful Christ constituted into us to become the kingdom of God. God's house is for His rest and expression. God's city is for His dominion and administration. Perhaps the deepest burden on God's heart is His administration.

Ephesians 1:10 says, "Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him." This verse indicates that the entire universe is a heap of collapse. We must admit that the whole earth is a mess and that everything needs to be headed up. This is why the Lord needs Zion. We want to cooperate with Him to become that elevated city. This is the key to the Lord's recovering the usurped earth from the evil one for His testimony. It is in this way that the whole earth will in reality be the Lord's.

Psalm 87:3 says, "Glorious things are spoken of you, / O city of God." We are burdened for His glory. We are not burdened for our success but for His glory. We desire that the whole earth would speak well of Him and speak glorious things concerning Him.

Zion Being a Poetic Title of the Church in Both the Universal Sense and the Local Sense

Zion is a poetic title of the church in both the universal sense and the local sense (v. 2).

Zion Being the City of King David, the Center of the City of Jerusalem as God's Dwelling Place on Earth

Zion was the city of King David (2 Sam. 5:7), the center of the city of Jerusalem as God's dwelling place on earth. Zion is the center of the city of Jerusalem as well as its highest peak.

Zion within Jerusalem Typifying the Body of Overcomers, the Perfected and Matured God-men, within the Church as the Heavenly Jerusalem

Zion within Jerusalem typifies the body of overcomers, the perfected and matured God-men, within the church as the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb. 12:22; Rev. 14:1-5). Hebrews 12:22 says, "You have come forward to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; and to myriads of angels, to the universal gathering." Every time we come to the Triune God in our spirit, we have come to Mount Zion, to the universal gathering. Therefore, moment by moment, day by day, where we want to be is in our spirit. We have come to Mount Zion, to the holy city. The overcomers are those who continually practice coming to and remaining in the Holy of Holies. The Holy of Holies is Mount Zion, but the Holy of Holies today is in our spirit. We have come, and now we want to remain in the Holy of Holies.

I appreciate footnote 6 on Revelation 2:7, which was mentioned in Message 1. The last paragraph says,

> Eating the tree of life, that is, enjoying Christ as our life supply, should be the primary matter in the church life. The content of the church life depends on the enjoyment of Christ. The more we enjoy Him, the richer the content will be. But to enjoy Christ requires us to love Him with the first love. If we leave our first love toward the Lord, we will miss the enjoyment of Christ and lose the testimony of Jesus; consequently, the lampstand will be removed from us. These three things—loving the Lord, enjoying the Lord, and being the testimony of the Lord—go together.

To be the Lord's testimony and not to have the lampstand removed out of its place, we need to be those loving Him with the first love and enjoying Him as the tree of life. We need to be those loving, eating, and enjoying Him as the God-man to become the perfected God-men so that we could be His testimony. That is why this footnote puts these three matters together—loving the Lord, eating the Lord, and being the Lord's testimony. This is very precious and is a real key to being an overcomer.

The Lord's burden according to the book of Revelation is the testimony of Jesus. This is the spirit of the entire prophecy of that book (19:10). To be the overcomers is to be those who love the Lord with the first love, giving Him the preeminence, the first place, and to be those who enjoy Him. We need to pray, "Lord Jesus, right now I give You the first place." When He has the preeminence within us, it is much easier to enjoy Him and to eat Him as the tree-of-life-God-man. Then we can be built up not only personally but together with others in the churches and as the Body of Christ to be His testimony.

Revelation 14 speaks of Mount Zion, the eternal city, and the firstfruits. To be the firstfruits, we need to be those who enjoy the Lord as our first love. The firstfruits are those who love the Lord with the first love so that they can satisfy the Lord's deep desire for His testimony as the eternal city of God, which is full of Him.

As the Highlight and Beauty of the Holy City Jerusalem, Zion Typifying the Overcomers as the High Peak, the Center, the Uplifting, the Strengthening, the Enriching, the Beauty, and the Reality of the Church

As the highlight and beauty of the holy city Jerusalem, Zion typifies

the overcomers as the high peak, the center, the uplifting, the strengthening, the enriching, the beauty, and the reality of the church (Psa. 48:1-2, 11-12; 50:2; 20:2; 53:6a; 87:2). We need to take note of all these points—high peak, center, uplifting, strengthening, enriching, beauty, and reality. These characterize Zion. The Lord does not merely want His house in a general way; He wants Zion, the consummate Holy of Holies.

I have been freshly impressed that the overcomers are those who take the lead to praise the Lord. The more we praise the Lord, the more we become the high peak, the more Christ is the center, and the more we are built up. The more we praise the Lord, the more there is an uplifting, strengthening, and enriching. The more we praise Him, the more beautiful we become and the more reality there is in the church.

The Lord never requires us to be spiritual giants. Those in the church in Philadelphia were not super, extraordinary, or spectacular, but they had a little power, they did not deny the Lord's name, and they kept His word (Rev. 3:8). This constituted them as overcomers. They possessed the high peak, the center, the uplifting, the strengthening, the enriching, the beauty, and the reality.

In Psalm 8 the overcomers are not super people but babes and sucklings. Verse 2 says, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings / You have perfected praise" (Septuagint). Overcomers take the lead to praise the Lord.

In 2 Chronicles 20, as the enemies were approaching to engage Judah in battle, Jehoshaphat the king sent singers and praisers to go out before the army. When they began to sing and to praise, all the enemies destroyed one another and were utterly defeated (vv. 20-24). Again this shows that overcomers take the lead to praise the Lord. Hallelujah!

The Overcomers as Zion Being the Reality of the Body of Christ and Consummating the Building Up of the Body in the Local Churches to Bring In the Consummated Holy City, New Jerusalem, the Holy of Holies as God's Dwelling Place, in Eternity

The overcomers as Zion are the reality of the Body of Christ and consummate the building up of the Body in the local churches to bring in the consummated holy city, New Jerusalem, the Holy of Holies as God's dwelling place, in eternity (Rev. 21:1-3, 16, 22). The New Jerusalem is the consummate Holy of Holies. The entire city is the Holy of Holies. It is God united, mingled, and incorporated with all of us. We

are in Him, and He is in us. We are fully united, mingled, and incorporated together. This is the Holy of Holies as God's dwelling place for eternity. I really treasure *Hymns,* #894, written by Brother Lee. The chorus says, "Will you be an overcomer? / Will you make this choice?" None of us can say definitely that he is an overcomer. However, day by day, we can repeatedly make this choice. Moment by moment, each of us can choose to be an overcomer.

For the Lord to Do Good in His Good Pleasure unto Zion Being for Him to Build Up the Church, Fill the Church with His Glory, and Grant the Church His Rich Presence with Himself as Joy, Peace, Life, Light, Security, and Every Spiritual Blessing

For the Lord to do good in His good pleasure unto Zion is for Him to build up the church, fill the church with His glory, and grant the church His rich presence with Himself as joy, peace, life, light, security, and every spiritual blessing (Psa. 51:18; cf. Eph. 1:3). The Lord's doing good in His good pleasure unto Zion comprises these three things: building up the church, filling the church with His glory, and granting the church His rich presence with Himself as joy, peace, life, light, security, and every spiritual blessing. Following his thorough repentance in Psalm 51, David was utterly open to the Lord. Because of his openness, the Lord was able to put His desire into David's heart. Thus, David's concluding word at the end of this psalm is, "Do good in Your good pleasure unto Zion; / Build the walls of Jerusalem" (v. 18). God's desire became David's desire because of his openness to Him.

We want to be those who are so one with the Lord that He can build up the church, fill the church with His glory, and grant the church His rich presence with Himself as joy, peace, life, light, security, and every spiritual blessing. In Ephesians 1:3 Paul says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ."

Ephesians 3:17-21 says, "That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be full of strength to apprehend with all the saints what the breadth and length and height and depth are and to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God. But to Him who is able to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power which operates in us, to Him be the glory in the

church and in Christ Jesus unto all the generations forever and ever. Amen." This is the apostle's tremendous prayer, that we would experience Christ to the fullest extent.

Although the Lord Has the Right, the Title, to the Earth, Today the Earth Being Usurped by His Enemy; Yet on This Usurped Earth There Being the Mountain of Jehovah, Mount Zion, Which Is Absolutely Open to the Lord and Absolutely Possessed by Him

Although the Lord has the right, the title, to the earth, today the earth is usurped by His enemy; yet on this usurped earth there is the mountain of Jehovah, Mount Zion, which is absolutely open to the Lord and absolutely possessed by Him (Psa. 24:1-3, 7-10; 2:6; 87:3). Footnote 2 on Psalm 24:3 says, "The overcomers, who are typified by Zion...are the beachhead through which the Lord will return to possess the whole earth." Thus, although the earth has been usurped, the overcomers are the beachhead. The burden of this training is that all of us and all of those who are under the hearing of the truth will cooperate with the Lord so that we can become a beachhead for our King to come to possess the whole earth.

Psalm 2:6 says, "I have installed My King / Upon Zion, My holy mountain." Then verse 12 tells us how we take care of our King: "Kiss the Son / Lest He be angry." The best way to cooperate with God for His kingdom is to kiss the Son. This is similar to what we presented in the final message of the previous training on Psalms—the reigning Christ recovers the earth, not by smiting and judging but by watering. The Lord's kingdom comes practically, experientially, and in reality through those who take the lead to kiss the Son, give Him the first and best love every day, and care for Him and for His heart's desire. Overcomers are those who kiss the Son.

In the New Heaven and New Earth the Entire New Jerusalem Becoming Zion, with All the Believers as Overcomers

In the new heaven and new earth the entire New Jerusalem will become Zion, with all the believers as overcomers (Rev. 14:1; 21:1-2, 16). Eventually, we will all be the overcomers, but our burden is that we would choose now to be overcomers. "Will you be an overcomer? / Will you make this choice? / Christ is calling, Christ is calling, / Listen to His voice!" (*Hymns,* #894).

"BUT OF ZION IT WILL BE SAID, THIS ONE AND THAT ONE WERE BORN IN HER, AND THE MOST HIGH HIMSELF WILL ESTABLISH HER. JEHOVAH WILL COUNT WHEN HE RECORDS THE PEOPLES: THIS ONE WAS BORN THERE"

Psalm 87:5-6 says, "But of Zion it will be said, / This one and that one were born in her, / And the Most High Himself will establish her. / Jehovah will count / When He records the peoples: / This One was born there." The preceding verse says, "I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon as those who know Me; / Behold, Philistia and Tyre along with Cush: / This one was born there, they say" (v. 4). There is a kind of boasting in the world about a certain famous person having been born in this or that place. However, no place can compare with Zion. I appreciate the counting of Jehovah. The world's counting means nothing; only Jehovah knows how to count. This helps us to realize why our boast is in Zion.

In Verses 5 and 6 God's Intention Being to Make a Contrast, a Comparison, of All Other Places with Zion

In verses 5 and 6 God's intention is to make a contrast, a comparison, of all other places with Zion.

Psalm 87 Unveiling Christ with All the Saints to Be God's House for God's City and for God to Gain the Whole Earth

Psalm 87 unveils Christ with all the saints to be God's house for God's city and for God to gain the whole earth (27:4; 36:8-9; 48:1-2; 72:8).

This One in 87:6 and *This One* and *That One* in Verse 5 Indicating That Christ Himself and All the Saints Were Born in the Heavenly Zion

This One in 87:6 and *this one* and *that one* in verse 5 indicate that Christ Himself and all the saints were born in the heavenly Zion (Matt. 1:20; Gal. 4:26-31; Heb. 12:22-23a). We were born in Zion. Praise the Lord! According to the truth of God's word, we were all born in Zion, so surely we are for Zion. This is the city of our God.

This One Being the Unique One, Christ, Who Is the Totality of All the Saints as the One Who Is All the Saints and in All the Saints

This One is the unique One, Christ, who is the totality of all the

saints (Psa. 87:5) as the One who is all the saints and in all the saints (Col. 3:11). Colossians 3:10-11 tells us that we have put on the new man, where there cannot be Greek or Jew, me or you, but Christ is all and in all. This is wonderful! People like to talk about how this or that famous person was born in their place, but that does not really count. We need to care for the way Jehovah counts. He says, "This One! This One!" Forget about those other ones. The birth of this One with all those who are connected to Him is the only important birth. We care for this One!

Ephesians 1:22-23 says, "He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church, which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all." We are becoming the fullness of the One.

In Resurrection God Begetting a Son, Jesus Christ, and in Resurrection God Regenerating Many Sons; This Showing Us That the Resurrection of Christ Was a Great Delivery

In resurrection God begot a Son, Jesus Christ, and in resurrection God regenerated many sons; this shows us that the resurrection of Christ was a great delivery (Acts 13:33; Rom. 1:3-4; John 20:17; 1 Pet. 1:3). There were three great issues of the Lord's resurrection aside from the great fact that our Christ in resurrection swallowed up death in victory. This is a great matter, but related to the practicality of carrying out His economy, there were three main issues of His resurrection. First, Christ was designated the firstborn Son of God. In His divinity He has always been the only begotten Son of God, and He will be the only begotten Son eternally. However, through His death and His resurrection, the Spirit of divinity invaded His humanity to divinize His humanity, to sonize His humanity, in order to designate the man Jesus as the Son of God (see *God's New Testament Economy,* pp. 62-64).

This man should be worshipped. We realize that God's economy is that God became man in order to make man God in life and nature but not in the Godhead. We can never become God in the sense that we will be worshipped. However, the wonderful man Jesus Christ is now God on the throne. Philippians 2:10-11 tells us that every knee will bow and every tongue will openly confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Therefore, the resurrection of Christ was a great delivery. Included in this delivery were Christ the Head and all His members. It is hard to guess how many there will be in the New Jerusalem. I do not know, but

this was a really big delivery. To give birth to a thirteen pound baby would be a big delivery, but the delivery of the new man in resurrection should cause us to rejoice greatly. Hallelujah! What a delivery!

In resurrection Christ was designated the Son of God in His humanity, and according to 1 Peter 3, we were regenerated through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead unto a living hope. We were all re-*gene*-erated in Christ's resurrection. We all have new genes that determine who we are going to look like and who we are going to become. We all will be just like Christ.

Furthermore, in resurrection He became the life-giving Spirit. Because of this, we can now receive Him, experience Him, enjoy Him, and express Him as the many members of His Body and as the many sons of God the Father for His testimony on the earth.

Christ Being Born as the Firstborn, and Our Being Regenerated as His Many Brothers, the Many Sons of God; Hence, That Birth in Resurrection Being a Corporate Birth—the Birth of the Firstborn Son and His Many Brothers

Christ was born as the Firstborn, and we were regenerated as His many brothers, the many sons of God; hence, that birth in resurrection was a corporate birth—the birth of the firstborn Son and His many brothers (Rom. 8:29; Heb. 1:6; 2:10-11). Romans 8:29 is not as familiar to most Christians as verse 28, but actually they go together. Romans 8:28 says, "We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." Verse 29 then concludes, "That He might be the Firstborn among many brothers," indicating that, as we are loving the Lord, everything in our life is working together for a particular good. This *good* is that the whole earth would recognize this One, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers, and that He would be exalted. The whole earth will see this One exalted in, through, and in the midst of all of His brothers.

The Birth of a New Corporate Child Comprising Christ and His Believers Being the Birth of the New Man

The birth of a new corporate child comprising Christ and His believers was the birth of the new man (Col. 3:10). The corporate man brought forth by Christ's work in His resurrection is the new man spoken of in Ephesians 2:15. According to the truth of God's word,

according to the bequests left in His will for us, there are many things that we are able to declare. We can shout, "Hallelujah, I am part of the one new man!" The Head is the firstborn Son of God, and the Body is a composition of all the many sons of God, the many brothers of the Lord (1:22-23). This child, this corporate new man, was brought forth through Christ's work in resurrection (John 16:20-22).

The issue of Christ's work in resurrection is this wonderful One. Hallelujah for this One! In Zion, this One is testified, exalted, and glorified.

"ALL MY SPRINGS ARE IN YOU"

Psalm 87:7b says, "All my springs are in you." These springs are not a thing but a person, the Triune God Himself. When we really care for the desire of God's heart—for Zion with Christ, for His building, and for His city—all our needs are met, and we are people who are full of joy. Praise the Lord! To the very end, our Brother Nee was for God's economy and purpose, and one of his last statements was that he had maintained his joy. He was still enjoying God's house even though he was in prison. He was enjoying the springs. I believe he could testify, "All my springs are in you."

You Being the City of God; All the Springs Being in Zion

You is the city of God; all the springs are in Zion.

The Processed Triune God Being the Fountain, the Springs, and the River of Water of Life; the Father Being the Fountain, the Son Being the Springs, and the Spirit Being the River of Water of Life

The processed Triune God is the fountain, the springs, and the river of water of life; the Father is the fountain, the Son is the springs, and the Spirit is the river of water of life (John 4:14; 7:38; Isa. 12:2-3). Where there is water, there is joy. If there is no water, there is no joy, but where there is much water, there is much joy. Isaiah 12:3 says, "Therefore you will draw water with rejoicing / From the springs of salvation." Where there is water, there is joy.

A few of us were with Brother Lee in Israel in 1977. When we got to the head of the Jordan River, it was springing up from a fountain under the ground. That was the very source of the flow of that river. I was walking beside Brother Lee, yet I did not realize that in that spring he

saw the Triune God. He was seeing Zion. He bumped me and said, "Jump in, Brother!" I did not jump in, but later I began to realize, little by little, why he was so excited. He was happy because he was seeing Zion with the realization, "All my springs are in you." He was full of joy.

In Eternity the Lamb Shepherding God's Redeemed and Guiding Them to Springs of Waters of Life

As Our Shepherd, Christ Leading Us into Himself as the Springs of Water of Life So That We May Enjoy the Eternal Dispensing of the Triune God

In eternity the Lamb will shepherd God's redeemed and guide them to springs of waters of life (Rev. 7:17). As our Shepherd, Christ will lead us into Himself as the springs of water of life so that we may enjoy the eternal dispensing of the Triune God. Even now, we are enjoying the dispensing of the Triune God.

Springs of Waters of Life *Referring to the Unique Water of Life in Different Aspects*

Springs of waters of life refers to the unique water of life in different aspects (v. 17; John 7:38; Rev. 22:1). As this wonderful One comes into us, out of our innermost being shall flow rivers. These rivers include a river of joy, a river of love, a river of righteousness, and a river of patience. Recently, I was at a corner waiting to turn right, and the driver in front of me would not turn right on red, even though he had plenty of opportunity. That can really irritate me, but because my wife and I were enjoying the river of water of life, I enjoyed Him as the river of patience in that situation.

In the New Jerusalem, the Eternal Mount Zion, Our Drinking of Many Springs and Enjoying Many Different Waters; for Eternity Our Being Able to Declare, "All My Springs Are in You."

In the New Jerusalem, the eternal Mount Zion, we will drink of many springs and enjoy many different waters; for eternity we will be able to declare, "All my springs are in You." May every local church be a little Zion where the saints can say, "All my springs are in you." Psalm 87:7 says, "Then singing as well as dancing, they will say, / All my springs

are in you." We could also say, "Singing as well as praising." We are not so much for dancing, but I hope that we all would be dancing inwardly in our heart. We need a gladdened spirit and a gladdened heart. If you must dance outwardly, that is okay. "Singing as well as dancing, they will say, / All my springs are in you."

None of the names are mentioned of those singing or dancing. None of us may be a spiritual giant, but we can all be little singers and little praisers. This is the Lord's desire for His testimony.

I would like to give you two statements as a conclusion. First, the issue of caring for God's desire for Zion is enjoying the waters of salvation, which is to enjoy the Triune God Himself for eternity with singing, dancing, and praising. This is the issue of caring for God's desire for Zion. If you really want to be joyful, care for His desire. Our focus cannot be our own desire but His desire.

Second, the way to become that city with the elevated center is also by experiencing and enjoying this wonderful Christ daily as our waters of salvation. May we all be those who with joy draw water out of the wells of salvation.—D. T.

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OF THE PSALMS (2)

The Highest and Fullest Experience of God—Taking God as Our Habitation, Our Eternal Dwelling Place (Message 4)

Scripture Reading: Psa. 90—92

I. To take God as our habitation, our eternal dwelling place, is the highest and fullest experience of God—Psa. 90:1:

A. Psalm 36:8 speaks of eating the fatness of God's house and drinking the river of God's pleasures, indicating that we can experience the Lord by eating and drinking Him—cf. John 6:48-58, 63; 7:37; 1 Cor. 10:3-4; 12:13.

B. According to Moses, the giver of the law and the writer of Psalm 90, we can also dwell in the eternal Triune God as our Lord—v. 1; 91:9; Deut. 33:27; cf. John 15:4; 1 John 4:15-16; Rev. 21:22.

C. To dwell in God is to have our living in God (Col. 2:6; 3:3; 1 John 4:16), taking Him as our everything; this is deeper than eating and drinking Him.

D. Book Four of the Psalms (Psa. 90—106) unveils the saints' deeper experience of God in the identification with Christ, and it unveils God's recovery of His title and right over the earth:

1. This indicates that our experience of dwelling in God paves the way for Christ to come to possess the earth so that God may recover His title (ownership) and right over the earth.
2. Without the saints' deeper experience of God, God has no way to recover this title and right.

E. "The days of our years are seventy years, / Or, if because of strength, eighty years; / But their pride is labor and sorrow, / For it is soon gone, and we fly away"—90:10:

1. If we take God as our dwelling place, we will realize that the span of our life on earth is brief and full of sins and afflictions—vv. 3-11.
2. We need to dwell in God, living in Him every minute, for outside of Him there are sins and afflictions—v. 8; John 16:33.

II. Psalm 91 concerns the saints' identification with Christ in His taking God as His dwelling place—v. 9:

A. In their identification with Christ, the saints make Jehovah the Most High their habitation, dwelling in His secret place and abiding in His shadow under His wings—vv. 1-9.

B. This is the genuine oneness with God; here, we are constituted with Him, and we and God live together as one.

C. *You* and *Your* in verses 9 through 13 refer to Christ, as proven by the fact that verses 11 and 12 of this psalm are quoted by Satan in Matthew 4:6 in reference to Christ:

1. This indicates that in Psalm 91 it is Christ who takes God as His habitation, His dwelling place.
2. Thus, not only Moses took God as his dwelling place (90:1), but even the Lord Jesus, while He was on earth, took God the Father as His habitation.
3. Moses, the lawgiver, and Christ, the grace-giver, were the same in taking God as their dwelling place, as their habitation.
4. Thus, the saints (represented by Moses) and Christ are identified as one.

D. To be identified with Christ is to be identified with Him not only in His death, in His resurrection, and in His ascension but also in His taking God as His habitation.

E. If we would be identified with Christ in His death, resurrection, and ascension, we need to abide in Christ (John 15:4), and to abide in Christ is not only to remain in Him but also to dwell in Him, taking Him as our everything:

1. We abide in Christ according to the teaching of the anointing inwardly and according to the walk of the Lord outwardly—1 John 2:27, 6.
2. In order to abide in Christ, we must keep God's commandments, God's charges to us, and be those who are submissive to God—3:24.

3. To abide in Christ, taking Him as our dwelling place, and to allow Him to abide in us, taking us as His dwelling place, are to live in the reality of the universal incorporation of the processed and consummated Triune God with the redeemed and regenerated believers—John 14:2, 10-11, 17, 20, 23:
   a. The New Jerusalem is the ultimate incorporation of the processed and consummated Triune God with the regenerated, sanctified, renewed, transformed, conformed, and glorified tripartite church—Rev. 21:3, 22.
   b. The New Jerusalem is the tabernacle of God, and the center of the tabernacle is Christ as the hidden manna; the way to be incorporated into this universal, divine-human incorporation, the mutual abode of God and man, is to eat Christ as the hidden manna—v. 3; Exo. 16:32-34; Heb. 9:4; Rev. 2:17.
4. We abide in Christ so that He may abide in us by dealing with the constant word in the Scriptures, which is outside of us, and the present word as the Spirit, which is within us—John 5:39-40; 6:63; 2 Cor. 3:6; Rev. 2:7:
   a. By the outward, written word we have the explanation, definition, and expression of the mysterious Lord, and by the inward, living word we have the experience of the abiding Christ and the presence of the practical Lord—Eph. 5:26; 6:17-18.
   b. If we abide in the Lord's constant and written word, His instant and living words will abide in us—John 8:31; 15:7; 1 John 2:14.
   c. We abide in Him and His words abide in us so that we may speak in Him and He may speak in us for the building of God into man and of man into God—John 15:7; 2 Cor. 2:17; 13:3; 1 Cor. 14:4b.
5. If we abide in Christ by loving Him, by always rejoicing, by unceasingly praying, and by giving thanks in everything, He will abide in us to dispense His riches into us—John 14:23; 1 Thes. 5:16-18; John 15:4.
6. If we abide in Christ, we will bear much fruit to glorify God—v. 8.
7. If we abide in Christ, when He is manifested, we will

boldly meet Him and not be put to shame and depart from His glorious presence—1 John 2:28; cf. Matt. 25:30.

F. *He, Him,* and *His* in Psalm 91:14-16 refer to Christ; these verses are a prophecy concerning Christ:
   1. Christ loved God the Father (John 14:31); He has been set on high, exalted to the highest place in the heavens (Phil. 2:9-11); and He is now seeing God's salvation in the extension of His days in resurrection (Psa. 91:16; Rev. 1:18a).
   2. In all these matters we should be identified with Christ; then we will live with Him and love God; thus, we will be exalted, and we will see God's salvation in the extension of our days.

III. Psalm 92 shows the issue of the deeper experience of God in the saints' identification with Christ in taking God as their dwelling place:
   A. The first issue is that the saints rejoice in the great works of Jehovah (vv. 1-9); when we dwell in God, taking Him as our habitation, we see His great works in the accomplishing of His economy and rejoice in them.
   B. Before we dwell in God as our habitation, we may be low and frequently defeated; a further issue of our dwelling in God is that our horn (fighting strength) is exalted over our spiritual enemies—v. 10; Eph. 6:10-13.
   C. Another issue of our dwelling in God as our habitation is our being mingled with fresh oil, which signifies the consummated Spirit, who is fresh and present—cf. Exo. 30:23-25.
   D. Still another issue of our dwelling in God, taking Him as everything in our living in His house, is that we are securely planted in His house and flourish in the riches of His divine life to such an extent that we bear fruit even in old age—Psa. 92:12-14.

MESSAGE FOUR

THE HIGHEST AND FULLEST EXPERIENCE OF GOD—TAKING GOD AS OUR HABITATION, OUR ETERNAL DWELLING PLACE

In this message we come to Book Four of the Psalms, which consists of seventeen psalms from Psalm 90 through Psalm 106. These seventeen psalms reveal the deeper experience of God in identification with Christ to bring in the recovery of God's title and right over the whole earth. This section is very meaningful because it indicates that the recovery of God's right over the whole earth is related to the saints' deeper experience of God. Without the saints' deeper experience of God in their identification with Christ, it is not possible for Christ to gain the whole earth by recovering His title and right over the earth. We know that Christ will ultimately gain the whole earth and recover His title and right over the earth; nevertheless, the saints must be brought into this deeper experience of God as a prerequisite for Christ to gain the earth. This deeper experience of God is very meaningful and is revealed in the New Testament, particularly in the writings of John. In John 15 the Lord revealed that He is the vine tree and charged the disciples, saying, "Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me" (v. 4). In 14:2 the Lord said, "In My Father's house are many abodes; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you." These many abodes in the Father's house do not refer to a heavenly mansion. Rather, these abodes refer to the building up of all the believers into God's building. All the believers are part of God's building as the many abodes in the Father's house. This building, this house, is where God and Christ coinhere together and where all the believers are being brought into the mutual abiding of God in man and man in God. Through the revelation in the New Testament, we see how man dwells in God and takes God as his habitation.

This message will cover Psalms 90 through 92, focusing mainly on our deeper experience of God in our identification with Christ. Psalm 90

reveals that we can actually dwell in God and take Him as our habitation. Psalm 91 reveals the way for us to dwell in God by being identified with Christ, which requires that we abide in Him. Finally, Psalm 92 reveals the issues of our dwelling in God and of our deeper experience of Him. I hope that the title of this message—"The Highest and Fullest Experience of God—Taking God as Our Habitation, Our Eternal Dwelling Place"—does not intimidate the younger or newer ones among us. We should not have the thought that the highest and fullest experience of God is reserved only for those who are older or more mature. This highest and fullest experience of taking God as our habitation should be the normal experience of all the saints, although each of us may experience it in varying degrees. We must realize that God needs all the saints to be brought into this deeper, highest, and fullest experience of Him in order for Him to regain the whole earth. Even if you have been saved for only a few months, you should not think that this experience is too high for you or that you are not ready to experience it. This highest and fullest experience of God belongs to all the saints. We can illustrate this experience in the way that we experience electricity. The theory of electricity is very profound, involving many complex concepts and equations. However, in our practical daily lives, nearly anyone, young or old, can apply and experience electricity. There are so many uses for electricity in our daily life; there is no need for us to seek out other alternatives when we can easily apply and use electricity by simply flipping a switch. We all must enter into this highest and fullest experience of taking God as our habitation, and all of us can enter in—from the most newly saved believers to the oldest ones among us. May we all enter into this highest and fullest experience of taking God as our habitation, our eternal dwelling place.

TO TAKE GOD AS OUR HABITATION, OUR ETERNAL DWELLING PLACE, BEING THE HIGHEST AND FULLEST EXPERIENCE OF GOD

To take God as our habitation, our eternal dwelling place, is the highest and fullest experience of God (90:1). It is altogether remarkable and outstanding that in Psalm 90:1, Moses could utter such a profound declaration: "O Lord, You have been our dwelling place / In all generations." Throughout the Old Testament age there were many great men of God, including Enosh, who called upon the name of Jehovah; Enoch, who walked with God; Abraham, who dined with God; and David, who

was a man according to God's heart and who desired to build a house for God. However, only Moses had such a profound realization that he could say that God is our habitation, our dwelling place. The God whom all the Old Testament saints experienced was actually their dwelling place as well. How do the experiences of the Old Testament saints—such as calling on Jehovah, walking with God, dining with God, being according to God's heart, and desiring to build a house for Him—compare with the experience of Moses dwelling in God? For us to dwell in God means that God Himself is our habitation and that we take Him as our dwelling place. To take God as our habitation is the highest and fullest experience of God. To dwell in God and to live in Him is such a profound matter. Taking God as our habitation does not merely imply that He is the place where we rest our head. Dwelling in God implies that we dwell in Him in every aspect of our living. Sometimes when we travel, we may stay in a very nice hotel or in a saint's home, yet no matter how comfortable these places may be, we never actually regard them as our own home. We may stay in the most luxurious hotel, but that still is not our home. Our home may be very small and modest, but it is the place where we are at rest. God is not our hotel; God is our dwelling place, our home. We can actually dwell in Him and make our home in Him. Taking God as our habitation is not merely a matter of having a place to rest our heads; it is to have a place where our entire being finds rest and where we may conduct every aspect of our living.

Psalm 36:8 Speaking of Eating the Fatness of God's House and Drinking the River of God's Pleasures, Indicating That We Can Experience the Lord by Eating and Drinking Him

Psalm 36:8 speaks of eating the fatness of God's house and drinking the river of God's pleasures, indicating that we can experience the Lord by eating and drinking Him (cf. John 6:48-58, 63; 7:37; 1 Cor. 10:3-4; 12:13). Praise the Lord for the recovery of eating and drinking the Lord. It is a marvelous recovery to know that God does not want us to merely fear Him, worship Him, or serve Him. God desires that we would eat Him and drink Him. He has presented Himself to us in the form of food and drink. We eat and drink of Him and thus take Him into our being. Then this food and drink organically dwells within us and becomes a part of our being. God dwells in us today in the form of

food. He is no longer merely outside of us. Taking God into us as food and drink is much higher and fuller than merely fearing God, worshipping God, or serving Him in an outward way.

According to Moses, the Giver of the Law and the Writer of Psalm 90, Our Also Being Able to Dwell in the Eternal Triune God as Our Lord

According to Moses, the giver of the law and the writer of Psalm 90, we can also dwell in the eternal Triune God as our Lord (v. 1; 91:9; Deut. 33:27; cf. John 15:4; 1 John 4:15-16; Rev. 21:22). On one hand, we eat and drink God to receive Him into our being; on the other hand, we need the experience of dwelling in Him as expressed by Moses in Psalm 90. Not only does He dwell in us in the form of food and drink, but also we need to dwell in Him as our dwelling place. In Deuteronomy 33:27 Moses declares, "The God of old is your habitation, / And underneath are eternal arms." He repeats himself in Psalm 90:1: "O Lord, You have been our dwelling place / In all generations." As we have said, no other Old Testament saint had such a profound utterance as this. How was Moses able to utter such a profound statement? I suspect that Moses may have received the revelation of God being his habitation when he spent forty days and forty nights with Jehovah on the mountain of God.

Please consider the most recent time that you spent with the Lord. How much time did you spend with Him? I am concerned that some of the young people may spend only four minutes with the Lord in the morning, and some may spend only forty seconds with Him. We may enjoy the Lord briefly in the morning, but then we just go about the rest of our day without much experience of dwelling in Him. Consider the revelation that we would receive if we spent forty days and forty nights with the Lord. During those forty days and forty nights with the Lord, surely Moses began to realize that he was there taking God as his abode. He was living in God as his habitation. Most of our enjoyment of the Lord may be short-lived. Perhaps some of us may spend more time with the Lord in the morning, even as much as twenty or thirty minutes, but we need to be impressed that God wants us to dwell in Him continuously. Dwelling in the Lord is not merely a matter of spending some time with Him in the morning and then going on with the rest of our day apart from Him. God desires that we dwell in Him,

spend much time with Him, and even have our entire living in Him. This does not mean that we should quit our jobs and cease from all our daily activities. However, we need to be brought into the real experience that, in everything we do, God is our habitation, our dwelling place. We should not merely go about our daily activities in ourselves or by ourselves but in Him. We are in Him! God is our habitation and our dwelling place.

If we would dwell in God as our habitation in everything that we do, our whole living would be different. From the moment that we wake up in the morning, instead of worrying about the coming day, about our job, or about our problems, we should immediately pray, "Thank You, Lord Jesus, for a new day." We can begin living in the Lord from the moment that we first open our eyes. We do not have to wait until we sit down at our desk to contact the Lord and get revived. From the moment that we wake up we can begin to tell Him, "Lord Jesus, I love You." Our living in the Lord can begin from the moment that we wake up; He desires to be involved in every aspect of our living.

The New Testament, particularly John's writings, greatly develops the experience of taking God as our habitation. John 15 reveals our abiding in Christ as the vine. Verse 4 says, "Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me." Then in his first Epistle, John says, "Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him and he in God. And we know and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him" (4:15-16). And in Revelation John reveals that in the New Jerusalem there is no temple, "for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple" (21:22). For eternity, we will dwell in the Lord as our temple; that is, we will take the Triune God Himself as our habitation.

To Dwell in God Being to Have Our Living in God, Taking Him as Our Everything; This Being Deeper Than Eating and Drinking Him

To dwell in God is to have our living in God (Col. 2:6; 3:3; 1 John 4:16), taking Him as our everything; this is deeper than eating and drinking Him. Eating and drinking the Lord is surely important; otherwise, there would be no way for Him to be mingled with us. Yet there is something deeper than eating and drinking; we must also dwell in God

and have our living in Him, taking Him as our everything. We eat and drink the Lord so that we can be fully mingled with the Triune God. The issue of this eating and drinking is that we are fully mingled and fully absorbed into the Triune God, dwelling in Him as our everything. The goal of our eating and drinking is that our entire living would be absorbed into God and that we would take Him as our everything.

What does it mean for us to dwell in God? He is in the heavens, and we are on the earth; yet, the key for us to dwell in Him is that we dwell in God through Christ. Colossians 2:6 says, "As therefore you have received the Christ, Jesus the Lord, walk in Him." How can we dwell in the infinite God, who is far away from us, dwelling in unapproachable light? The key is believing into His Son, Jesus Christ, and receiving Him into us. The result of our believing into Him is that we receive Him and He enters into us and dwells in us as the Spirit. Our believing into Christ brings us into an organic union with Him. Receiving Him is not like receiving a Bible as a gift from another brother. We may receive a Bible and have it in our hand, but it remains separate from us. However, when we received Christ by believing into Him, this brought us into an organic union with Him. This is like receiving food into us, for the food that we eat is organic and is digested and assimilated into our being. Similarly, we have received the Christ, Jesus the Lord, and have been brought into an organic union with Him. Now we can walk in Him.

Our organic union with the Lord and our walking in Him can be illustrated by an electrical appliance being plugged into an electrical outlet in order to receive the current of electricity and then operate according to that electricity. Our believing into Christ is like plugging an appliance into an electric socket, which results in a kind of electrical union. Just as we have been organically united with Christ by believing into Him, the electricity flows into the appliance, and the appliance is instantly connected to the electrical current and to the entire power plant through that connection. Now the appliance can operate in the electricity. For the appliance to operate in this current of electricity is different from something that is battery operated. There is a transmission flowing from the power plant to the appliance causing it to operate. In the same way, as we have received Christ and are in an organic union with Him, we must now walk in Him.

On one hand, through our organic union with Christ, He has been brought into us through our believing. On the other hand, we are now in Him; hence, we can walk in Him as a realm. We have received the

very Christ who is the embodiment of God realized as the life-giving Spirit; now, in our experience He becomes a realm for us to dwell in. Not only is He in us, but we are also in Him as a realm for us to walk in, just as the children of Israel walked in the good land to possess all its riches. Through our organic union with Christ, He has been brought into us, and at the same time, we have been brought into Him as a realm. With the electric appliance, on one hand, the electricity is brought into the appliance, and on the other hand, the appliance now operates in the electricity, in the realm of electricity.

Therefore, to dwell in God is to have our entire living in Him; it is not merely to rest in Him or to be satisfied by Him temporarily. To dwell in Him is to have our living in Him and to take Him as our everything. I was very touched by reading Brother Lee's own testimonies of how he lived in God:

> How do you practically abide? Here is an example. Every morning as soon as you rise up, when you enter the bathroom, you should first shut the door and for half a minute pray, "O Lord, thank You for giving me a new day. O Lord, give me the grace to wholly live by You today. Even as I wash, I do not want to wash by myself; I want to wash by You." Just pray a simple prayer like this. Then when you turn on the water, you can pray, "O Lord, I live by You, and I wash my face by You." (*Abiding in the Lord to Enjoy His Life,* p. 23)

Brother Lee shared these experiences as an elderly man, and they seem almost childish; nevertheless, they form a very practical testimony of how we may dwell in the Lord and take Him as our everything.

To practice dwelling in God is not just a matter of calling on Him when we are tired or in need so that we can receive some supply from Him. Rather, it is to live in Him moment by moment, all day long. I have learned to practice this to some degree. When I open my eyes in the morning, I pray, "Lord, thank You for today. Give me today's supply of grace for me to live You today." While I am washing my face and putting on my contact lenses, I thank the Lord and say, "Lord, You are my real sight. Grant me sight today to really see You." Simple prayers like these help us to live in Christ and to walk in Him as our realm. We must learn to not take all the practical matters of our daily living for granted. For example, putting on our clothes, tying our tie, driving our car—all these activities are related to our living. God wants

us to dwell in Him and to take Him as our everything in all these things. Therefore, as you put on your clothes, practice praying, "Lord, cover me today." As you are shopping at the store, pray, "Lord, I want to shop with You."

To dwell in God is to enter into Him as a realm and to live together with Him. Colossians 3:3 says, "You died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." We need to take Him as our everything. This is surely deeper than merely eating and drinking Him. Therefore, to dwell in God is the highest, deepest, and fullest experience of Him.

Book Four of the Psalms Unveiling the Saints' Deeper Experience of God in the Identification with Christ and Unveiling God's Recovery of His Title and Right over the Earth

This Indicating That Our Experience of Dwelling in God Paves the Way for Christ to Come to Possess the Earth So That God May Recover His Title (Ownership) and Right over the Earth

Book Four of the Psalms (Psa. 90—106) unveils the saints' deeper experience of God in the identification with Christ, and it unveils God's recovery of His title and right over the earth. This indicates that our experience of dwelling in God paves the way for Christ to come to possess the earth so that God may recover His title (ownership) and right over the earth.

Without the Saints' Deeper Experience of God, God Having No Way to Recover This Title and Right

Without the saints' deeper experience of God, God has no way to recover this title and right.

"The Days of Our Years Are Seventy Years, or, If Because of Strength, Eighty Years; but Their Pride Is Labor and Sorrow, for It Is Soon Gone, and We Fly Away"

Psalm 90:10 says, "The days of our years are seventy years, / Or, if because of strength, eighty years; / But their pride is labor and sorrow, / For it is soon gone, and we fly away." After declaring that the Lord was his dwelling place, Moses had the realization that his human life was fragile, limited, and temporal. Anyone who takes God as his habitation will have the consciousness and realization that human life is fragile and limited. What can we boast in after living seventy or eighty years? Our lives are full of labor and sorrow, they are temporary, and "we fly away." To have God as our dwelling place is the surest thing in the universe. Nothing else counts or is reliable; everything is soon gone and even we will quickly fly away.

If We Take God as Our Dwelling Place, Our Realizing That the Span of Our Life on Earth Is Brief and Full of Sins and Afflictions

If we take God as our dwelling place, we will realize that the span of our life on earth is brief and full of sins and afflictions (vv. 3-11).

Our Needing to Dwell in God, Living in Him Every Minute, for outside of Him There Being Sins and Afflictions

We need to dwell in God, living in Him every minute, for outside of Him there are sins and afflictions (v. 8; John 16:33). If we practice living in God and dwelling in Him, we will have the sensation that everything else around us in our human life and in our environment is full of sins and afflictions. We need to live in God every moment. Brother Nee lived such a life, even during his years in prison. He lived a life fully dependent on the Lord; he leaned helplessly upon the Lord and felt that he could not live without Him. Surely, Brother Nee realized that everything in human life and human existence was frail, empty, and vain.

PSALM 91 CONCERNING THE SAINTS' IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRIST IN HIS TAKING GOD AS HIS DWELLING PLACE

Psalm 91 concerns the saints' identification with Christ in His taking God as His dwelling place (v. 9). Psalm 90 reveals that God wants us to dwell in Him and take Him as our habitation. In Psalm 91 we see the way that we can actually dwell in God and take Him as our habitation. The key to our dwelling in God is our identification with Christ in His taking God as His dwelling place.

In Their Identification with Christ, the Saints Making Jehovah the Most High Their Habitation, Dwelling in His Secret Place and Abiding in His Shadow under His Wings

In their identification with Christ, the saints make Jehovah the

Most High their habitation, dwelling in His secret place and abiding in His shadow under His wings (vv. 1-9). Psalm 91 begins by referring to the saints' taking the Almighty as their habitation: "He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High / Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty" (v. 1). Verse 9 says, "You have made Jehovah, who is my refuge, / Even the Most High, Your habitation." The words *You* and *You're* here refer to Christ. Christ made Jehovah, even the Most High, His habitation. Therefore, there are two parties in this psalm—the saints, who aspire to take the Almighty as their habitation, and Christ Himself, who took Jehovah as His habitation.

This Being the Genuine Oneness with God; Here, Our Being Constituted with Him, and We and God Living Together as One

This is the genuine oneness with God; here, we are constituted with Him, and we and God live together as one. Genuine oneness with God is not merely agreeing with God and obeying Him. To be genuinely one with God is actually to dwell with Him, taking Him as our everything and living together with Him as one. To take God as our everything in every aspect of our life is genuine oneness with God. It is not hard to be one with God when we are in the meetings or praying to Him by ourselves. Rather, it is at all the other times in our daily life that we need to experience this genuine oneness with Him. Living in God and dwelling in Him is to experience genuine oneness with Him, oneness in which we are constituted with Him and live together with Him as one.

You and *Your* in Verses 9 through 13 Referring to Christ, as Proven by the Fact That Verses 11 and 12 of this Psalm Are Quoted by Satan in Matthew 4:6 in Reference to Christ

You and *Your* in verses 9 through 13 refer to Christ, as proven by the fact that verses 11 and 12 of this psalm are quoted by Satan in Matthew 4:6 in reference to Christ. When tempting the Lord in Matthew 4:6, Satan quoted Psalm 91:11-12. Therefore, through Satan's speaking, we know that verses 9 through 13 in Psalm 91 refer to Christ. Christ is the one who took God, the Most High, as His habitation.

This Indicating That in Psalm 91 It Is Christ Who Takes God as His Habitation, His Dwelling Place

This indicates that in Psalm 91 it is Christ who takes God as His habitation, His dwelling place.

Thus, Not Only Moses Taking God as His Dwelling Place, but Even the Lord Jesus, While He Was on Earth, Taking God the Father as His Habitation

Thus, not only Moses took God as his dwelling place (90:1), but even the Lord Jesus, while He was on earth, took God the Father as His habitation.

Moses, the Lawgiver, and Christ, the Grace-giver, Being the Same in Taking God as Their Dwelling Place, as Their Habitation

Moses, the lawgiver, and Christ, the grace-giver, were the same in taking God as their dwelling place, as their habitation. Praise the Lord that both the lawgiver and the grace-giver took God as their habitation.

Thus, the Saints (Represented by Moses) and Christ Being Identified as One

Thus, the saints (represented by Moses) and Christ are identified as one.

To Be Identified with Christ Being to Be Identified with Him Not Only in His Death, in His Resurrection, and in His Ascension but Also in His Taking God as His Habitation

To be identified with Christ is to be identified with Him not only in His death, in His resurrection, and in His ascension but also in His taking God as His habitation. Identification means "to be one with" or "to be in union with." Identification is not imitation; it is not a matter of our imitating Christ. Some Christians may desire to imitate Christ by considering what Jesus would do in certain situations; they want to walk like He did and act like He did. However, we need to forget about

imitation. Identification with Christ means that we are one with Him and in union with Him.

In the past I heard of an illustration used to explain identification as the way for us believers to partake of Christ's accomplishments, such as His death. In order for Christ's death to be effective in us, we must be identified with Christ. According to that illustration, identification is similar to placing a piece of paper within a book so that the history and experience of the book becomes the history and experience of that sheet of paper. For instance, if the book is put into fire, the sheet of paper within the book also passes through fire. Such an illustration is not bad, since it shows how we are included in Christ and, as a result, pass through whatever Christ passed through. Gradually, however, I have come to realize that even though this illustration is good to some degree, it is not sufficient to describe identification in full since the sheet of paper placed within the book remains a sheet of paper, while the book remains the book. Although the sheet of paper is within the book, the two are not the same.

The genuine identification according to the New Testament revelation is best illustrated by the grafting of a branch into a tree. A branch that is grafted into a tree becomes joined to that tree and is brought into union with the tree. Then through this union, something spreads from the tree into the branch, and something of the branch grows into the tree. This is different from merely placing one thing within another thing. Here something is growing in an organic union. Our being in Christ, that is, our being identified with Christ, is not merely like a sheet of paper within a book; our identification with Christ is like a branch grafted into a vine tree so that there is an organic union between the two. On one hand, something of Christ grows into us, and on the other hand, something of us grows into Him.

Romans 6 speaks concerning this union. Verse 5 says, "If we have grown together with Him in the likeness of His death, indeed we will also be in the likeness of His resurrection." Since we are joined to Christ through this organic union, we grow together with Him. It is through this process of identification that we partake of Christ's death and resurrection. We are not only identified with Christ in His death, resurrection, and ascension but also in His taking God as His habitation. We may be familiar with being identified with Christ in His death and resurrection, but we may never have considered that the believers are identified with Christ in His taking God as His habitation. Christ

dwelt in God, and now, by being identified with Him, we also dwell in God. Psalm 91 shows in a wonderful way not only that we can dwell in God but also that Christ was the One who took God as His habitation and that by being identified with Him, it is possible for us to dwell in God.

If We Would Be Identified with Christ in His Death, Resurrection, and Ascension, Our Needing to Abide in Christ, and to Abide in Christ Being Not Only to Remain in Him but Also to Dwell in Him, Taking Him as Our Everything

If we would be identified with Christ in His death, resurrection, and ascension, we need to abide in Christ (John 15:4), and to abide in Christ is not only to remain in Him but also to dwell in Him, taking Him as our everything. Abiding in Christ is the teaching in John 15, where the Lord said that He is the vine, that we are the branches, and that we need to abide in Him and He in us (v. 4). The New Testament is full of this teaching concerning abiding in Christ. John's writings and Paul's writings, in particular, emphasize the matter of abiding in Christ, living in Him, dwelling in Him, walking in Him, and taking God as our realm so that we may live and walk in Him (John 15:4; Rom. 6:11; Col. 2:6).

In order to adequately understand the significance of abiding according to the Lord's word—"Abide in Me"—we need to understand four words related to abiding.

The first word is *in*, a key word in the New Testament translated from the Greek word *en*. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, "If anyone is *in* Christ, he is a new creation," and 1 Corinthians 1:30 says that it is of God that "you are *in* Christ Jesus." According to these verses, everything depends on where you are. The question that you need to ask yourself is not merely, "What are you doing?" but "Where are you?" If you are still in Adam, you are in the old realm, and it does not matter what you do; you are under condemnation. But you can praise the Lord that you are not in Adam but in Christ. You have been transferred into another realm.

The second word is *abide*. This is the word used in John 15:4: "*Abide* in Me." This is not a light word. The word in Greek is *meno*, which means "to remain"; it does not imply a short stay or visit but a

long remaining. Hence, although we are already in Christ, according to John 15, we need to abide in Him.

The third word is *dwell,* from the Greek word *oikeo,* which comes from the Greek word for *house, oikos. Oikeo* may be translated "dwell" or "make home," and it is used in 1 Corinthians 3:16, which says, "The Spirit of God dwells in you." To dwell is more than to abide, since it includes making home.

The fourth group of words is *deeply dwell, deeply make home,* or *make home deeply,* translated from the Greek word *kat'oikeo.* This Greek word is from the words *kata,* which means "deep down," and *oikeo,* which means "make home" or "dwell." It is the word used by Paul in Ephesians 3:17, which says, "That Christ may *make His home* in your hearts." Christ is deeply and firmly making His home in our heart.

These four words, which the New Testament uses to describe how we abide in Christ, are meaningful. First, we are in Him because we have been transferred into Him, but we also need to abide in Him, that is, remain in Him. In addition to remaining in Him, there needs to be the dwelling, the making home, so that the Spirit of God not only remains with us but also dwells in us. Furthermore, the apostle Paul was burdened that Christ would live in us, dwelling in us not in a shallow way but making His home deeply within our being. He wanted to make certain that we would allow Christ to make home deep within us. These four words denote four stages of the experience of dwelling in God. Upon receiving the Lord and believing in Him, we are placed in Him. But after we are put in Him, we need to pursue abiding in Him, dwelling in Him, and go further in allowing Him to deeply and firmly make His home in our heart.

Our Abiding in Christ according to the Teaching of the Anointing Inwardly and according to the Walk of the Lord Outwardly

We abide in Christ according to the teaching of the anointing inwardly and according to the walk of the Lord outwardly (1 John 2:27, 6). First John 2:27 says, "The anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone teach you; but as His anointing teaches you concerning all things and is true and is not a lie, and even as it has taught you, abide in Him." The living anointing is abiding within each and every one of the Lord's genuine believers. This anointing is nothing less than the Triune God Himself

who lives in us; He is moving, He is active, and He is operating within us. The anointing is God in motion, God in action. He is moving within us, and as He moves in us, He teaches us. Sometimes when we want to go somewhere or do something that is not pleasing to Him, we may want to take a leave of absence from the Lord. We may say to Him, "Lord, I've been with You all six days of this training. That has been wonderful, but now on the Lord's Day, please give me a three hour break to do whatever I would like to do." However, as we are indulging in our pleasure and entertainment, the anointing would not let us go or leave us. Rather, He operates in us. Sometimes, as we are engaging in our entertainment and pleasure, we may sense the anointing within us saying, "Are you really enjoying this? Is this really meaningful?" Such a sense is the operation of the anointing within us. If, at the moment when the anointing stirs in us, we heed the anointing and turn from whatever we are doing back to our spirit, we are then receiving the teaching of the anointing. This is the way to abide in Him.

In addition to the teaching of the anointing inwardly, we abide in Christ also according to the walk of the Lord outwardly. When the Lord Jesus was on the earth, He lived in a certain way, and He said that He has given us an example so that we may do as He has done (John 13:15). This indicates that whatever the Lord did, He did as an example.

In Matthew 11:29 the Lord said, "Learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." We need to learn from the Lord. In His living on the earth, He established a model not for imitation but for reproduction. It is useless to try to imitate the Lord, since for us to imitate Him is similar to a monkey attempting to imitate a man. Although it is possible to imitate Christ for a short time, we will eventually revert to our original form. But the Lord's word is that He has given us an example and that we can learn from Him. First Peter 2:21 says that Christ left us a model so that we may follow in His steps. Christ was a model, and we need to be His reproduction. Thus, inwardly we have His anointing teaching us, and outwardly we have the walk of the Lord as a model, a pattern, helping us to remain abiding and dwelling in Him.

In Order to Abide in Christ, Our Having to Keep God's Commandments, God's Charges to Us, and Be Those Who Are Submissive to God

In order to abide in Christ, we must keep God's commandments,

God's charges to us, and be those who are submissive to God (1 John 3:24). If we desire to abide in Christ, it is essential that we keep God's commandments. His commandments refer to His Word, His speaking. When we say Amen to the Word of God, we are immediately brought into Him in a subjective way. When we heed God's speaking, saying Amen to His speaking, we are not only positionally in Him but also dispositionally, actually, and experientially abiding in Him. I encourage and even admonish all the brothers and sisters, especially the young people, to daily read the Word of God. If we do not read the Word of God, the Bible, how can we know His commandments? Brother Lee was strong in charging us to make our reading of the Word of God a legal matter. Every day we need to spend at least ten minutes in reading our Bible. I hope that we will build up a culture among us of asking whether or not we have read the Bible today. In this way, if we have not been reading the Bible for many weeks, someone may check with us and thereby remind us to read our Bible. We need to read the Bible every day. We also need to pay attention to the Bible, God's Word, and to keep His word. Our saying Amen to God's word will help us to abide in Him.

To Abide in Christ, Taking Him as Our Dwelling Place, and to Allow Him to Abide in Us, Taking Us as His Dwelling Place, Being to Live in the Reality of the Universal Incorporation of the Processed and Consummated Triune God with the Redeemed and Regenerated Believers

To abide in Christ, taking Him as our dwelling place, and to allow Him to abide in us, taking us as His dwelling place, are to live in the reality of the universal incorporation of the processed and consummated Triune God with the redeemed and regenerated believers (John 14:2, 10-11, 17, 20, 23). God's desire is to have a universal divine-human incorporation. The ultimate goal of God's purpose in His economy is to gain an incorporation in which the Triune God is incorporated with the tripartite man. The Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—is an incorporation in Himself, and He desires that this incorporation would be enlarged to include His chosen people, thus becoming a universal divine-human incorporation where God is in man and man is in God. This incorporation is the mutual dwelling place of God and man that becomes the New Jerusalem as the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose. Our dwelling in God and our making God our habitation has much to do with our being brought into this universal incorporation.

The New Jerusalem Being the Ultimate Incorporation of the Processed and Consummated Triune God with the Regenerated, Sanctified, Renewed, Transformed, Conformed, and Glorified Tripartite Church

The New Jerusalem is the ultimate incorporation of the processed and consummated Triune God with the regenerated, sanctified, renewed, transformed, conformed, and glorified tripartite church (Rev. 21:3, 22).

The New Jerusalem Being the Tabernacle of God, and the Center of the Tabernacle Being Christ as the Hidden Manna; the Way to Be Incorporated into This Universal, Divine-human Incorporation, the Mutual Abode of God and Man, Being to Eat Christ as the Hidden Manna

The New Jerusalem is the tabernacle of God, and the center of the tabernacle is Christ as the hidden manna; the way to be incorporated into this universal, divine-human incorporation, the mutual abode of God and man, is to eat Christ as the hidden manna (v. 3; Exo. 16:32-34; Heb. 9:4; Rev. 2:17). In Revelation 2:17, which was written to the church in Pergamos, the Lord said, "To him who overcomes, to him I will give of the hidden manna." The church in Pergamos prefigures the church that entered into a marriage union with the world. It was a type of the worldly church, where everything is outward in the physical, material realm. In the degraded church, the Lord was calling for the overcomers who, in spite of all the outward, physical things in that materialistic, worldly church, would daily come into the Holy of Holies in the incarnated Triune God and dive into Him. The hidden manna signifies the hidden Christ as our life supply. Every believer needs to have experiences of this hidden Christ.

In Exodus, when the Israelites were in the wilderness, manna rained down from heaven as a public life supply from God to His people. However, there is a hidden portion of manna in the golden pot within the Ark, signifying our hidden experiences of Christ. In the worldly church everything is open and is for an outward show and worldly glamour. In the midst of such a situation, the overcomers daily turn to their spirit, coming forward to the throne of grace in order to contact the

hidden Christ in their spirit. Hence, they are rewarded by Christ with the hidden manna.

The location of the hidden manna is important. The hidden manna was located in a golden pot, and this golden pot was inside the Ark of the Covenant, which was within the Holy of Holies, the innermost part of the tabernacle. The hidden manna, which signifies the hidden Christ as the hidden supply for God's people, was hidden in a golden pot, which signifies the divine nature of God the Father. Hence, Christ as the hidden supply for God's people is hidden in God. Furthermore, this golden pot was within the Ark, which was made of the acacia wood overlaid with gold, signifying the wonderful God-man Jesus with both the divine and human natures. This shows that God is in Christ. Eventually this Christ, as signified by the Ark, was within the Holy of Holies, which signifies our spirit indwelt by the Holy Spirit, the divine Spirit, to be the reality of the Holy of Holies.

Thus, according to the picture of the hidden manna in the tabernacle, Christ as the hidden manna is in God, typified by the golden pot, who is in Christ, typified by the Ark, who is located in our spirit, typified by the Holy of Holies. Christ today is in our spirit! Furthermore, the Holy of Holies was in the tabernacle, typifying the incarnated Triune God. This mutual indwelling is referred to in John 14:20—"In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you"—and is fully realized in Christ's resurrection. Christ is in the Father, we are in Christ, and Christ is in us. In the picture of the tabernacle, it is clear that if we come forward as overcomers, in spite of a situation of degradation, into the Holy of Holies and to the throne of grace in order to partake of Christ as the hidden manna, we will be incorporated with God. Christ is in God, God is in Christ, and Christ is in our spirit, mingling with us so that we are fully in the incarnated Triune God, not only by being joined to Him and mingled with Him but also by being incorporated with Him. Today, the Triune God is not only coinhering within Himself, this incorporation has been enlarged to include all the believers who are enjoying Christ as the hidden manna.

Our Abiding in Christ So That He May Abide in Us by Dealing with the Constant Word in the Scriptures, Which Is outside of Us, and the Present Word as the Spirit, Which Is within Us

We abide in Christ so that He may abide in us by dealing with the constant word in the Scriptures, which is outside of us, and the present word as the Spirit, which is within us (5:39-40; 6:63; 2 Cor. 3:6; Rev. 2:7). Again I say that if we desire to dwell in God, to take God as our habitation, our dwelling place, we need to daily handle the Word of God as the constant word and the present word, or the hidden word. Every day we need to read the constant word of the Scriptures, the Bible, not in a dead or doctrinal way but in the way of exercising our spirit over the Word to receive the word into us. This is different from coming to the Word like the Pharisees who approached the Word merely to receive teachings. We need to come to the Lord in the Word to receive not only the constant word but also the present word, which is the Spirit. The best way to do this is to pray-read the Word. We must daily pray-read the Word. We should not live a day without pray-reading the Word. We can pray-read at least two verses before we leave for work or school. We need to pray-read the Word. When we pray-read the Word, our living will become different, because we will be brought into a realm, a sphere, in which we not only enjoy God for a moment but also live and dwell in God.

By the Outward, Written Word Our Having the Explanation, Definition, and Expression of the Mysterious Lord, and by the Inward, Living Word Our Having the Experience of the Abiding Christ and the Presence of the Practical Lord

By the outward, written word we have the explanation, definition, and expression of the mysterious Lord, and by the inward, living word we have the experience of the abiding Christ and the presence of the practical Lord (Eph. 5:26; 6:17-18).

If We Abide in the Lord's Constant and Written Word, His Instant and Living Words Abiding in Us

If we abide in the Lord's constant and written word, His instant and living words will abide in us (John 8:31; 15:7; 1 John 2:14).

Our Abiding in Him and His Words Abiding in Us So That We May Speak in Him and He May Speak in Us for the Building of God into Man and of Man into God

We abide in Him and His words abide in us so that we may speak in Him and He may speak in us for the building of God into man and of man into God (John 15:7; 2 Cor. 2:17; 13:3; 1 Cor. 14:4b). The building

up of the church depends on God's speaking. If there is no speaking of God, there is no building up of the church. This is why we practice prophesying in all the local churches on the Lord's Day. All the saints are encouraged to speak the word of God. But how can we speak the word of God if we do not read the Word every day? We need to receive the word and allow the word to remain in us as a storehouse so that we are not only filled with the word but can also speak forth the word.

When the Spirit within us is speaking forth the word that has come into us, and we echo forth the Spirit's speaking as a prophecy, our speaking, our prophesying, builds up the church. The Lord needs to recover the prophesying of all the saints more and more. If every saint who attends the Lord's Day prophesying meeting came prepared to prophesy for the Lord, the whole recovery would be brought into a new revival.

If We Abide in Christ by Loving Him, by Always Rejoicing, by Unceasingly Praying, and by Giving Thanks in Everything, His Abiding in Us to Dispense His Riches into Us

If we abide in Christ by loving Him, by always rejoicing, by unceasingly praying, and by giving thanks in everything, He will abide in us to dispense His riches into us (John 14:23; 1 Thes. 5:16-18; John 15:4). If we desire to abide in Christ, the first thing that we need to do is love Him. Such love for Him is produced by our rejoicing always, our praying unceasingly, and our giving thanks in everything.

If We Abide in Christ, Our Bearing Much Fruit to Glorify God

If we abide in Christ, we will bear much fruit to glorify God (v. 8). An indication that we are abiding in the Lord is that we will bear fruit. Fruit-bearing is a result of the life-flow. When life is flowing out from us, we bear fruit. Thus, if we abide in the Lord by enjoying Him as the vine, and allow Him to flow out of us in a normal way, fruit will be borne and God will be glorified.

If We Abide in Christ, When He Is Manifested, Our Boldly Meeting Him and Not Being Put to Shame and Departing from His Glorious Presence

If we abide in Christ, when He is manifested, we will boldly meet Him and not be put to shame and depart from His glorious presence

(1 John 2:28; cf. Matt. 25:30). We know that the Lord is coming soon, but where will we be when He comes? First John 2:28 says, "Little children, abide in Him, so that if He is manifested, we may have boldness and not be put to shame from Him at His coming." The apostle Paul was exercised in the matter of abiding. He desired to be found in Christ in every situation and not be put to shame (Phil. 3:9; cf. 1:20).

We need to pursue abiding in Christ and dwelling in Him so that at His coming, we will not be put to shame. Rather, we will have boldness. We do not want to be like those evil workers in Matthew 7, who will come to the Lord saying, "Lord, Lord, was it not in Your name that we prophesied, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name did many works of power?" The Lord will say to them, "I never knew you. Depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness" (vv. 22-23). The Lord's word here indicates that it is not sufficient to merely be zealous in doing many things for the Lord. We need to dwell in the Lord and abide in Him so that He can say, "I know these ones. I am with them and they have been with me. They are living in Me."

He, Him, and *His* in Psalm 91:14-16 Referring to Christ; These Verses Being a Prophecy concerning Christ

He, Him, and *His* in Psalm 91:14-16 refer to Christ; these verses are a prophecy concerning Christ. Christ loved God the Father (John 14:31); He has been set on high, exalted to the highest place in the heavens (Phil. 2:9-11); and He is now seeing God's salvation in the extension of His days in resurrection (Psa. 91:16; Rev. 1:18a). In all these matters we should be identified with Christ; then we will live with Him and love God; thus, we will be exalted, and we will see God's salvation in the extension of our days. We praise the Lord for the matter of our identification with Christ; by abiding in Him, we can dwell in God.

PSALM 92 SHOWING THE ISSUE OF THE DEEPER EXPERIENCE OF GOD IN THE SAINTS' IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRIST IN TAKING GOD AS THEIR DWELLING PLACE

Psalm 92 shows the issue of the deeper experience of God in the saints' identification with Christ in taking God as their dwelling place. I marvel at the arrangement of Psalms 90—92. In Psalm 90 is the revelation concerning dwelling in God; in Psalm 91, we see that the way for

us to dwell in God is by being identified with Christ; and in Psalm 92, we see the issues of taking God as our dwelling place.

The First Issue Being That the Saints Rejoice in the Great Works of Jehovah; When We Dwell in God, Taking Him as Our Habitation, Our Seeing His Great Works in the Accomplishing of His Economy and Rejoicing in Them

The first issue is that the saints rejoice in the great works of Jehovah (vv. 1-9); when we dwell in God, taking Him as our habitation, we see His great works in the accomplishing of His economy and rejoice in them. Psalm 92:4-5 says, "You have made me rejoice, O Jehovah, because of what You have done; / Because of the works of Your hands I will shout for joy. / How great are Your works, O Jehovah! / So very deep are Your thoughts!" If we are not a people who dwell in God and take Him as our habitation, when we see all that is around us, we may consider that not much is happening. Actually, we may be full of criticism regarding what we see around us and have many opinions about everything. However, when we dwell in God, taking Him as our habitation, we will see the great works of God and praise Him for His work. God is moving and working. Whether or not we see what the Lord is doing depends on our point of view. When we are not in God, our point of view is low, and we see only our self and the pitiful situation. But, when we are in God, we see His wonderful works, which cause us to rejoice.

Before Our Dwelling in God as Our Habitation, Our Possibly Being Low and Frequently Defeated; a Further Issue of Our Dwelling in God Being That Our Horn (Fighting Strength) Is Exalted over Our Spiritual Enemies

Before we dwell in God as our habitation, we may be low and frequently defeated; a further issue of our dwelling in God is that our horn (fighting strength) is exalted over our spiritual enemies (v. 10; Eph. 6:10-13). An issue of our dwelling in God is that our horn is exalted. In a previous message we saw that when we dwell in God, we can do nothing except praise the Lord. We can declare, "Praise the Lord! Everything is done! Christ is the Victor!"; our horn is exulted, and we are not afraid of the enemies. There will be attacks and opposition, but

we know that the victory is ours. The Lord said that the gates of Hades will not prevail against the built up church (Matt. 16:18).

When we dwell in God and enter into the universal divine-human incorporation, Satan has no way. In chapter 1 of *The Mystery of God and the Mystery of Christ*, Brother Lee gives a touching testimony regarding taking Christ as His habitation. He says,

> In July of 1937 Japan attacked China, beginning a war that would last until 1945. Just as this war was beginning, I was traveling in northern China. In October I went to Hangkow, and while I was there, I received a cable from my family, asking me to return to Chefoo. Since Hangkow is far to the north of Chefoo, to return home would require me to travel along four or five different railway lines. This would be very dangerous because during the war, the Japanese were conducting daily bombings on the railway stations and lines in China. As a result of this bombing, there were many refugees up and down the railway lines and at the stations, and the trains were often not on time. Although this was the situation, after much prayer I felt that I should return home to Chefoo. I did not want to leave my family under the care of the brothers and sisters any longer but felt that I should return home to take care of them while the war was taking place. When I told the saints in Hangkow of my decision to go to Chefoo, they all were very concerned. They repeatedly said to me, "Look at the map. Look at the map. How will it be possible for you to make it all the way to Chefoo from Hangkow in such a dangerous situation?" Nevertheless, I still felt that I should go.
>
> I must testify that while I was traveling on that trip, I experienced Christ as my habitation. I did not feel that I was in a train or being carried by a train but that I was in Christ and being carried by Christ. I remember well the events of one night on the train. That night the sky was filled with clouds and it was raining. Because of the weather, all the people on the train were very happy. They knew that as long as the sky was covered by clouds, the Japanese bombers would not be able to see the train, and they would be safe. The people on the train were so happy that they even began to sing. Suddenly, however, the weather changed—the sky

became exceptionally clear and the moon came out. When the people on the train realized this, they became exceedingly anxious. They were so afraid that the Japanese bombers would bomb the train. When the train stopped at a station, they became even more frightened. That night, while everyone around me was filled with anxiety, I was filled with praise. I was experiencing Christ as my habitation.

After a while, I began to speak with the other people on the train. I said to them, "Friends, why are you all so afraid?" They answered me in surprise, "Don't you know why? Don't you know that the Japanese bombers may come at any minute and bomb the train?" I said to them, "Yes, I know this quite well. I know this as well as you do." Then they said to me, "If you also know this, why are you so happy? How are you able to be happy when we are in such danger?" I answered them, "I am so happy because I have Christ. I have Christ; therefore, I have peace."

Later all the people on the train were still very anxious, so I spoke to them again. I said, "I realize that all of you are still very anxious, but I would like to let you know that I have prayed to my Christ, and He has told me that nothing bad will happen to us. Be at peace." When the people on the train heard these words, they said to me, "Sir, you are very deep in religious matters." I answered them, "It is not that I am deep in religious matters, but that I have the living Christ within me." Finally after a very long time on the train, we eventually arrived at our destination in Chefoo. As I was leaving the train, I saw the people who I had been speaking with earlier. When they saw me, they all began to say, "You were right! Your prophecy was correct." (pp. 12-13)

It is not a small thing to realize and experience taking God as our dwelling place. When we have God as our dwelling place, Satan has no way and no ground in anything, and our horn is exalted over our spiritual enemies.

Another Issue of Our Dwelling in God as Our Habitation Being That We Are Mingled with Fresh Oil, Which Signifies the Consummated Spirit, Who Is Fresh and Present

Another issue of our dwelling in God as our habitation is our being

mingled with fresh oil, which signifies the consummated Spirit, who is fresh and present (cf. Exo. 30:23-25). When we are dwelling in God, we are mingled with God, incorporated with Him, and under this constant anointing. We can all testify that since Brother Lee went to be with the Lord fourteen and a half years ago, there has been no shortage of the Lord's speaking or His rich anointing among us. None of us is anybody, but because we are dwelling in God, we are being corporately brought into the universal divine-human incorporation as the reality of the Body of Christ, upon which is a constant anointing. As Paul declares in 2 Corinthians 1:21, "The One who firmly attaches us with you unto Christ and has anointed us is God." Paul realized that he, an apostle, with all the believers had been firmly attached by God unto the anointed One.

In one sense, our speaking in the trainings and conferences is nothing new. The truths that the Lord has given us are "all in the books," as Brother Lee said. However, we can sense the freshness in all this speaking. We may have heard many of these truths in the past, but every time we dig into them and labor on them, there is a sense of freshness and newness. This sense is the Lord's blessing upon our dwelling in Him and our being brought into this universal divine-human incorporation.

Still Another Issue of Our Dwelling in God, Taking Him as Everything in Our Living in His House, Being That We Are Securely Planted in His House and Flourish in the Riches of His Divine Life to Such an Extent That We Bear Fruit Even in Old Age

Still another issue of our dwelling in God, taking Him as everything in our living in His house, is that we are securely planted in His house and flourish in the riches of His divine life to such an extent that we bear fruit even in old age (Psa. 92:12-14).

All you older saints need to see that there is hope for you. Our dwelling in God is the genuine "fountain of youth"; even in old age, we will bear fruit. As you dwell in God, daily coming to Him, handling His Word, enjoying His anointing, and eating of the hidden manna, you will be renewed so that even in your old age, you will bear fruit. You will flourish; you will be full of sap and green. Hallelujah! —J. L.

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OF THE PSALMS
(2)

Christ's Eternal and Unchanging Existence in His Resurrection (Message 5)

Scripture Reading: Psa. 102:6-8, 13, 16, 21-28

I. Psalm 102 unveils Christ's death and His eternal and unchanging existence in His resurrection:

A. In typology, this psalm first refers to Christ's suffering, especially to His death:

1. Christ's suffering was for redemption, and His redemption was to produce the church as the house of God and the city of God—vv. 6-8.
2. Verse 7 is a particular verse concerning Christ's suffering, which was related to His zeal for God's house—John 2:17; Psa. 69:9:
   a. In Psalm 102:7 Christ is likened to a lone sparrow on a housetop, referring to the flat roof of a Jewish house, where people would often go to pray—Acts 10:9.
   b. This indicates that when the Lord Jesus was on earth, probably there were times when in the night He, like a lone bird on a housetop, would watch and pray, caring not for His own interest but for the interest of God and of God's house—Matt. 14:23; Luke 6:12.

B. Psalm 102:23-28 unveils Christ as the One who is everlasting in His resurrection:

1. Verses 25 through 27, quoted in Hebrews 1:10-12, speak of Christ's continuing existence in His resurrection.
2. Christ's existence is unchanging throughout all generations because of His resurrection—Acts 2:24; Rev. 1:18; Heb. 13:8.

3. The resurrected Christ is no longer bound by any limitations; when He resurrected, nothing could hold Him back—John 20:1-18; Acts 2:24:
   a. Resurrection means that the Lord Jesus has broken through all barriers, even the greatest barrier of all—death; death has been nullified, and the resurrected Christ lives forever and ever—Heb. 2:14; 2 Tim. 1:10; Rev. 1:18.
   b. In His resurrection Christ has transcended everything, including space and time; as the resurrected One, He is omnipresent, and space and time cannot limit Him—Eph. 1:19-23.
4. Because of His eternal and unchanging existence in His resurrection, Christ is the key that turns the earth to the Lord—Psa. 102:12-27; Rev. 1:18; Heb. 13:8.

II. The product of Christ's death and resurrection is the church, typified by Zion with God's house and God's city—Psa. 102:13-16, 21; Heb. 12:22-23:
   A. In Psalm 102 Zion, the center of the city of Jerusalem, typifies the church as the center of God's kingdom—48:2; Matt. 16:18-19.
   B. The stones typify the believers as the building materials of the church, and the dust, the soil, typifies the ground of the church—Psa. 102:14; 1 Pet. 2:5; Rev. 1:11:
      1. We should take pleasure in all the members of the church—Psa. 102:14.
      2. We should favor the ground of the church, which is the ground of oneness—Deut. 12:5-28; 14:23-25; John 17:11, 21-23; 1 Cor. 1:10-13a; Eph. 4:3-6; Rev. 1:11.
   C. In Psalm 102:16 the rebuilding of Zion typifies the rebuilding of the church:
      1. It is through the established, restored Zion, signifying the church, that all the nations and kingdoms will be brought into the praise and worship of Jehovah—vv. 21-22.
      2. The rebuilding of the devastated church, typified by the rebuilding of Zion, will turn all the nations to the Lord, and the kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of God and of Christ—v. 16; Rev. 11:15.

III. It is in Christ's resurrection, by Christ's resurrection, and through Christ's resurrection that the church continues its existence—Psa. 102:21-28; Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:19-23; 2:6:

   A. Christ's resurrection enables the church to continue its existence—Matt. 16:18; Acts 1:22; 2:31; 4:2, 33.
   B. The church, the Body of Christ, is absolutely in resurrection—Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:19-23; 2:6:
      1. The golden lampstand, typifying the church as the Body of Christ, portrays Christ as the resurrection life, growing, branching, budding, and blossoming to shine the light—Exo. 25:31-40; Num. 17:8; Rev. 1:11-12.
      2. The church is a new creation in Christ's resurrection and was created by the resurrected Christ—Gal. 6:15; Heb. 2:10-12:
         a. We are the Body of Christ only in the new creation germinated by Christ's resurrection life—2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 1:19-23.
         b. The reality of resurrection is Christ as the life-giving Spirit—John 11:25; 20:22; 1 Cor. 15:45b:
            1) If we do any work that is not in resurrection, the life-giving Spirit will not honor it.
            2) The Spirit honors only what is in resurrection—vv. 45b, 58.
      3. In order to be in the reality of the Body of Christ, we need to be absolutely in the resurrection life of Christ—John 11:25; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 1:9:
         a. When we do not live by our natural life but live by the divine life within us, we are in resurrection; the issue of this is the Body of Christ—Phil. 3:10-11; 2 Cor. 1:9.
         b. Our natural strength and ability need to be dealt with by the cross to become useful in resurrection for our service to the Lord—Phil. 3:3.
   C. The church is "resurrectionly"; that is, the church is an organic entity absolutely in resurrection, a new creation created in Christ's resurrection and by the resurrected Christ—Eph. 1:19-23; 2:6; 2 Cor. 5:17:
      1. "God sees the church as a being that can endure death. The gates of Hades are open to the church, but the gates of Hades cannot prevail against her and cannot confine her;

thus, the nature of the church is resurrection" (*The Orthodoxy of the Church,* pp. 21-22).

2. The church is the vessel that holds the resurrected Christ; the church is the place where God demonstrates the operation of the might of His strength, according to the power which He caused to operate in Christ when He raised Him from the dead—Eph. 1:19-23; 2:6.
3. The church is the same as the resurrected Lord not only in nature but also in power—John 11:25; Matt. 16:18; Acts 4:33; Rev. 1:11, 18; 2:8.
4. Just as God broke through all barriers in the resurrected Christ, He is breaking through all barriers in the church; therefore, the church should be the same in life and power as the resurrected Christ—Eph. 1:19-23; 2:6:
   a. The church should be as powerful, as free, and as unfettered by any limitation as the Lord Jesus is—Rev. 1:18.
   b. The might of God's strength not only operated in Christ, but it continually operates in the church as well—Eph. 1:19-20; Col. 1:29.
   c. The power of the church is the resurrection power of Christ—Phil. 3:10.
5. The Holy Spirit is manifesting the resurrection power of Christ through the church—Acts 1:8; 2:24; 4:33:
   a. The church is the depository and storehouse of the resurrection power of Christ—Eph. 1:19-23.
   b. Hades represents death, and the church represents resurrection—Matt. 16:18.
   c. As Christ is in resurrection, the church also is in resurrection; therefore, the church continues its existence in the resurrection of Christ—Eph. 1:19-23; 2:6; Rev. 1:18, 20.

MESSAGE FIVE

CHRIST'S ETERNAL AND UNCHANGING EXISTENCE IN HIS RESURRECTION

These messages have been given in the context of a training. To be a trainee is not merely to voluntarily comply with directions and regulations. This is needed, but it is outward. Intrinsically speaking, to be a trainee means that we are willing and ready to be touched by the Lord Spirit in our natural life and being. We may say that the Lord conducted the first "full-time training" during the three and a half years of His earthly ministry. All His trainees, His disciples, except the one who betrayed Him, were deeply and profoundly touched in their natural being. If we are trainees intrinsically, we cannot receive these twelve messages without being touched in our natural being.

This message focuses on resurrection, on Christ's continuing and everlasting existence in resurrection, and on the church as an organic entity constituted with the resurrection life of Christ. This word will be intensely focused, but its application may be quite extensive. We are in and we are the Body of Christ as a reality, and the unique Head of the Body—the Lord Spirit moving in the Body—knows about and cares for the particular situation, condition, and need of every member. Every member is precious to Him. Only the Lord knows the range of the needs among the many members receiving this word. There are new ones who have been saved only a very short time, those who are new to the church life, full-time trainees, graduates from the full-time training, young working saints, middle-aged saints, and elderly saints. It is my conviction before the Lord's face that He would like to apply something of this word on resurrection to every one of us.

THE APPLICATION AND EXPERIENCE OF RESURRECTION

There are at least seventeen areas related to resurrection in which the Lord Spirit might operate in us, areas of possible application by the Lord Spirit, areas in which the Lord may begin to touch us.

Knowing Christ in His Resurrection, Knowing the Resurrected Christ

The Lord may apply this word on resurrection to help us to know Christ Himself as the resurrected One. In Philippians 3:10 Paul links knowing Christ with knowing the power of His resurrection. If we do not know resurrection, we do not know Christ.

Knowing the Church as an Organic Entity in the Resurrection Life of Christ

The Lord Spirit might apply this word so that we would know the church as an organic entity in the resurrection life of Christ (Eph. 1:19-23; 2:6; 2 Cor. 5:17). If we do not know resurrection experientially, we do not know the church intrinsically.

Willing to Experience the Cross as Portrayed in Song of Songs 2

Under the Spirit's application of this word, we may become willing to experience the cross as described in Song of Songs 2:8-13. We may be lifted out of our introspection, our self-examination, and be willing to go at last to the clefts of the rock, which is to abide in the crucified Christ. We need to spend much time in the crucified Christ.

Aspiring to Know the Power of Christ's Resurrection

The Lord Spirit may cause us, like Paul, to aspire to know the power of Christ's resurrection (Phil. 3:10). It was a yearning in Paul to know this power experientially. If we have little interest or aspiration for this, the Lord Spirit may first need to produce in us a desire to know in our experience the power of Christ's resurrection.

Advancing in the Divine Romance

The Lord Spirit might cause some of us to advance in the divine romance by applying this word to us. We can and should continually say, "Lord Jesus, my Beloved, I love You!" However, for many of us, our love remains juvenile and undeveloped; we are stranded in Song of Songs 1. Such love has not matured to be the love of the bride (Rev. 21:9-10; 22:17). Because the Lord Spirit knows this, by the application of resurrection life He will enable and motivate us to advance deeply in the divine romance until we become the Shulammite (S. S. 6:13).

Participating in the Fellowship of Christ's Sufferings

In His burden for the Body of Christ, the Lord Spirit will constrain some to participate in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings (Phil. 3:10). Only the Lord Spirit knows who these ones are. They are willing to make up what is lacking of the afflictions of Christ for His Body, the church (Col. 1:24). If none of us participates in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, the building up of the Body of Christ through the ministry of life will be delayed.

Our Natural Ability Becoming Resurrected Ability

The Lord Spirit may apply this word to our natural ability and our natural strength, leading us into dealings with the natural constitution so that all of our God-created and developed abilities will no longer be natural but in resurrection (Phil. 3:3). In this way they can be used by the Spirit and honored by the Body.

Serving the Lord according to the Eternal Principle of Death and Resurrection

By resurrection the Lord Spirit will cause us to serve in the church, the ministry, and the work according to the eternal principle of death and resurrection (Rom. 7:6). If we are naturally active, efficient, and capable, the Lord Spirit may touch us in our service. He wants to bring each of us into resurrection.

Gradually Experiencing the Out-resurrection—the Resurrection of Our Entire Inner Being—until We Reach Maturity in Life

The Lord Spirit may apply the word in this message to give us the longing to experience the out-resurrection—the gradual resurrection of our entire inner being—until we reach maturity in life (Phil. 3:11). It is sad to see brothers and sisters in their seventies, nearing their end yet displaying the full flower of their disposition. A brother who liked to control others thirty years ago should not be more controlling today, nor should a brother who was naturally emotional forty years ago be more so now. Instead, the older saints should bear this testimony: "As my days are declining and my strength and energy are weakening, my inner being is thriving in resurrection."

Being Able by the God of Resurrection to Comfort Those Who Are Suffering

The Lord Spirit may apply this word concerning resurrection to some of us so that by the God of resurrection, the God of all comfort, we may comfort those in affliction with the comforting with which we ourselves have been comforted by Him (2 Cor. 1:3-4). In the southern Philippines many saints are suffering terribly because of a flood—children of the saints have perished, saints are missing, and some have lost everything. Only those who know the God of resurrection's comforting of them in all their afflictions can comfort such suffering ones, weep with them, embrace them, and minister resurrection life to them.

Prayer in Resurrection

The Lord Spirit may apply this word to us so that our prayer will be in resurrection, typified by the incense with the principal ingredient of frankincense (Exo. 30:34-35). In many prayer meetings there is a struggle caused by many who pray in a natural way—out of their natural being—and thereby inhibit the release of resurrection power. The prayer of the church should be in resurrection. The Lord might want to touch us concerning our way of praying.

Being a Living Testimony of the Resurrected Christ

The Lord Spirit may work in some of us in the near future so that we can be living testimonies of the resurrected Christ (Acts 5:20; 23:11; 26:16). To be a testimony is not merely to be a preacher or teacher of the doctrine of resurrection but to be one who gives a direct experiential account of the reality of the resurrected Christ. The Lord needs such living testimonies to travel throughout India, testifying that Jesus has been raised from the dead and that the devil and death have been destroyed.

Being a Genuine Deputy Authority with the Budding Rod

The Lord Spirit might apply this word to some brothers to cause them to be manifested as having a budding rod in their God-appointed ministry, making them genuine representatives of the One who has all authority in heaven and on earth (Num. 17:8; Matt. 28:18). May the Lord eradicate from the churches in His recovery any abusive use of authority and any authoritarianism. Instead, may there be a budding rod with almonds and flowers.

Being Able to Detect and Defeat the Attack of Death upon the Church

Perhaps the Lord Spirit will move in some according to this word on resurrection in order to train them to detect the attack of death upon the church and then to defeat it (16:18). These ones will realize that the ultimate war is between the gates of Hades, which signify death, and the church built up in Christ's resurrection life. We need to reign in life over death in the meetings, in our family life, and even upon our being.

Defeating Satan, Not Being Afraid of Him but Reigning in Life over Him

The Lord may apply this word on resurrection to us so that we are able to defeat Satan, not being afraid of him but reigning in life over him (Rom. 5:17). Satan's power ends at death. The Body is in resurrection. We are not afraid of him, but he is afraid of us.

Producing Ministry in Resurrection

As a serving one, I look to the Lord that for the future of His recovery the Lord Spirit will operate in many brothers to produce ministry in resurrection (2 Cor. 3:6; 4:10-12). The Lord needs to touch their natural ability so that they do not trust in their gift. They need to become beings in resurrection in order to be able to continue the New Testament ministry in resurrection. If in the next generation we have merely gifted, eloquent, able brothers, we are finished. If the Lord Spirit touches us concerning this, we need to pray for it. Although we may be young, we can give ourselves to the Lord not out of ambition but out of aspiration.

Living in the Reality of the Body of Christ

We need to pray that the Lord Spirit would bring us into the experiences of resurrection so that we may live in the reality of the Body of Christ (Eph. 4:15-16). This is another realm. Nearly forty years ago Brother Lee asked me to move to Detroit from Chicago, enabling me to pass through two years and eight months of death experiences under the Lord's sovereign arrangement. Since that time I have been learning mainly one lesson—to be in resurrection for the Body of Christ.

We trust restfully in the Lord Spirit for this message. The expression *the Lord Spirit* indicates that the Lord is dear, near, present, and

active. May the Lord Spirit have an unhindered way in us to apply the reality of Christ's resurrection to our being in the particular ways that He may choose.

PSALM 102 UNVEILING CHRIST'S DEATH AND HIS ETERNAL AND UNCHANGING EXISTENCE IN HIS RESURRECTION

In Typology, This Psalm First Referring to Christ's Suffering, Especially to His Death

Psalm 102 unveils Christ's death and His eternal and unchanging existence in His resurrection. In typology, this psalm first refers to Christ's suffering, especially to His death.

Christ's Suffering Being for Redemption, and His Redemption Being to Produce the Church as the House of God and the City of God

Christ's suffering was for redemption, and His redemption was to produce the church as the house of God and the city of God (vv. 6-8). Verse 7 says, "I watch, and I am like / A lone sparrow on a housetop."

Verse 7 Being a Particular Verse concerning Christ's Suffering, Which Was Related to His Zeal for God's House

Verse 7 is a particular verse concerning Christ's suffering, which was related to His zeal for God's house (John 2:17; Psa. 69:9). In His human living, the Lord Jesus had no one to talk to who would fully understand Him. His brothers did not believe in Him, based upon their behavior in John 7:3-5. His mother, who pondered things in her heart (Luke 2:19), may have had some realization. Nevertheless, there was no one to whom He could open Himself in order to share His mission, the desire of His heart, the zeal that was burning in Him for God's house. Thus, He is likened to a lone sparrow in Psalm 102:7. Sparrows are often found in groups, but the Lord is likened to one that is alone on the flat rooftop of a house.

In Psalm 102:7 Christ Being Likened to a Lone Sparrow on a Housetop, Referring to the Flat Roof of a Jewish House, Where People Would Often Go to Pray

In Psalm 102:7 Christ is likened to a lone sparrow on a housetop, referring to the flat roof of a Jewish house, where people would often go to pray (Acts 10:9).

This Indicating That When the Lord Jesus Was on Earth, Probably There Were Times When in the Night He, like a Lone Bird on a Housetop, Would Watch and Pray, Caring Not for His Own Interest but for the Interest of God and of God's House

This indicates that when the Lord Jesus was on earth, probably there were times when in the night He, like a lone bird on a housetop, would watch and pray, caring not for His own interest but for the interest of God and of God's house (Matt. 14:23; Luke 6:12). He did not pray about His health or success in business, nor did He lament the fact that He would remain single His whole life or that He was physically unattractive and not included in many social activities. He did not care about Himself; He only cared for God's interests and the desire of God's heart. He would allow nothing and no one to distract Him from the deep need for private communion with the Father. For instance, after feeding the five thousand in Matthew 14, He was able to send the crowds away (v. 22). He was not excited about such a miracle or the success of His ministry. He could stop, send everyone away, and go up to the mountain privately to pray (v. 23). The Christ who lives within us is such a person.

Luke 6:12 says, "In these days He went out to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God." According to the literal Greek, He spent the whole night "in the prayer of God." He did not decide to try to pray all night; instead, He simply began to pray and could not stop. His prayer was the prayer of God. Afterwards, He chose the twelve apostles (v. 13).

At times, the Lord experienced a very deep loneliness. Only the Father could be His companion, and only the Father could understand Him. In the book *Authority and Submission* Brother Nee speaks of the loneliness of a deputy authority (pp. 190-191). As a deputy authority, Moses had no one with whom he could fully communicate. We should not be emotional about this, but some among us, especially those in the ministry, sometimes need to know Christ in His loneliness. They need to be one with Him to realize that what is in the depths of their being is ultimately known only to Him. Surely, some of us will reach the point at which there will only be disappointment among the closest circle in

our human life. In this situation we will know the Lord as a root out of dry ground, the One whose being was anchored in God (Isa. 53:2).

Psalm 102:23-28 Unveiling Christ as the One Who Is Everlasting in His Resurrection

Psalm 102:23-28 unveils Christ as the One who is everlasting in His resurrection. What do we mean by *resurrection*? Resurrection means that something of the natural life has been put to death. Death seems to be a total termination of everything, but that which is of God emerges in newness of life. With this emergence in newness of life, with resurrection, a resurrected person, matter, or thing is beyond death, beyond all limitation, and transcendent. Resurrection life is a life that enters into death, passes through death, and emerges from death in resurrection. We need to realize that this is God's goal for us. No one can stop Him from carrying out His goal, and eventually we all will cease from trying to stop Him. Then we will really sing, "Oh, may I know this resurrection life, / In every kind of death its pow'r outpoured, / In my experience ever realize / This life is nought but Christ my living Lord" (*Hymns,* #639).

Resurrection Being the Focus of the Bible

Resurrection is the focus of the Bible. It is not an exaggeration to say this. We can see the types and prophecies of resurrection from Genesis 1 through Revelation 22.

Resurrection as Seen in the Old Testament Types

In Genesis 1:9 we see the dry land emerging from the death water on the third day. In 8:18 we see eight human beings emerging from the ark, having passed through the death water. In 50:25 we see Joseph charging the children of Israel to bring his bones out of Egypt and later bury them in the good land (cf. 2:21; Exo. 12:46). In Exodus we also see the water emerging in resurrection out of the smitten rock (17:6). In Numbers the budding rod of Aaron typifies the resurrected, budding Christ, who not only buds but also blossoms and bears fruit to maturity (17:8). In Joshua death and resurrection are typified by the two sets of twelve stones. One set of twelve stones was raised up out of the riverbed of the Jordan and erected in the good land as a sign of resurrection (4:3 and footnote, vv. 13, 20). Another set of twelve stones was left in the middle of the Jordan, typifying the old man crucified with Christ

(v. 9 and footnote). We see also resurrection in Song of Songs, where in type we see Christ eventually bringing His loving seekers to be absolutely one with Him in resurrection as the climax of the divine romance (2:8-13). All these are types of resurrection.

Resurrection as Seen in the Old Testament Prophecies

We also see resurrection in the prophecies of the Old Testament. Psalm 2:7 says, "He said to Me: You are My Son; / Today I have begotten You." Psalm 16:10 says, "You will not abandon my soul to Sheol, / Nor let Your Holy One see the pit" (cf. Acts 2:27). Psalm 22:22 says, "I will declare Your name to my brothers; / In the midst of the assembly I will praise You" (cf. Heb. 2:12). And Psalm 118:22-24 says, "The stone which the builders rejected / Has become the head of the corner. / This is from Jehovah; / It is wonderful in our sight. / This is the day that Jehovah has made; / Let us exult and rejoice in it."

Resurrection as Seen in the New Testament Fulfillment

In the Gospels

Throughout the New Testament the Lord spoke of His being raised on the third day. In Matthew 12:39-40 He said, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and a sign shall not be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet. For just as Jonah was in the belly of the great fish three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights." In a more direct way 16:21 says, "From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and on the third day be raised." Then in resurrection the Lord declared, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (28:18).

In John 2:19 the Lord said to the Jews, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Moreover, in chapter 2 we see that the principle of life is to change death into life for the building of God. In John 11 the Lord even tried to reveal to some opinionated ones that He Himself is resurrection (v. 25), but they were more concerned with what He would do than with what He was. They had yet to see, as many of us need to see, that everything the Lord does is based on what He is. One day, through the growth of Christ within us, we will care more for what the Lord is than for what He does.

In the Acts

In Acts, Matthias was chosen to join the eleven as witnesses of the Lord's resurrection (1:15-26). Resurrection was the heart of Peter's first gospel message (2:24-36). Acts 4:33 says, "With great power the apostles gave testimony of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all." Great grace was upon the church, and the apostles testified of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power. We see this throughout the book of Acts.

In the Epistles and Revelation

Paul's gospel in Romans was "concerning [God's] Son, who came out of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was designated the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness out of the resurrection of the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1:1, 3-4). In 8:11 we see that the One who raised Jesus from the dead is imparting resurrection life to our being.

In 1 Corinthians 15 we see that resurrection is the life pulse of God's economy. The footnote on verse 12 says,

> In this chapter the apostle dealt with the Corinthians' heretical saying that there is no resurrection of the dead. The Corinthians were like the Sadducees (Matt. 22:23; Acts 23:8). This was the tenth problem among them. It is the most damaging and destructive to God's New Testament economy, worse than the heresy of Hymenaeus and Philetus concerning resurrection (2 Tim. 2:17-18). Resurrection is the life pulse and lifeline of the divine economy. If there were no resurrection, God would be the God of the dead, not of the living (Matt. 22:32). If there were no resurrection, Christ would not have been raised from the dead. He would be a dead Savior, not a living One who lives forever (Rev. 1:18) and is able to save to the uttermost (Heb. 7:25). If there were no resurrection, there would be no living proof of our being justified by His death (Rom. 4:25 and footnote), no imparting of life (John 12:24), no regeneration (John 3:5), no renewing (Titus 3:5), no transformation (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18), and no conformity to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29). If there were no resurrection, there would be no members of Christ (Rom. 12:5), no Body of Christ as His fullness (Eph. 1:20-23), and no church as Christ's bride (John 3:29), and therefore no new man (Eph. 2:15; 4:24; Col. 3:10-11). If there were no resurrection, God's New Testament economy would altogether collapse and God's eternal purpose would be nullified.

Then in 2 Corinthians we see that the God of resurrection produces the new covenant ministry as a ministry in resurrection (4:7, 10-11).

In Galatians the gospel makes man the new creation in resurrection. Paul was an apostle through the resurrection of Christ according to his regenerated man in the new creation (1:1). In Ephesians 1:19-22 we see that the great power that raised Christ from the dead is being transmitted to the church. In Philippians we see the power of resurrection. In 3:10-11 Paul says, "To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if perhaps I may attain to the out-resurrection from the dead." In Colossians 1 we see Christ as the Firstborn from the dead to be the Head of the Body. Verse 18 says, "He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things."

In 2 Timothy 1 we see that Christ has nullified death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. Verse 10 says that God's grace "now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who nullified death and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel." Then in 2:8 Paul says, "Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, of the seed of David, according to my gospel."

Hebrews 13:20 says, "Now the God of peace, He who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, in the blood of an eternal covenant."

First Peter 1 shows us that we were regenerated in the resurrection of Christ. Verse 3 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has regenerated us unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

Finally, the book of Revelation unveils the first, the best, aspect of resurrection, which is the resurrection of reward and of returning with Christ to reign with Him on earth during the millennial kingdom. In 20:4-6 John says,

> I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of

> the word of God, and of those who had not worshipped the beast nor his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no authority, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

Then in Revelation 21 we see the New Jerusalem, the city of resurrection. Verse 17 says, "He measured its wall, a hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel." Footnote 2 says, "It is in resurrection that man will be like the angels (Matt. 22:30). Hence, *the measure of a man, that is, of an angel* indicates that the wall of the city is not natural but is in resurrection." The New Jerusalem is "resurrection city"; the entire city is resurrection.

Verses 25 through 27 of Psalm 102, Quoted in Hebrews 1:10-12, Speaking of Christ's Continuing Existence in His Resurrection

Psalm 102:25 through 27, quoted in Hebrews 1:10-12, speaks of Christ's continuing existence in His resurrection. Based on Psalm 102:25 through 27 we need to see that our Christ is the One who is everlasting in His resurrection. Romans 6:9 says, "Knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more; death lords it over Him no more." We should not frustrate the Lord Spirit's operation in our mind, heart, and spirit by supposing that we know the resurrected Christ adequately. Paul quotes Psalm 102:25-27 in Hebrews 1:10-12, saying, "You in the beginning, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Your hands; they will perish, but You remain perpetually; and they all will become old like a garment, and like a mantle You will roll them up; like a garment they will also be changed; but You are the same, and Your years will not fail." Before this, in verse 6, Paul refers to Christ as the Firstborn. Now we see that as the Firstborn, the first One produced in resurrection, He is ever-existing, beyond all limitation, transcending time and space. He does not come and go; He is always here. When He was in the flesh, if He was in Nazareth, those in Jerusalem or in Rome could not contact Him. But in resurrection Christ is omnipresent and beyond limitation. Death cannot hold the resurrected Christ.

The ultimate and greatest limitation on every living thing is death. I remember confronting this matter when I was a little boy. One day I found my pet hamster dead in its cage. To a young boy death can be horrifying. Then in human life, wave after wave of death comes, sparing nothing and no one. But there is One who nullified death. Second Timothy 1:10 says that God's grace "now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who nullified death and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel." Hebrews 2:14 says that Christ partook of blood and flesh "that through death He might destroy him who has the might of death, that is, the devil." Christ destroyed the devil on the cross. Revelation 1:18 shows Christ as the living One, saying, "I became dead, and behold, I am living forever and ever; and I have the keys of death and of Hades."

Now Christ is the Lord Spirit in resurrection. As Emmanuel, He is here with us. At the same time He is with the saints in the southern Philippines to comfort them. Our Lord Jesus will exist eternally as the resurrected God-man, and the reality of His resurrection is the Spirit. When we are really in the spirit and are one spirit with Him, we touch resurrection with its freedom from all manner of limitation and restriction. This is why those who know Christ in His resurrection eventually discover that they can conquer everything. The Body of Christ is invincible and unconquerable.

The enemy's weapon is death. He will attack with death, and apparently death will prevail and destroy everything. But there is a third day. We need to wait for the third day. This summer I was in Norway for a conference, and days before I arrived in Oslo, there occurred a horrible slaughter of many young people. The entire country was in the grips of that horrific act, but by the power of the Lord's resurrection, we were able to declare, "It is the third day. Resurrection prevails!"

Brother Nee says, "Presently, we have only touched the hem of the garment of resurrection" (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee,* vol. 59, p. 95). We do not fully know what would happen if a hundred of us, under the anointing and the leading of the Spirit, truly prayed, "Lord, I must touch the hem of Your garment of resurrection. I must touch You. I have heard and read so much about resurrection. We have even had lessons in the full-time training concerning this. But Lord, I want to touch even the hem of Your garment as the resurrected Christ in order that the power, the energy, that is in You will flow into me so that I will be able to testify that resurrection is real."

Christ's Existence Being Unchanging throughout All Generations Because of His Resurrection

Christ's existence is unchanging throughout all generations because of His resurrection (Acts 2:24; Rev. 1:18; Heb. 13:8). In Acts 2:24 Peter said, "Whom God has raised up, having loosed the pangs of death, since it was not possible for Him to be held by it." Christ did not need to struggle to break free from the grip of death. In John 20:4-7 the disciples at the tomb saw His grave clothes and the handkerchief folded and set in a certain place. This shows that our beloved Lord emerged in resurrection transcendent over death, space, time, and every limitation. He will exist eternally in His resurrection. Thus, Hebrews 13:8 says, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes, even forever." This verse applies to the resurrected Christ, not mainly to His immutability in the Godhead.

The Resurrected Christ Being No Longer Bound by Any Limitations; When He Resurrected, Nothing Being Able to Hold Him Back

Resurrection Meaning That the Lord Jesus Has Broken Through All Barriers, Even the Greatest Barrier of All—Death; Death Having Been Nullified, and the Resurrected Christ Living Forever and Ever

The resurrected Christ is no longer bound by any limitations; when He resurrected, nothing could hold Him back (John 20:1-18; Acts 2:24). Resurrection means that the Lord Jesus has broken through all barriers, even the greatest barrier of all—death; death has been nullified, and the resurrected Christ lives forever and ever (Heb. 2:14; 2 Tim. 1:10; Rev. 1:18).

In His Resurrection Christ Having Transcended Everything, Including Space and Time; as the Resurrected One, His Being Omnipresent, and Space and Time Not Being Able to Limit Him

In His resurrection Christ has transcended everything, including space and time; as the resurrected One, He is omnipresent, and space and time cannot limit Him (Eph. 1:19-23). Such a Christ is in our spirit. Nothing can hold back the resurrected Christ. If He could fully

pray in our prayers, our prayers would be transcendent beyond anything we have ever known. We would pray in the ever-existing Christ in resurrection, who is limited by nothing.

Because of His Eternal and Unchanging Existence in His Resurrection, Christ Being the Key That Turns the Earth to the Lord

Because of His eternal and unchanging existence in His resurrection, Christ is the key that turns the earth to the Lord (Psa. 102:12-27; Rev. 1:18; Heb. 13:8). Christ Himself is the key that turns the earth to the Lord. Some among us need to know Him in this way. When we learn to experience Him, to be constituted with Him, to live Him, to be one with Him, and to do everything in Him, we will touch the power that will eventually turn the entire earth to the Lord. I believe that the time is drawing near when, through the church in resurrection, Christ will turn every nation to the true and living God.

THE PRODUCT OF CHRIST'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION BEING THE CHURCH, TYPIFIED BY ZION WITH GOD'S HOUSE AND GOD'S CITY

The product of Christ's death and resurrection is the church, typified by Zion with God's house and God's city (Psa. 102:13-16, 21; Heb. 12:22-23). Psalm 102:13-16 and 21 say,

> You will arise and have compassion on Zion, / For it is time to be gracious to her; the appointed time has come. / For Your servants take pleasure in her stones, / And show favor to her dust. / And the nations will fear the name of Jehovah, / And all the kings of the earth, Your glory; / For Jehovah has built up Zion; / He has appeared in His glory... / That the name of Jehovah may be declared in Zion, / And His praise, in Jerusalem.

The product of Christ's death and resurrection is the church, typified by Zion with God's house and God's city.

In Psalm 102 Zion, the Center of the City of Jerusalem, Typifying the Church as the Center of God's Kingdom

In Psalm 102 Zion, the center of the city of Jerusalem, typifies the church as the center of God's kingdom (48:2; Matt. 16:18-19).

The Stones Typifying the Believers as the Building Materials of the Church, and the Dust, the Soil, Typifying the Ground of the Church

Needing to Take Pleasure in All the Members of the Church

The stones typify the believers as the building materials of the church, and the dust, the soil, typifies the ground of the church (Psa. 102:14; 1 Pet. 2:5; Rev. 1:11). We should take pleasure in all the members of the church (Psa. 102:14). When full-time trainees in their first term, especially those who are accustomed to having their own bedroom with all their personal items, come to live in houses with nine or ten other trainees, they will probably not take pleasure in everyone. At the same time, they are with trainees from different cultures, races, and dispositions. More than likely they will not be able to say, "I take pleasure in all the members."

If all that we can see is the natural, evident features of our fellow believers, this exposes our lack of Christ. However, when we experience the resurrected Christ, we will see something more and thus treasure all the members of the church. Those who have more discernment are not so hung up by the peculiarities, the natural life, or the self of others, for they treasure the resurrected Christ in those members; they treasure all the living the stones.

Needing to Favor the Ground of the Church, Which Is the Ground of Oneness

We should favor the ground of the church, which is the ground of oneness (Deut. 12:5-28; 14:23-25; John 17:11, 21-23; 1 Cor. 1:10-13a; Eph. 4:3-6; Rev. 1:11). To favor the ground of the church is not to be legal. One who views the ground of the church legally may say, "Since we are the church in this city and you do not live in this city, if you want to meet with the church, then you should either move to this city or start a church in the city where you live." This is to not regard the ground of the church. The ground of the church is the oneness of the Spirit, the oneness of the Body, which in reality is the Spirit.

In Psalm 102:16 the Rebuilding of Zion Typifying the Rebuilding of the Church

It Being through the Established, Restored Zion, Signifying the Church, That All the Nations and Kingdoms Will Be Brought into the Praise and Worship of Jehovah

In Psalm 102:16 the rebuilding of Zion typifies the rebuilding of the church. It is through the established, restored Zion, signifying the church, that all the nations and kingdoms will be brought into the praise and worship of Jehovah (vv. 21-22). Everything depends on the building of not just the church but the church as Zion.

The Rebuilding of the Devastated Church, Typified by the Rebuilding of Zion, Turning All the Nations to the Lord, and the Kingdom of the World Becoming the Kingdom of God and of Christ

The rebuilding of the devastated church, typified by the rebuilding of Zion, will turn all the nations to the Lord, and the kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of God and of Christ (v. 16; Rev. 11:15).

IT BEING IN CHRIST'S RESURRECTION, BY CHRIST'S RESURRECTION, AND THROUGH CHRIST'S RESURRECTION THAT THE CHURCH CONTINUES ITS EXISTENCE

It is in Christ's resurrection, by Christ's resurrection, and through Christ's resurrection that the church continues its existence (Psa. 102:21-28; Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:19-23; 2:6). Nothing of the human life lasts. Nothing of the old creation lasts. No experience, situation, or even relationship will last. Neither nations nor human organizations will last. Where today is the Roman Empire or the British Empire? The only thing on earth that is lasting is the church. We are in the only thing that is eternal. Nevertheless, not even everything with us will last, but the essence of the church is everlasting in Christ's resurrection, by Christ's resurrection, and through Christ's resurrection.

We need to consider whether or not we will do a work that lasts. When the "final exam" comes, it will be an objective final exam carried out by fire, which will test everything. It will not be a subjective test that asks how we feel about what we have produced but an objective test by fire that tries everyone's work. Only a certain kind of work will

last and become part of the New Jerusalem. Once, my wife and I were fellowshipping concerning this matter. In our fellowship we were not morose or sad, but we realized that we are no longer young. We have been married a very long time, and the nature of our marriage is in the old creation. Hence, when either one of us goes to the Lord, our marriage relationship will end. Yet, during the course of our marriage, something eternal has been going on because we are both members of the Body of Christ. Something eternal has been going on in the midst of something temporal. I hope that the young brothers will aspire to serve the Lord in a way that will produce eternal results, to serve the Lord in the everlastingness of Christ's resurrection.

Christ's Resurrection Enabling the Church to Continue Its Existence

Christ's resurrection enables the church to continue its existence (Matt. 16:18; Acts 1:22; 2:31; 4:2, 33). The existence of the churches in the Lord's recovery did not depend on our dear Brother Lee living until the end of the age. The church's existence does not depend on any person, no matter how precious he or she may be. The continuing existence of the church depends on Christ's resurrection. Sisters in particular deeply need security. True security is found only in the resurrection life that cannot be shaken by anything.

The Church, the Body of Christ, Being Absolutely in Resurrection

The church, the Body of Christ, is absolutely in resurrection (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:19-23; 2:6). Surely no one can declare, "I am absolutely in the resurrection life of Christ." Nevertheless, this is the intrinsic nature of the church as the Body of Christ. Thus, this is the direction in which the Lord Spirit within us is moving. We will experience a great rest when we stop fighting the Lord Spirit's moving or when we overcome our fear of abandoning ourselves to the Lord. However, we should not do this out of heroism but in response to the resurrection life. We may tell the Lord, "I long to know the power of Your resurrection. I long to attain to the out-resurrection from among the dead. Lord, give me the experiences that I need to know this resurrection life. May I know the resurrection life."

Eventually, all the seventeen areas of the application of resurrection that we have mentioned will be worked out absolutely. Resurrection is

our destiny. Everything of the old creation, even the highest, the best, and the most refined, must be terminated to release the resurrection life that will bring us into an ever-existing church life. My only regret is that I did not hear this when I was in my early twenties. Even if it is merely a doctrine to you now, you are hearing these true words. We all are resurrection bound.

The Golden Lampstand, Typifying the Church as the Body of Christ, Portraying Christ as the Resurrection Life, Growing, Branching, Budding, and Blossoming to Shine the Light

The golden lampstand, typifying the church as the Body of Christ, portrays Christ as the resurrection life, growing, branching, budding, and blossoming to shine the light (Exo. 25:31-40; Num. 17:8; Rev. 1:11-12).

The Church Being a New Creation in Christ's Resurrection and Being Created by the Resurrected Christ

Being the Body of Christ Only in the New Creation Germinated by Christ's Resurrection Life

The church is a new creation in Christ's resurrection and was created by the resurrected Christ (Gal. 6:15; Heb. 2:10-12). We are the Body of Christ only in the new creation germinated by Christ's resurrection life (2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 1:19-23). Which do we treasure more—the old creation or the new creation? Sincere answers to this question will differ according to age and experience.

The whole world treasures the old creation. Some young affluent professionals these days get certain kinds of injections at the first signs of oldness. The plastic surgery business is booming because of people's obsession with the old creation. Even among many saints there is such an undercurrent. They may be for Christ and the church, but simultaneously they are also fixated on health issues, organic foods, and various diets. We should take care of our old creation body in a practical way so that we can exist for God's eternal purpose to build up the Body of Christ as a new creation. However, may the Lord deliver us from obsession with our old creation. The Lord needs a group of people who have this vision. Not only those in their seventies and beyond but even those in their thirties can say, "I treasure the new creation. I

will take care of my human life in the old creation but not as a thing in itself. I do not expect the old creation to last. I am not seeking for immortality. My goal is resurrection." The new creation is in the resurrected Christ. We are the Body of Christ only in the new creation germinated by Christ's resurrection life.

The Reality of Resurrection Being Christ as the Life-giving Spirit

If We Do Any Work That Is Not in Resurrection, the Life-giving Spirit Not Honoring It

The reality of resurrection is Christ as the life-giving Spirit (John 11:25; 20:22; 1 Cor. 15:45b). If we do any work that is not in resurrection, the life-giving Spirit will not honor it. Right now, continuing an operation that started a few years ago, the life-giving Spirit is making clear to seeking saints in a certain region what sort of work that He honors in the sphere of the Lord's recovery. May many saints throughout the earth recognize the work that is done in resurrection. I am very thankful to the Lord for sending some co-workers there to labor with those already there to do a genuine work in resurrection and to have that work honored by the life-giving Spirit so that the Body is able to say Amen.

The Spirit Honoring Only What Is in Resurrection

The Spirit honors only what is in resurrection (vv. 45b, 58). When we prophesy, it is human to want to speak perfectly and to receive approval from the audience. However, it is much better to speak in resurrection and to serve in resurrection. I encourage you to take the way of resurrection spoken of in Brother Lee's ministry. At the first opportunity that the Lord gave me, in response to His perfecting and supplying ministry and under this ministry, I chose not the way of gift, eloquence, or ability but the way of resurrection. Everything must be in resurrection. The opinions of the majority do not matter. They are not the sense of the Body. The sense of the Body is something of the life-giving Spirit in resurrection.

May the course of all the young brothers and their wives be set toward resurrection. May the Lord use their wives as the best helpers to help them to enter into resurrection. May the Lord touch them to not have any motive to be somebody, to be appreciated, or to be respected in the Lord's recovery. It is better to be among those who are reviled, who are the object of so much negative speaking, and who care for nothing except the endorsement of the life-giving Spirit.

In Order to Be in the Reality of the Body of Christ, Our Needing to Be Absolutely in the Resurrection Life of Christ

In order to be in the reality of the Body of Christ, we need to be absolutely in the resurrection life of Christ (John 11:25; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 1:9). When we do not live by our natural life but live by the divine life within us, we are in resurrection; the issue of this is the Body of Christ (Phil. 3:10-11; 2 Cor. 1:9). Our natural strength and ability need to be dealt with by the cross to become useful in resurrection for our service to the Lord (Phil. 3:3). To be in resurrection is to live not by our natural life but by the divine life within us. According to God's creation, we may be very strong, able, smart, and capable. That is just the way God made us; that is the way we were formed. But all our natural life needs to be dealt with so that it can be in resurrection and become useful in resurrection for our service to the Lord.

Let us take the way of resurrection, even if we do not fully understand what we are getting involved in. It is like saying "I do" when we get married. We do not fully know what is coming. All we know is that we love this person, that it is God's will, and that we are happy about it. It is good to have no idea what is coming. Let me assure you that many situations will come when we take the way of resurrection. Yet all the co-workers as one man will testify that they have no regrets about taking this way. We would never speak of sacrifice, for it is a privilege untold (cf. *Hymns,* #473, Stanza 2). There is no other way but the way of resurrection.

The Church Being "Resurrectionly"; That Is, the Church Being an Organic Entity Absolutely in Resurrection, a New Creation Created in Christ's Resurrection and by the Resurrected Christ

The church is "resurrectionly"; that is, the church is an organic entity absolutely in resurrection, a new creation created in Christ's resurrection and by the resurrected Christ (Eph. 1:19-23; 2:6; 2 Cor. 5:17). Brother Nee could testify of this, as we can see in the following quote: "God sees the church as a being that can endure death. The gates of

Hades are open to the church, but the gates of Hades cannot prevail against her and cannot confine her; thus, the nature of the church is resurrection" (*The Orthodoxy of the Church,* pp. 21-22). Several years ago, in my fellowship with some saints, I realized that a certain local church was passing through a devastating time. Two of the leading brothers went to be with the Lord, and a young brother was taken to the Lord. That locality suffered blow after blow. I would like to honor the God of resurrection who has maintained and sustained that local church unto this day. The existence of the church in that city is a glory to the Lord. That church will never be defeated. Many other churches also have suffered devastation, yet today there are blossoming, golden lampstand-trees in these cities. We need to know the church in resurrection. The church is the only entity on the earth that is in resurrection. Praise the Lord!

The Church Being the Vessel That Holds the Resurrected Christ; the Church Being the Place Where God Demonstrates the Operation of the Might of His Strength, according to the Power Which He Caused to Operate in Christ When He Raised Him from the Dead

The church is the vessel that holds the resurrected Christ; the church is the place where God demonstrates the operation of the might of His strength, according to the power which He caused to operate in Christ when He raised Him from the dead (Eph. 1:19-23; 2:6).

The Church Being the Same as the Resurrected Lord Not Only in Nature but Also in Power

The church is the same as the resurrected Lord not only in nature but also in power (John 11:25; Matt. 16:18; Acts 4:33; Rev. 1:11, 18; 2:8). We are the Body of the resurrected Christ!

Just as God Broke Through All Barriers in the Resurrected Christ, His Breaking Through All Barriers in the Church; Therefore, the Church Needing to Be the Same in Life and Power as the Resurrected Christ

Just as God broke through all barriers in the resurrected Christ, He is breaking through all barriers in the church; therefore, the church

should be the same in life and power as the resurrected Christ (Eph. 1:19-23; 2:6). I believe that we are on the cusp, the edge, of a breakthrough in touching this matter. We need to pray these points and also pray-read, study, recite, and prophesy concerning these points in the coming year. We need to pray, "Lord, work this out in all the local churches. Cause us to touch this in reality."

The Church Needing to Be as Powerful, as Free, and as Unfettered by Any Limitation as the Lord Jesus Is

The church should be as powerful, as free, and as unfettered by any limitation as the Lord Jesus is (Rev. 1:18). I look forward to this in our prayer meetings, in our Lord's table meetings, in our propagation, in our gospel preaching, and in our church planting. I encouraged the brothers in India to have five hundred churches in India. May there be a thousand churches in mainland China and two thousand churches in the entire continent of Africa. There are no limitations to the church in resurrection. Let us release the power of Christ's resurrection throughout the earth through our prayers, our praises, our gospel preaching, and our propagation. May we discover what we are in the resurrected Christ.

The Might of God's Strength Not Only Operating in Christ, but It Continually Operating in the Church as Well

The might of God's strength not only operated in Christ, but it continually operates in the church as well (Eph. 1:19-20; Col. 1:29).

The Power of the Church Being the Resurrection Power of Christ

The power of the church is the resurrection power of Christ (Phil. 3:10).

The Holy Spirit Manifesting the Resurrection Power of Christ through the Church

The Church Being the Depository and Storehouse of the Resurrection Power of Christ

The Holy Spirit is manifesting the resurrection power of Christ through the church (Acts 1:8; 2:24; 4:33). The church is the depository and storehouse of the resurrection power of Christ (Eph. 1:19-23). The

church is the depository, where things are deposited for storage, of the ascended Christ, who has been transmitting the tremendous power into the church as His storehouse. It is time for us to tap into this resurrection power and to release it in every way.

Hades Representing Death, and the Church Representing Resurrection

Hades represents death, and the church represents resurrection (Matt. 16:18). The saints in the southern Philippines are suffering more than we can possibly know. We do not minimize the loss, and we are not ashamed of the grief, the tears, and the suffering we have in common with them. Yet the whole Body will rise up and declare, "Death will not prevail in the Philippines." We will pray to release the resurrection life that is within the Body of Christ to our sister churches. Let us forget ourselves and rise up to pray, "Lord, display the power of Your resurrection." Hades represents death, but the church represents resurrection.

As Christ Is in Resurrection, the Church Also Being in Resurrection; Therefore, the Church Continuing Its Existence in the Resurrection of Christ

As Christ is in resurrection, the church also is in resurrection; therefore, the church continues its existence in the resurrection of Christ (Eph. 1:19-23; 2:6; Rev. 1:18, 20). The first stanza of *Hymns*, #500 says,

> Oh, what a might! Oh, what a strength!
> God wrought to raise Christ from the dead.
> Far above all at His right hand,
> O'er all to us He is the Head.
> All this great pow'r is to the Church
> That she o'er all her foes may tread.

Praise the Lord for His eternal and unchanging existence in His resurrection.—R. K.

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OF THE PSALMS (2)

The Highest Revelation of Christ (Message 6)

Scripture Reading: Psa. 110

I. God has made Christ to sit at His right hand—Psa. 110:1-2:
   A. "Jehovah declares to my Lord, / Sit at My right hand / Until I make Your enemies / Your footstool"—v. 1:
      1. This word, which concerns Christ in His ascension, has been quoted directly more than twenty times in the New Testament and has been quoted indirectly approximately another twenty times—cf. Matt. 22:44; Mark 12:36; 16:19; Luke 20:42-43; Acts 2:33-35; Rom. 8:34; Heb. 1:13.
      2. The Lord Jesus quoted this verse to reveal His divinity as the Lord of David—Matt. 22:41-46.
      3. The highest place in the universe is at the right hand of God—cf. Ezek. 47:1.
      4. Christ's ascension to the right hand of God is not merely a matter of His being in a place but of His being in a person, the Father; in His ascension Christ entered into the Father's being and sat down there—Heb. 1:3b; John 16:28.
      5. This word about Christ's sitting at the right hand of God implies Christ's kingship—Psa. 80:17; Col. 1:17a, 18b; Rev. 22:1; Ezek. 1:22, 26; cf. Isa. 14:13; 3 John 9; 1 John 5:21.
      6. In His ascension Christ was made by God the Lord, the Christ, the Leader of the entire universe, and the Savior—Acts 2:36; 5:31; 10:36.
      7. Christ is on the throne, but He is still in need of a footstool:
         a. God is endeavoring to subdue all of Christ's enemies and to make them His footstool.

b. Our fighting today is for the subduing of Christ's enemies—Rom. 5:17, 21.

B. God will send forth from Zion the scepter of Christ's strength to rule over all the nations at His return—Psa. 110:2.

II. We need to cooperate with Christ's heavenly ministry in the day of His warfare by presenting ourselves as freewill offerings to the Lord in the splendor of consecration and by being His young men who are to Him like the dew from the womb of the dawn—v. 3:

A. In the eyes of the Lord our willing consecration, our offering ourselves to Him, is a matter of splendor:

1. Although the church has become degraded, throughout the centuries there has been a line of those who have offered themselves willingly to the Lord in the splendor, the beauty, of their consecration.
2. *Splendor* may also be translated "adornment"; the splendor of consecration is an adornment; if we offer ourselves willingly to the Lord, we will be beautified with a divine, heavenly splendor.

B. Here Christ likens Himself to a plant that needs the watering of the mild, soft, gentle dew:

1. As Christ is on the way to carry out God's economy, He needs to be watered; Christ is watered by those who offer themselves willingly to Him.
2. Whoever volunteers himself to Christ as an offering is a young man likened to the dew conceived in the womb of the dawn for watering Christ.

C. In order to cooperate with Christ's heavenly ministry in the day of His warfare, we need to have an absolute and thorough consecration to the Lord of our whole being with everything that we have for the accomplishment of His eternal economy; the fullness of one's experience of life depends on the fullness of one's experience of consecration—Matt. 26:6-13:

1. The basis of consecration is God's purchase—1 Cor. 6:19-20; Rom. 14:8.
2. The motive of consecration is God's love—2 Cor. 5:14-15; Rom. 12:1.
3. The meaning of consecration is to be a sacrifice—v. 1; Num. 28:2-3.

4. The purpose of consecration is to let God work in us so that we might work for God—Eph. 2:10; Isa. 64:8; Phil. 2:12-13; 1 Cor. 15:10.
5. The result of consecration is to abandon our future—Lev. 1:9; cf. 6:10-13.

D. In order to cooperate with Christ's heavenly ministry in the day of His warfare, we need to rise up early in the morning to contact the Lord so that we may enter into the womb of the dawn to be conceived as the dew for Christ's watering—Matt. 6:6; 14:22-23; Mark 1:35.

E. In order to cooperate with Christ's heavenly ministry in the day of His warfare, we need to live a life of the altar and the tent, keeping ourselves empty, open, fresh, living, and young with the Lord for His new move—Gen. 12:7-8:

1. We need to be emptied and unloaded in our spirit, in the depth of our being, so that we may receive Christ as the reality of the kingdom of the heavens—Matt. 5:3; Luke 1:53.
2. We need to be open vessels; the one who experiences the greatest amount of transformation is the one who is the most open to the Lord—18:17; Prov. 20:27; Rev. 4:5.
3. We need to receive the Spirit as the fresh oil—Zech. 4:12-14; Matt. 25:8-9; Rev. 3:18.
4. We need to walk in newness of life and serve in newness of spirit—Rom. 6:4; 7:6; cf. Ezek. 36:26-27; 2 Cor. 3:16; Matt. 5:8; 26:29.
5. We need to be vitalized by the Lord to be the living and functioning members of His Body—1 Cor. 14:4b, 31; cf. Rev. 3:1; 14:4.
6. We need to be renewed day by day with the fresh supply of the resurrection life to stay young in the Lord—2 Cor. 4:16; Eph. 5:26-27.

F. In order to cooperate with Christ's heavenly ministry in the day of His warfare, we need to fight for the brothers in oneness with Him to cherish the churches in His humanity and nourish the churches in His divinity to produce the overcomers through His organic shepherding—Gen. 14:13-20; Rev.

1:13; 2:7; 1 Pet. 5:4; Heb. 13:20; 1 John 5:16; cf. Acts 6:4; Rev. 1:20.

III. God has sworn and will not change in ordaining Christ a Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek—Psa. 110:4; Heb. 5:6, 10:

A. Christ is not only the King with power and authority (Psa. 110:1-2) but also the High Priest—Heb. 2:17; 4:14; 6:20; 8:1; 9:11:

1. Christ's heavenly ministry in His ascension includes both His kingship and His priesthood—7:1-2; Zech. 6:13.
2. As the King, He has the scepter to rule over the earth and to manage our affairs, and as the High Priest, He is interceding for us and taking care of our case before God—Heb. 4:14-16; 7:25-26; 9:24; Rom. 8:34; Rev. 1:12-13.

B. As the kingly High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, Christ ministers God into us as our supply to fulfill God's eternal purpose—Heb. 7:1-2; 8:1-2; Gen. 14:18:

1. In His earthly ministry Christ was a High Priest according to the order of Aaron for the putting away of sin—Heb. 9:14, 26.
2. Then, in His heavenly ministry Christ was designated a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek (5:6, 10), not to offer sacrifices for sin but to minister to us the very God who was processed through incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection, signified by the bread and the wine (Matt. 26:26-28), as our life supply so that we may be saved to the uttermost (Heb. 7:25).

C. As the High Priest, Christ cherishes the churches in His humanity and nourishes them in His divinity with His divine love—Rev. 1:12-13; 2:1.

IV. Christ, who is the Lord *(Adonai)* and who is at God's right hand, will shatter kings in the day of His anger at His coming back with His overcomers and will execute judgment among the nations over a great land—Psa. 110:5-6; Dan. 2:34-35, 44; Joel 3:11-12; Rev. 17:14:

A. This indicates that Christ is the Warrior to be the greatest Victor, overcoming all the nations, shattering the kings and the head of the enemies, and executing judgment upon all who oppose Him—Psa. 2:9, 12; Dan. 2:44; Rev. 2:26-27.

B. He will come with His bride, a composition of all His overcomers, as His army, and with her He will fight against and defeat Antichrist and his armies—19:11-21.

V. Christ will drink from the brook by the way and will lift up His head triumphantly—Psa. 110:7:

A. The brook signifies the overcomers; as Christ is taking the lead to fight through to the end, He will need water to drink, and this water will be the overcomers.

B. Christ's lifting up His head is a sign of His victory, His triumph, in overcoming all the enemies.

C. To the enemies Christ is the Victor, but to us He is the Drinker.

D. In this psalm we see Christ as the King, the Priest, the Warrior, the Victor, and the Drinker (the Coming One).

MESSAGE SIX

THE HIGHEST REVELATION OF CHRIST

In this message we will consider Psalm 110, which presents the highest revelation of Christ. We need to look to the Lord for His mercy and for a spirit of wisdom and revelation. Psalm 110 says,

> Jehovah declares to my Lord, / Sit at My right hand / Until I make Your enemies / Your footstool. / Jehovah will send forth / The scepter of Your strength from Zion: / Rule in the midst of Your enemies. / Your people will offer themselves willingly / In the day of Your warfare, / In the splendor of their consecration. / Your young men will be to You / Like the dew from the womb of the dawn. / Jehovah has sworn, / And He will not change: / You are a Priest forever / According to the order of Melchizedek. / The Lord is at Your right hand; / He will shatter kings in the day of His anger. / He will execute judgment among the nations; / He will fill the place with corpses; / He will shatter the head / Over a great land. / He will drink from the brook by the way; / Therefore He will lift up His head.

This psalm shows that Christ is the King, the Priest, the Warrior, the Victor, and the Drinker. As we consider it verse by verse, we will see that Christ is our King, our High Priest, the Warrior, the Victor to defeat the enemy, and the Drinker to enjoy the brook on the way of His coming back. When Christ comes back with His overcomers, all the overcomers will be a brook to Him in order to refresh Him on the way of His coming back.

GOD HAVING MADE CHRIST TO SIT AT HIS RIGHT HAND

"Jehovah Declares to My Lord, Sit at My Right Hand until I Make Your Enemies Your Footstool"

This Word, Which Concerns Christ in His Ascension, Having Been Quoted Directly More Than Twenty Times in the New Testament and Having Been Quoted Indirectly Approximately Another Twenty Times

God has made Christ to sit at His right hand (vv. 1-2). Psalm 110:1

says, "Jehovah declares to my Lord, / Sit at My right hand / Until I make Your enemies / Your footstool." This word, which concerns Christ in His ascension, has been quoted directly more than twenty times in the New Testament and has been quoted indirectly approximately another twenty times (cf. Matt. 22:44; Mark 12:36; 16:19; Luke 20:42-43; Acts 2:33-35; Rom. 8:34; Heb. 1:13).

We need to be impressed with the Lord Jesus' direct quotation of Psalm 110:1 in Matthew 22. Before He quoted this verse, the chief priests, elders, Pharisees, Herodians, and a lawyer asked Him puzzling and insidious questions, trying to entrap Him by His answers. They questioned the Lord concerning His authority, concerning politics, concerning fundamental belief, and concerning the law. However, His answers were absolutely stupendous, marvelous, and awesome.

There is a dear brother among us who received salvation by reading this portion of the Scriptures. Upon reading the New Testament for the first time as an unbeliever, he read these four questions concerning Christ's authority, concerning politics, concerning fundamental belief in resurrection, and concerning the greatest commandment. As this brother read each question and the Lord's response to it, he marveled at how the Lord was able to answer each question in such a wonderful way. When he came to the fourth question, he thought to himself, "How is He going to get out of this one?" Then when he read Christ's marvelous answer, he said, "Lord, I believe!" and he was saved. This is wonderful.

One of the questions posed by the disciples of the Pharisees with the Herodians concerned giving tribute to Caesar. The Lord had an absolutely marvelous answer, and I would like to impress you with it. Verses 15 and 16 say, "The Pharisees went and took counsel how they might ensnare Him in His words. And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Teacher, we know that You are true and that You teach the way of God in truth and do not fear anyone, for You do not regard the person of men." They spoke in this way in order to flatter the Lord so that they could entrap Him. They may have thought, "You do not regard the person of men, so we are going to ask You a question and entrap You through our introductory flattery." Verses 17 through 19 continue, "Tell us therefore, What do You think? Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not? But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, Why do you tempt Me, hypocrites? Show Me the coin for the tribute." As soon as the Lord asked them to show Him a coin, they were

defeated since the Lord did not even possess a coin. Verses 19 through 22 continue, "And they brought to Him a denarius. And He said to them, Whose is this image and inscription? They said, Caesar's. Then He said to them, Render then the things that are Caesar's to Caesar and the things that are God's to God. And when they heard this, they marveled. And they left Him and went away." After this answer there was another wave of questions. However, we need to be impressed with the Lord's response in saying, "Whose is this image and inscription? They said, Caesar's. Then He said to them, Render then the things that are Caesar's to Caesar and the things that are God's to God." Since the image on the coin was Caesar's, the coin belonged to Caesar; likewise, those asking the question were in the image of God; thus, they belonged to God! That is the implication of the Lord's response. The Lord seemed to be saying, "You belong to God, so you need to render yourself to God!" As a result, they marveled.

After the different groups had asked Him all their questions, the Lord asked them a question. His question is the question of questions. Matthew 22:41-42 says, "Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus questioned them, saying, What do you think concerning the Christ?" The footnote on verse 42 says,

> As portrayed in 21:23—22:46, during His last visit to Jerusalem, the center of Judaism, Christ was surrounded by the chief priests, elders, Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees, along with a lawyer, all of whom endeavored to ensnare Him by asking puzzling and insidious questions. First, the chief priests, representing the authority of the Jewish religion, and the elders, representing the authority of the Jewish people, asked Him concerning His authority (21:23). Their question was according to their religious concept. Second, the Pharisees, the fundamentalists, and the Herodians, who were zealous in politics, asked Him a question related to politics. Third, the Sadducees, the modernists, questioned Him concerning fundamental belief. Fourth, a self-approved lawyer asked Him a question concerning the law. After answering all their questions wisely, He asked them a question concerning the Christ. This is the question of questions. Their questions were related to religion, politics, belief, and the law. His question was concerning the Christ, who is the center of all things. They knew religion, politics, belief, and the law, but they paid no attention to Christ. Hence, He asked them, "What do you think concerning the Christ?" This question of questions must be answered by everyone.

Every man and woman on this earth must answer the question: "What do you think concerning the Christ?" This is a good question to ask people when we are preaching the gospel. We may ask, "What do you think about Jesus? Who is He? Who is He to you?"

The Lord asked the Pharisees, "What do you think concerning the Christ? Whose son is He? They said to Him, David's" (22:42). The Pharisees responded with only half the answer. Christ was the son of David according to His humanity. Thus, the Lord followed with another question: "How then does David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand until I put Your enemies underneath Your feet'? If then David calls Him Lord, how is He his son?" (vv. 43-45). *My Lord* in the Lord's quotation of Psalm 110 refers to Christ, the Messiah. After asking this question, Matthew 22:46 says, "No one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone from that day dare to question Him anymore."

Christ is not only the son of David according to His humanity but also the Lord of David according to His divinity. In His divinity Christ is the God of David, the Lord of David. The Lord of David became the son of David and was crucified; then in resurrection, God made this son of David both Lord and Christ. The man Jesus became the Lord even in His humanity. Today Jesus the son of David is Lord not only as God but also as the man Jesus. This is a great matter. Hence, Psalm 110:1 says, "Jehovah declares to my Lord, / Sit at My right hand / Until I make Your enemies / Your footstool."

The Lord Jesus Quoting This Verse to Reveal His Divinity as the Lord of David

The Lord Jesus quoted this verse to reveal His divinity as the Lord of David (Matt. 22:41-46).

The Highest Place in the Universe Being at the Right Hand of God

The highest place in the universe is at the right hand of God (cf. Ezek. 47:1). Jesus is at the right hand of God. Revelation 22:1-2 says, "He showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out

of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street. And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life." These verses reveal Christ as the King because they speak regarding the throne of God and of the Lamb. According to 21:23, the Lamb is the lamp of the New Jerusalem, and God is within Him as the light. Therefore, the throne in 22:1 is not a "loveseat" with God sitting on one side and the Lamb on the other; the Lamb is the lamp, and God is within Him as the light. Thus, on the throne we see God as the shining One, shining out through the Lamb, and the Lamb as the redeeming One. First, we see the shining One, the redeeming One, and then we see the reigning One who is on the throne. This reigning One is the King, the One who has the headship and the lordship.

Proceeding out of the throne is the river of water of life, which reveals Christ as the flowing One, and growing along the sides of that river is the tree of life, which reveals Christ as the supplying One. The sequence of the revelation of Christ in these verses as the shining One, the redeeming One, the reigning One, the flowing One, and the supplying One matches our experience. When we turn our heart to the Lord in our spirit, He as the shining One within us shines on us so that He may be applied to us as the redeeming One. Under His shining, we take Him as our sin offering and our trespass offering in order to receive the application of His precious blood to all our sins and trespasses in our conduct and the application of His cross to our sinful nature. Then when we confess our sins, He immediately forgives us of our sins and becomes the ruling and reigning One within us; He becomes the King in our being. As the King in our being, He becomes the flowing One within us, and as He flows within us, He supplies us with Himself as the tree of life. This illustrates how wonderful and experiential Revelation 22:1 and 2 are.

Ezekiel 47:1 says, "He brought me back to the entrance of the house, and there was water flowing out from under the threshold of the house to the east (for the house faced east); and the water flowed down below the south side of the house, on the south of the altar." The water flowed from under the threshold of the house first to the east. The east, the direction of the sunrise, signifies the place of God's glory. In order to experience Christ as the King in our being, we need to be for God's glory, since this flow is toward the east. Then the water flowed down below the south side of the house. The south side is the right side of the house. The right side is the place of preeminence; it signifies the highest position at

the right hand of God (Eph. 1:20-22). Thus, for the water to flow down below the right side, the south side, of the house means that the flow of life should have the preeminence. The water also flowed on the south of the altar. The altar signifies a full consecration.

In all our meetings we should be for the corporate expression of the Triune God. Furthermore, what we should care for in our lives is the practical flowing presence of the Lord Jesus within us. We must always give Christ the King as the flow of life the preeminence. If we do not have the flow within us, we do not have Him as the King reigning within us. The practical presence of our King Jesus within us is the flow of life moving within our being, as signified by the water that flows out of the right side, the preeminent side, of the house.

The fact that the water flows on the south of the altar means that we need a full consecration for the flow of life in our being. We need to fully consecrate ourselves for the flow of this King Jesus within our being. In addition, we must fully consecrate ourselves to enjoy Him as the flow of life. We should not go anywhere, do anything, or say anything without the flow of life. This is the way that we enthrone Christ as the King in our being. When the young saints make a decision regarding what school to attend, they need to go along with the flow of life within them. When we go along with the flow of life within us, we enthrone Christ as the King within our being.

To illustrate this point, I would like to tell a little story about a certain sister who was granted admission to a very prestigious school but who did not attend that school because she was taking care of the flow of life within. When this sister was accepted into that highly respected school, many of the young people immediately told her, "You need to go to that school. Since you were accepted, you should go." They thought to themselves, "You were accepted to such an esteemed school; who wouldn't attend that school if they had the opportunity?" They did not ask her to pray; they only encouraged her to attend this school. Later, she came to have fellowship with my wife and me, and we encouraged her to pray, to take care of the flow of life in her spirit, and to take care of the life and peace within. We said, "If the Lord Jesus is flowing within you when you are considering this respected school, then you should attend that school because that is where He is directing you as the King in your being." Eventually, this sister decided to attend another school because that was where the life flowing within her was leading her. This is a genuine testimony of one who took care of the flow of

life. Of course, there are other saints among us who decided to attend that famous school because the Lord was flowing within them to go there. However, we should never say, "Since Brother So-and-so decided to attend such-and-such school, I also will attend that school." We need to go along with the flow of life within each of us personally. This is the practical enthroning of Christ as the King in our being.

On the one hand, we need to take care of the flow and give it the preeminence in our being, and on the other hand, this flow needs to be deepened. As this flow is deepened within us, Christ's kingship and His rulership within our being are deepened. Ezekiel 47:1-5 shows that this flow of life from the house was measured a number of times and that each time it was measured, the water became deeper. The first time the water was measured, it was to the ankles (v. 3); when it was measured a second time, it was to the knees (v. 4). Then it was measured again, and it was to the loins (v. 4); and when it was measured yet again, "the water had risen, enough water to swim in, a river that could not be crossed" (v. 5).

We need to allow the Lord to measure us. We may illustrate what it means to be measured by considering a sister who is purchasing material in order to make drapes. The sister first measures the material; while measuring it, she tests it, examines it, and judges it in order to possess it. This is what it means to measure. When the Lord measures us, He tests us, examines us, and judges us so that He may possess us by deepening the flow within us. In a recent training for elders and responsible brothers held in the Netherlands (see *The Ministry of the Word,* vol. 16, no. 2), we challenged the attendants by posing the question, "How deep is the flow of life within your being?" Is it to the ankles, the knees, the loins, or do we have enough water to swim in? Are we really swimming in God?

We often take Ezekiel 47 for granted, but a crucial point in this chapter is whether or not we have enough water to swim in. We need to consider the depth of the flow within us and whether we have practically consecrated ourselves to God to the extent that we are being carried along with the current of the flow of the Lord Jesus within us as our indwelling Ruler and King. None of us may have the boldness to say that the flow within is "water to swim in." Thus, we need to be measured more and more; we need to be judged, tested, examined, and possessed by the Lord more so that we are eventually swimming in

God, being carried along by the flow of life as the King, the Decider, and the Ruler of everything related to our being.

Christ's Ascension to the Right Hand of God Being Not Merely a Matter of His Being in a Place but of His Being in a Person, the Father; in His Ascension Christ Entering into the Father's Being and Sitting Down There

Christ's ascension to the right hand of God is not merely a matter of His being in a place but of His being in a person, the Father; in His ascension Christ entered into the Father's being and sat down there (Heb. 1:3b; John 16:28). Christ sitting at the right hand of God implies His kingship. He entered into the Father's being and sat down there. Isaiah 22:23 says concerning Christ, "I will drive him as a peg into a sure place, / And he will become a throne of glory for his father's house." The footnote on the word *peg* in this verse says,

> Christ has been driven by God as a peg, or nail, into a sure place (v. 23a), which typifies the third heaven (cf. 2 Cor. 12:2b), where Christ was exalted by God after His resurrection (Acts 2:33; 5:31). Because the Father is in the third heaven (Matt. 6:9), to be exalted to the third heaven is to be exalted to God the Father (cf. Luke 15:18). Christ today is in the heavens as a peg driven into God.

According to Isaiah 22:24, hanging upon Christ as a peg driven into God is all the glory of His Father's house, "the offspring and the issue, all the smallest vessels, from the bowls to all the jars." *The offspring and the issue* and *vessels* refer to us. The footnote on the word *glory* here says,

> The glory of the Father's house that hangs on Christ as the peg is the children of God as the offspring and the issue (descendants) of God, and these children of God are the vessels of Christ, who hang on Him in order to contain Him and to minister Him to others. The children of God as the offspring and the issue are glory in the house of God, and they are also the vessels.

Christ has been driven as a peg into God, and we are all hanging upon Him as the peg in the third heaven. Furthermore, the footnote on the word *bowls* in verse 24 says,

> The bowls and jars typify the different ways and means for

us to partake of Christ in His riches. Bowls, or cups, are small vessels to contain water, typifying the Spirit of Christ (John 7:37-39), and jars, or pitchers, are large vessels to contain wine, typifying the divine life (Matt. 9:17 and footnote 1). This signifies that in the house of God all His children are vessels to contain His Spirit as water to quench people's thirst and His life as wine to cheer people unto rejoicing. All the riches of the bountiful supply for the enjoyment of God's children are hanging on Christ as the peg, the holder.

This One, the Holder, has been driven into God in His ascension.

This Word about Christ's Sitting at the Right Hand of God Implying Christ's Kingship

This word about Christ's sitting at the right hand of God implies Christ's kingship (Psa. 80:17; Col. 1:17a, 18b; Rev. 22:1; Ezek. 1:22, 26; cf. Isa. 14:13; 3 John 9; 1 John 5:21). Psalm 80:17 says, "Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, / Upon the son of man whom You have strengthened for Yourself." As we pointed out in an earlier message, the man of God's right hand is Christ, and God's hand is His exalting hand, His leading hand, His guiding hand, His directing hand, and His strengthening hand, which causes man to take action. Hence, for God's hand to be upon the man of His right hand means that God is leading Christ, directing Christ, guiding Christ, exalting Christ, strengthening Christ, and causing Christ to take action in our being so that we may give Him the preeminence in every part of our being as our indwelling King.

Ezekiel 1:22-26 speaks concerning the awesome crystal expanse over the heads of the four living creatures. These verses show that we need to pray until there is nothing between us and the Lord. *Hymns,* #373 begins every stanza with, "Nothing between, Lord, nothing between." We should pray, "Lord, may there be nothing between You and me or between me and the brothers and sisters, to the extent that my sky would be like awesome crystal. I also pray that Your throne would be above this clear sky. Lord, I want to have a clear sky between You and me so that there is nothing between us, and I want to be filled with the heavenly situation, atmosphere, condition, and reality of Your ruling presence." We need a clear sky in our being with God's throne above it.

We need to realize that there is one in our being who wanted to exalt his throne above God's throne (Isa. 14:13). In our fallen being, there is a desire to be on the throne; but when we are in our spirit, we want God to be on the throne. We need to be those who live in our spirit and who desire God to be on the throne in our being.

In His Ascension Christ Being Made by God the Lord, the Christ, the Leader of the Entire Universe, and the Savior

In His ascension Christ was made by God the Lord, the Christ, the Leader of the entire universe, and the Savior (Acts 2:36; 5:31; 10:36).

Christ Being on the Throne, but His Still Being in Need of a Footstool

Christ is on the throne, but He is still in need of a footstool. God is endeavoring to subdue all of Christ's enemies and to make them His footstool. Our fighting today is for the subduing of Christ's enemies (Rom. 5:17, 21). According to Romans 5:17, the way to fight is by receiving the abundance of grace. When we receive the abundance of grace, we spontaneously reign in life over Satan, sin, and death. Verse 17 says, "If, by the offense of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ." We need to be those who receive the abundance of grace, the abundance of the enjoyment of the Triune God, so that we can reign in life over Satan, sin, and death.

Verse 21 says, "In order that just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." We not only need to receive the abundance of grace so that we reign in life over Satan, sin, and death, but we also want this enjoyment of Christ to reign in our being. When we are enjoying the Lord and grace is reigning in our being, we are restricted in that enjoyment. Thus, grace restricts us. Through our enjoyment we are brought under Christ's kingship, His rulership, and He is enthroned in our being as grace.

Ephesians 1:19 through 23 shows how Christ was raised to the throne and speaks regarding the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. This power is the power which God caused to operate in Christ in raising Him from the dead, in seating Him at His right hand in the heavenlies, in subjecting all things under Christ's feet, and in giving Christ to be Head over all things to the church. When we put all these verses together, we see that there is a fourfold power

installed in our spirit. This power is resurrecting power, ascending power, subjecting power, which is the power that subjected all things under Christ's feet, and heading-up power, the power that gave Christ to be Head over all things to the church. When we pray according to Ephesians 3, saying, "Father, strengthen me with power through Your Spirit into the inner man," we are praying to be strengthened with this fourfold power—resurrecting power, ascending power, subjecting power, and heading-up power—into our inner man so that Christ can make His home in our heart through faith so that we may be filled unto all the fullness of God.

We must see that this fourfold power has been installed into our spirit so that we can fight the battle. But how do we fight? We fight by retreating. We need to learn to always retreat to our spirit. This is very practical. When different things are bothering us, such as problems in our situation and environment, or when vain thoughts begin creeping into our being, we need to declare, "Lord, I retreat into my spirit." We need to pray, "Lord, keep me in my spirit," because the power that raised Christ from the dead—resurrecting power, ascending power, subjecting power, and heading-up power—has been installed in our spirit. This power is *to the church,* meaning that when we are in our spirit, this power is being transmitted into our inner being.

God Sending Forth from Zion the Scepter of Christ's Strength to Rule over All the Nations at His Return

God will send forth from Zion the scepter of Christ's strength to rule over all the nations at His return (Psa. 110:2).

NEEDING TO COOPERATE WITH CHRIST'S HEAVENLY MINISTRY IN THE DAY OF HIS WARFARE BY PRESENTING OURSELVES AS FREEWILL OFFERINGS TO THE LORD IN THE SPLENDOR OF CONSECRATION AND BY BEING HIS YOUNG MEN WHO ARE TO HIM LIKE THE DEW FROM THE WOMB OF THE DAWN

We need to cooperate with Christ's heavenly ministry in the day of His warfare by presenting ourselves as freewill offerings to the Lord in the splendor of consecration and by being His young men who are to Him like the dew from the womb of the dawn (v. 3). Verse 3 says, "Your people will offer themselves willingly / In the day of Your warfare, / In the splendor of their consecration. / Your young men will be to You / Like the dew from the womb of the dawn." Take note of the words *the splendor of their consecration,* followed by the words *Your young men.*

There are no old men in God's economy; we all need to be young men. As young men, we need to be to Him "like the dew from the womb of the dawn." We must emphasize these expressions: *the splendor of their consecration, Your young men,* and *the dew from the womb of the dawn.* The context of these is "the day of His warfare." We can cooperate with Him as the King, the Priest, the Warrior, the Victor, and the Drinker by presenting ourselves as freewill offerings to Him in the splendor of consecration and by being His young men who are to Him like the dew from the womb of the dawn.

In the Eyes of the Lord Our Willing Consecration, Our Offering Ourselves to Him, Being a Matter of Splendor

In the eyes of the Lord our willing consecration, our offering ourselves to Him, is a matter of splendor. Consecration is our consent; it is our surrender to the Lord. We need to give our consent and surrender our whole life and our whole being to the Lord for His recovery and for His economy.

Although the Church Has Become Degraded, throughout the Centuries There Having Been a Line of Those Who Have Offered Themselves Willingly to the Lord in the Splendor, the Beauty, of Their Consecration

Although the church has become degraded, throughout the centuries there has been a line of those who have offered themselves willingly to the Lord in the splendor, the beauty, of their consecration.

Splendor *Also Being Translated "Adornment"; the Splendor of Consecration Being an Adornment; If We Offer Ourselves Willingly to the Lord, Our Being Beautified with a Divine, Heavenly Splendor*

Splendor may also be translated "adornment"; the splendor of consecration is an adornment; if we offer ourselves willingly to the Lord, we will be beautified with a divine, heavenly splendor. If we give ourselves willingly to the Lord, in His eyes we are beautified with a divine, heavenly splendor.

Once, John Nelson Darby was traveling and staying in a hotel by himself. That was a lonely time, but he knelt down and said, "Lord Jesus, I still love You." Brother Lee said, "None of his writings inspired me as much as this single short sentence. That short word touched my

heart. By that time he was quite old, yet he could still speak such a word to the Lord" (*Life and Building as Portrayed in the Song of Songs,* p. 23). This short word impressed Brother Lee more than all of Darby's other writings because it showed that all of his labor—including his translations of the Bible into French, German, and English and his *Synopsis of the Bible*—came out of his fresh love for the Lord. We need to pray every day, "Lord Jesus, I still love You." Brother Darby also said, "O the joy of having nothing and being nothing, seeing nothing but a living Christ in glory, and being careful for nothing but His interests down here." We need to be like him in this way.

Here Christ Likening Himself to a Plant That Needs the Watering of the Mild, Soft, Gentle Dew

Here Christ likens Himself to a plant that needs the watering of the mild, soft, gentle dew. As Christ is on the way to carry out God's economy, He needs to be watered; Christ is watered by those who offer themselves willingly to Him. Whoever volunteers himself to Christ as a freewill offering is likened to a young man and to the dew conceived in the womb of the dawn for watering Christ.

In Order to Cooperate with Christ's Heavenly Ministry in the Day of His Warfare, Our Needing to Have an Absolute and Thorough Consecration to the Lord of Our Whole Being with Everything That We Have for the Accomplishment of His Eternal Economy; the Fullness of One's Experience of Life Depending on the Fullness of One's Experience of Consecration

In order to cooperate with Christ's heavenly ministry in the day of His warfare, we need to have an absolute and thorough consecration to the Lord of our whole being with everything that we have for the accomplishment of His eternal economy; the fullness of one's experience of life depends on the fullness of one's experience of consecration (Matt. 26:6-13). In Matthew 26:6-13 Mary broke her alabaster flask of precious ointment and poured it out on the Lord. Judas took the lead to question her actions (John 12:4-5), but the disciples themselves were also indignant, saying, "Why this waste? For this could have been sold for much and given to the poor" (Matt. 26:8-9). Footnote 1 on verse 8 says,

> The disciples considered Mary's love offering to the Lord a waste. Throughout the past twenty centuries thousands of precious lives, heart treasures, high positions, and golden futures have been "wasted" upon the Lord Jesus. To those who love Him in such a way He is altogether lovely and worthy of their offering. What they have poured upon Him is not a waste but a fragrant testimony of His sweetness.

It is wonderful to pour out everything on the Lord Jesus; it is a great privilege.

Then in verse 13 the Lord spoke to His disciples concerning Mary's actions, saying, "Wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what this woman has done shall also be told as a memorial of her." Footnote 2 on this verse says, "The story of the gospel is that the Lord loved us, and the story of Mary is that she loved the Lord. We must preach both—the Lord's loving us and our loving the Lord. One is for our salvation, and the other is for our consecration." We need to preach the Lord loving us for our salvation, and we also need to preach our loving the Lord for our consecration.

This matches the meaning of the name Habakkuk, one of the minor prophets. The name Habakkuk means "embracing," or "clinging to." Footnote 1 on Habakkuk 1:1 says, "The meaning of the prophet's name indicates that in order for sinners to receive God's eternal salvation (2:4), which is actually God Himself (Isa. 12:2; Luke 2:30), God became a man on the earth that He might embrace sinners and sinners might cling to Him (cf. 19:1-10)." God became a man to embrace us for our salvation so that we sinners might cling to Him in our consecration.

The Basis of Consecration Being God's Purchase

The basis of consecration is God's purchase (1 Cor. 6:19-20; Rom. 14:8). God purchased us with His precious blood (1 Pet. 1:19). First Corinthians 6:19-20 says, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you have been brought with a price. So then glorify God in your body." We have been bought with the price of Christ's precious blood, so we need to glorify God in our body. Actually, our whole being—spirit, soul, and body—belongs to the Lord. First Thessalonians 5:23 says, "The God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." We need to consecrate our spirit to the Lord to contact, receive, and worship Him; we need to consecrate our soul to the Lord to enjoy and express Him; and we need to

consecrate our body to the Lord to glorify and magnify Him. Our need every day is to consecrate our entire tripartite being to the Lord because we were bought with His precious blood.

The Motive of Consecration Being God's Love

The motive of consecration is God's love (2 Cor. 5:14-15; Rom. 12:1). God's purchase is the basis of consecration, but the motive of consecration is God's love. God's love is the source of the sweetness, the intensity, and the vitality of our consecration. This is why we need to pray, "Lord, constrain me with Your love." *Hymns,* #431 says, "Thy mighty love, O God, constraineth me, / As some strong tide it presseth on its way... / Shall I not yield to that constraining power? / Shall I not say, O tide of love, flow in?" We need to make this hymn our prayer, saying, "Lord, I open to You. O tide of love, flow in." When the tide of love flows into us, we are constrained to go along with it and to consecrate our whole life to the Lord.

The Meaning of Consecration Being to Be a Sacrifice

The meaning of consecration is to be a sacrifice (v. 1; Num. 28:2-3). Romans 12:1 says, "I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service." Numbers 28:2-3 says, "Command the children of Israel and say to them, My offering, My food for My offerings by fire of a satisfying fragrance to Me, you shall be careful to present to Me at its appointed time. And you shall say to them, This is the offering by fire which you shall present to Jehovah: two male lambs a year old without blemish each day as a continual burnt offering." These verses show that the burnt offering becomes God's food. Man's food is that which satisfies man; God's food is that which satisfies God. When we take Christ as our burnt offering, we are identified with Him and become food for God's satisfaction. In other words, our consecration to God is for God's satisfaction and His heart's desire to have a built-up Body and a prepared bride to bring Him back to this earth. This is the purpose of consecration; it is for God's satisfaction.

The Purpose of Consecration Being to Let God Work in Us So That We Might Work for God

The purpose of consecration is to let God work in us so that we might work for God (Eph. 2:10; Isa. 64:8; Phil. 2:12-13; 1 Cor. 15:10). We

do not first work for God. We must first let God work in us, and then we can work for God. Philippians 2:13 says, "It is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for His good pleasure." Paul was telling the Philippians, "You need to realize that God is operating in you for your working. God is operating in you both your willing for His good pleasure and your working for His good pleasure. You need to allow God to operate in you so that you would choose God's good pleasure and then work for God's good pleasure." We need to let God work in us so that we might work for God. This is the purpose of consecration.

The Result of Consecration Being to Abandon Our Future

The result of consecration is to abandon our future (Lev. 1:9; cf. 6:10-13). Our only future is God Himself. The destiny of the burnt offering offered on the altar was ashes. When we consecrate ourselves to God, our destiny is to become ashes. When we see what it means to be ashes, we will praise the Lord.

Leviticus 6:10-11 says, "The priest shall put on his linen garment, and his linen trousers he shall put on his flesh; and he shall take up the ashes to which the fire has consumed the burnt offering on the altar, and he shall put them beside the altar. Then he shall take off his garments and put on other garments and carry the ashes outside the camp to a clean place." These ashes were very sacred to God. In the *Life-study of Leviticus* Brother Lee comments on these verses:

> This signifies the stateliness in handling the ashes (the result) of the burnt offering. In God's eyes, the result of our burnt offering is highly regarded. It is fine, pure, and clean. Thus, in carrying the ashes outside the camp, the priest wore stately garments and carried the ashes in a stately way. This teaches us to have a high regard for the result of our burnt offering.
>
> To become a full-timer is to offer ourselves to God as a burnt offering. Concerning this, there should be and must be a result. We should regard this result and not despise it or consider it insignificant. The result of our being a burnt offering will be something that carries out God's New Testament economy. What we do as full-timers is not merely to preach the gospel to save sinners, to establish local churches, to teach the Bible, or to help people to grow in life and in truth. What we do must result in the building up of the Body of Christ, which is a miniature of the coming of New Jerusalem.

> What we are doing is actually extraordinary, but to the worldly people it is nothing. To them what we are doing is ashes. However, God has a high regard for these ashes. Eventually these ashes will become the New Jerusalem. Have you ever realized that the ashes, the result of the burnt offering, will be the coming New Jerusalem? I realize this, and I believe it. I believe that I will be there and that what I am doing will be part of that city. The New Jerusalem is our destiny and our destination.
>
> How can the ashes of the burnt offering become the New Jerusalem? Ashes indicate the result of Christ's death, which brings us to an end, that is, to ashes. But Christ's death brings in resurrection. In resurrection, the ashes become precious materials—gold, pearls, and precious stones—for the building of the New Jerusalem. All three precious materials come from the transformation of the ashes. When we are brought to ashes, we are brought into the transformation of the Triune God. (p. 211)

This is a result of our consecration. Verses 12 and 13 continue, "And the fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it; it must not go out. And the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and he shall lay the burnt offering in order upon it and shall burn the fat of the peace offerings on it. Fire shall be kept burning on the altar continually; it shall not go out." We should never let the fire of the burnt offering go out in our life. It must not go out. When we wake up in the morning, one of the first things that we should do is say, "Lord Jesus, I love You." We may also say, "Praise You, Lord Jesus. Thank You, Lord Jesus. Lord Jesus, I love You. Lord Jesus, I take You as my burnt offering, and I consecrate my whole being, my whole life, and this whole day to You." Immediately, the fire will rise up in our being. This is our experience. We must not let the fire go out.

In Order to Cooperate with Christ's Heavenly Ministry in the Day of His Warfare, Our Needing to Rise Up Early in the Morning to Contact the Lord So That We May Enter into the Womb of the Dawn to Be Conceived as the Dew for Christ's Watering

In order to cooperate with Christ's heavenly ministry in the day of His warfare, we need to rise up early in the morning to contact the Lord so that we may enter into the womb of the dawn to be conceived as the dew for Christ's watering (Matt. 6:6; 14:22-23; Mark 1:35). Our time with the Lord in the morning is not mainly for our satisfaction; it is for His satisfaction. When we rise up early in the morning to contact the Lord, we enter into the womb of the dawn. In the womb of the dawn something fresh of Christ is conceived in our being, making us the dew to water Christ for His satisfaction. This is wonderful! We can have a personal time with the Lord to make Him happy, to water Him by being the dew to Him from the womb of the dawn.

Matthew 6:6 says, "You, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you." We may not have a private room, but we can find a private place where no one can see us. In 1987 I went to Taipei for a period of training, and I realized that I needed to spend personal time with the Lord every morning. Early in the morning, I went up to the roof of the meeting hall to be alone with the Lord, but I found that there were people everywhere spending time with the Lord. At first I wondered how I could enter into my "private room." I took a chair, faced it against the wall, and sat with my face to the wall with my hands to the sides of my face to block out everything; then I began to pray, "Lord Jesus. Lord Jesus, I love You." That was my private room, and the Lord met me there every morning. We need to enter into our private room, shut the door, and pray to our Father who is in secret; and our Father who sees in secret will repay us.

We should not let anyone disturb our personal time with the Lord. When we are spending time with the Lord, we should not answer our cell phone or return texts. We should turn our phones off when we are about to spend time with the Lord; turn everything off. We are about to spend time with the King of kings!

Once, I was about to have my time with the Lord, and I told my wife so that she would know that if the phone rang, she should take a message. While I was in my private room, the phone rang, and then my wife knocked on the door and said, "It's long distance." I thought that if it was long distance, it must be important, so I left the King of kings and went to answer the phone. The person on the other end of the line said, "Is this Ed Marks Construction Company?" I tell you, that was the devil calling me long distance to disturb my time with the Lord.

When Brother Lee spent time with the Lord in the morning or when he had messages read to him, he did not want to be disturbed.

When I or one of the other brothers was reading a message to him, that was his personal study of the Bible. He considered that to be a time of taking in the word, even if we were reading something that he had spoken. Once, when I was reading a message to him, the doorbell rang, and he said, "That's the devil." He was so serious about spending time with the Lord. We need to treasure our time with the Lord. We emphasize this matter very much in the full-time training. When the new graduates leave the training, they need to continue to spend personal time with the Lord every day.

In Matthew 14, after He had fed the five thousand, the Lord did not bask in His accomplishment. Verses 22 and 23 say, "Immediately He compelled the disciples to step into the boat and to go before Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away. And after He sent the crowds away, He went up to the mountain privately to pray. And when night fell, He was there alone." Footnote 1 on verse 22 says, "The Lord compelled the disciples to leave Him in order that He might have more time to pray privately to the Father (v. 23)." This One is now in us, and He wants to spend more time in us to pray privately to the Father. Footnote 1 on verse 23 says, "Standing in the position of man (4:4), the heavenly King, as the beloved Son of the Father (3:17), needed to pray privately to His Father who was in the heavens, that He might be one with the Father and have the Father with Him in whatever He did on earth for the establishing of the kingdom of the heavens. He did this not in the deserted place but on the mountain, leaving all the people, even His disciples, that He might be alone to contact the Father." He spent private time in prayer to the Father so that He could be absolutely one with the Father in His humanity to establish the kingdom of the heavens on the earth.

Mark 1:33 says, "The whole city was gathered together at the door." With the whole city gathered together at the door, the Lord had much work to keep Him very busy. However, verses 35 through 38 say, "Rising very early in the morning, while it was still night, He went out and went away to a deserted place, and there He prayed. And Simon and those with him hunted for Him, and they found Him and said to Him, All are seeking You. And He said to them, Let us go elsewhere into the nearby towns that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I came out." The disciples had to hunt for Him, and when they found Him, they told Him that all were seeking Him. However, the Lord's response was, "Let us go elsewhere." The Lord was not governed by the crowds, the need, or the opportunity; He was governed by His time with the Father.

In Order to Cooperate with Christ's Heavenly Ministry in the Day of His Warfare, Our Needing to Live a Life of the Altar and the Tent, Keeping Ourselves Empty, Open, Fresh, Living, and Young with the Lord for His New Move

In order to cooperate with Christ's heavenly ministry in the day of His warfare, we need to live a life of the altar and the tent, keeping ourselves empty, open, fresh, living, and young with the Lord for His new move (Gen. 12:7-8).

We need to be emptied and unloaded in our spirit, in the depth of our being, so that we may receive Christ as the reality of the kingdom of the heavens (Matt. 5:3; Luke 1:53).

We need to be open vessels; the one who experiences the greatest amount of transformation is the one who is the most open to the Lord (18:17; Prov. 20:27; Rev. 4:5). We should not let these points go. We should pray short prayers over them; then they will become our reality. We may pray, "Lord, make me an open vessel." The one who experiences the greatest amount of transformation is the one who is the most open to the Lord.

We need to receive the Spirit as the fresh oil (Zech. 4:12-14; Matt. 25:8-9; Rev. 3:18).

We need to walk in newness of life and serve in newness of spirit (Rom. 6:4; 7:6; cf. Ezek. 36:26-27; 2 Cor. 3:16; Matt. 5:8; 26:29). Every day we should pray, "Lord, save me from becoming old and stale." The Lord hates staleness. A number of messages in the *Life-study of First Samuel* speak of the staleness of the degraded Aaronic priesthood. We need to pray, "Lord, save me from becoming stale. Today Lord, cause me to walk in newness of life and to serve You in newness of spirit." The Lord will answer such a prayer.

We need to be vitalized by the Lord to be the living and functioning members of His Body (1 Cor. 14:4b, 31; cf. Rev. 3:1; 14:4).

We need to be renewed day by day with the fresh supply of the resurrection life to stay young in the Lord (2 Cor. 4:16; Eph. 5:26-27). We need to stay young in the Lord. No one likes to be old. We do not want to be old; we want to be new. We do not want to be dead; we want to be living. We do not want to be lukewarm; we want to be burning. We do

not want to be stale; we want to be fresh. We do not want to be old; we want to be young.

In Order to Cooperate with Christ's Heavenly Ministry in the Day of His Warfare, Our Needing to Fight for the Brothers in Oneness with Him to Cherish the Churches in His Humanity and Nourish the Churches in His Divinity to Produce the Overcomers through His Organic Shepherding

In order to cooperate with Christ's heavenly ministry in the day of His warfare, we need to fight for the brothers in oneness with Him to cherish the churches in His humanity and nourish the churches in His divinity to produce the overcomers through His organic shepherding (Gen. 14:13-20; Rev. 1:13; 2:7; 1 Pet. 5:4; Heb. 13:20; 1 John 5:16; cf. Acts 6:4; Rev. 1:20). Genesis 14:13-20 tells the story of Abraham fighting for Lot after he was captured by four kings (vv. 9, 12). Abraham did not criticize Lot for being in Sodom; rather, he led out his three hundred eighteen trained men, fought for Lot, and recovered him. Behind the scene, Melchizedek was interceding for Lot, for Abraham, and for Abraham's fighting. After Abraham won the victory, Melchizedek met him with bread and wine (v. 18), which is a prefigure of the Lord's table. This signifies that when we fight for our brothers, we can enjoy the processed God as our life supply and enjoyment.

GOD HAVING SWORN AND NOT CHANGING IN ORDAINING CHRIST A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK

Christ Being Not Only the King with Power and Authority but Also the High Priest

God has sworn and will not change in ordaining Christ a Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek (Psa. 110:4; Heb. 5:6, 10). Christ is not only the King with power and authority (Psa. 110:1-2) but also the High Priest (Heb. 2:17; 4:14; 6:20; 8:1; 9:11). Footnote 4 on Hebrews 1:3 says, "In this book is the present Christ, who is now in the heavens as our Minister (8:2) and our High Priest (4:14-15; 7:26), ministering to us the heavenly life, grace, authority, and power and sustaining us to live a heavenly life on earth. He is the Christ now, the Christ today, and the Christ on the throne in the heavens, who is our

daily salvation and moment-by-moment supply." I love this "now" Christ!

Christ's Heavenly Ministry in His Ascension Including both His Kingship and His Priesthood

Christ's heavenly ministry in His ascension includes both His kingship and His priesthood (7:1-2; Zech. 6:13).

As the King, His Having the Scepter to Rule over the Earth and to Manage Our Affairs, and as the High Priest, His Interceding for Us and Taking Care of Our Case before God

As the King, He has the scepter to rule over the earth and to manage our affairs, and as the High Priest, He is interceding for us and taking care of our case before God (Heb. 4:14-16; 7:25-26; 9:24; Rom. 8:34; Rev. 1:12-13).

As the Kingly High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek, Christ Ministering God into Us as Our Supply to Fulfill God's Eternal Purpose

As the kingly High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, Christ ministers God into us as our supply to fulfill God's eternal purpose (Heb. 7:1-2; 8:1-2; Gen. 14:18). Hebrews 7:25 says, "Hence also He is able to save to the uttermost those who come forward to God through Him, since He lives always to intercede for them." Hebrews 8:2 says that Christ is "a Minister of the holy places, even of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man." Christ is praying for us, interceding for us, and ministering God into us. At this very moment, He is interceding for each one of us personally and for all of us corporately, and He is ministering God into us. How wonderful!

In His Earthly Ministry Christ Being a High Priest according to the Order of Aaron for the Putting Away of Sin

In His earthly ministry Christ was a High Priest according to the order of Aaron for the putting away of sin (9:14, 26).

Then, in His Heavenly Ministry Christ Being Designated a High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek, Not to Offer Sacrifices for Sin but to Minister to Us the Very God Who Was Processed through Incarnation, Human Living, Crucifixion, and Resurrection, Signified by the Bread and the Wine, as Our Life Supply So That We May Be Saved to the Uttermost

Then, in His heavenly ministry Christ was designated a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek (5:6, 10), not to offer sacrifices for sin but to minister to us the very God who was processed through incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection, signified by the bread and the wine (Matt. 26:26-28), as our life supply so that we may be saved to the uttermost (Heb. 7:25).

As the High Priest, Christ Cherishing the Churches in His Humanity and Nourishing Them in His Divinity with His Divine Love

As the High Priest, Christ cherishes the churches in His humanity and nourishes them in His divinity with His divine love (Rev. 1:12-13; 2:1).

CHRIST, WHO IS THE LORD *(ADONAI)* AND WHO IS AT GOD'S RIGHT HAND, SHATTERING KINGS IN THE DAY OF HIS ANGER AT HIS COMING BACK WITH HIS OVERCOMERS AND EXECUTING JUDGMENT AMONG THE NATIONS OVER A GREAT LAND

Christ, who is the Lord *(Adonai)* and who is at God's right hand, will shatter kings in the day of His anger at His coming back with His overcomers and will execute judgment among the nations over a great land (Psa. 110:5-6; Dan. 2:34-35, 44; Joel 3:11-12; Rev. 17:14). Daniel 2:34-35 says, "You were watching until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the image at its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed all at once, and they became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth." The image mentioned in these verses is the great human image seen by Nebuchadnezzar in his dream (v. 31). This

human image was made of gold, silver, bronze, iron, and iron mixed with clay. This image signifies the successive world empires—the Babylonian Empire, the Medo-Persian Empire, the Macedonian-Grecian Empire, the Roman Empire, and even the revived Roman Empire under Antichrist with ten kings signified by the ten toes. The stone cut out without hands is Christ with His overcoming bride, coming from the heavens and striking the image at its feet. Thus, the image is crushed and becomes like chaff from the summer threshing floors, and no trace of it is found. The stone that smashes that human image becomes a great mountain that fills the whole earth. This great mountain is the kingdom of God.

This Indicating That Christ Is the Warrior to Be the Greatest Victor, Overcoming All the Nations, Shattering the Kings and the Head of the Enemies, and Executing Judgment upon All Who Oppose Him

This indicates that Christ is the Warrior to be the greatest Victor, overcoming all the nations, shattering the kings and the head of the enemies, and executing judgment upon all who oppose Him (Psa. 2:9, 12; Dan. 2:44; Rev. 2:26-27).

His Coming with His Bride, a Composition of All His Overcomers, as His Army, and with Her His Fighting against and Defeating Antichrist and His Armies

He will come with His bride, a composition of all His overcomers, as His army, and with her He will fight against and defeat Antichrist and his armies (19:11-21). If we are faithful and become overcomers, we will be there at the battle of Armageddon and will see the beast (Antichrist) and the false prophet be the first ones thrown into the lake of fire (v. 20). We will be there with Christ as the King of kings, the Lord of lords (v. 16), and the Word of God (v. 13).

CHRIST DRINKING FROM THE BROOK BY THE WAY AND LIFTING UP HIS HEAD TRIUMPHANTLY

Christ will drink from the brook by the way and will lift up His head triumphantly (Psa. 110:7). The brook signifies the overcomers; as Christ is taking the lead to fight through to the end, He will need water to drink, and this water will be the overcomers. Christ's lifting up His

head is a sign of His victory, His triumph, in overcoming all the enemies. To the enemies Christ is the Victor, but to us He is the Drinker. In this psalm we see Christ as the King, the Priest, the Warrior, the Victor, and the Drinker (the Coming One). Praise the Lord! This is the highest revelation of Christ.—E. M.

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OF THE PSALMS (2)

Christ as the Cornerstone for God's Building (Message 7)

Scripture Reading: Psa. 118:22-26; Isa. 28:16; Matt. 21:42; Acts 4:10-12; Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Pet. 2:4-7

I. Christ is not only the Lamb for redemption; He is also the stone for God's building—Psa. 118:22-26; Isa. 28:16; John 1:29; Acts 4:10-12.

II. In the Bible Christ is revealed as at least nine kinds of stones:

A. He is the eternal rock (Isa. 26:4; Matt. 16:18), the foundation stone (Isa. 28:16; 1 Cor. 3:11), the living stone (1 Pet. 2:4), the cornerstone (Psa. 118:22; Isa. 28:16; 1 Pet. 2:6; Acts 4:11; Eph. 2:20), the precious stone (Isa. 28:16; 1 Pet. 2:4, 6-7), the top-stone (Zech. 4:7), the cleft rock (Exo. 17:6; 1 Cor. 10:4), the crushing stone (Dan. 2:34-35; Matt. 21:44b), and the stone of stumbling (Isa. 8:14; Rom. 9:33).

B. We need to experience Christ as a stone in all positive aspects; if we experience Him in these aspects, we will have a complete building—a building that is actually Christ Himself—1 Pet. 2:4-5, 7.

III. In Psalm 118:22-26 Christ is revealed as the cornerstone:

A. "The stone which the builders rejected / Has become the head of the corner," the chief cornerstone—v. 22; Matt. 21:42:

1. This stone is Christ, who is for God's building—Isa. 28:16; Zech. 3:9.
2. The builders are the Jewish leaders, who should have been working on God's building—Matt. 21:42.
3. When the Jewish builders rejected Christ, they rejected Him as the cornerstone, the One who would join the Gentiles to them into a holy temple in the Lord—Eph. 2:20-22.

4. In Ephesians 2:20 we see Christ as the cornerstone that joins together the two walls, one wall being the Jewish believers, and the other, the Gentile believers.
5. Christ as the cornerstone is for the building up of the church in the New Testament age—Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Pet. 2:5:
   a. For the building up of the church as the temple of God, we need to experience Christ as the cornerstone—vv. 6-7.
   b. To God, Christ as the cornerstone is precious, and to us He is the preciousness—Matt. 21:42; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:4, 6-7.
   c. In Christ, the cornerstone, all the building, including both the Jewish and the Gentile believers, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord—Eph. 2:20-22.

B. "This is the day that Jehovah has made; / Let us exult and rejoice in it"—Psa. 118:24:
1. This day is the day of Christ's resurrection; on the day of His resurrection the Lord Jesus was made the cornerstone by God—Acts 4:10-12.
2. Christ was chosen by God in eternity past to be the cornerstone for God's spiritual building—1 Pet. 1:20; 2:4.
3. However, the Jewish leaders as the builders rejected Christ to the uttermost, to such an extent that they put Him on the cross—Matt. 21:38-42a.
4. God chose Christ as the cornerstone a second time in Christ's resurrection, thereby confirming His initial choosing of Christ in eternity past—Acts 4:10-12.
5. After God resurrected Christ, God uplifted Him to the heavens in His ascension—Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9:
   a. Christ's ascension to Zion in the heavens was a further confirmation that God had chosen Him to be the cornerstone—Rev. 14:1; Isa. 28:16; 1 Pet. 2:6.
   b. Both Christ's resurrection and ascension prove and confirm that He is the head of the corner for God's building—Acts 2:24, 32, 36.

C. As the all-inclusive stone, Christ is the centrality of God's move for the building up of His eternal habitation—Matt. 21:42, 44; Zech. 3:9; 4:7; cf. Rev. 5:6; Acts 4:10-12; Isa. 28:16; Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Pet. 2:4-8; Dan. 2:34-35; Rev. 21:11; cf. 4:3:
1. Everything Christ is, everything He has done, and everything He is doing are due to the fact that He is the cornerstone—Eph. 2:20; 4:15-16.
2. It is by His being the cornerstone that He could die for us, that we could be crucified with Him, made alive with Him, resurrected with Him, and seated with Him in the heavenlies, and that He could save us, transform us into precious stones, and build us together to be God's habitation, God's unique temple in the universe—Gal. 2:20; Eph. 2:5-6, 20-22.

D. In God's New Testament economy Christ as the cornerstone, in His saving us (Acts 4:10-12), first makes us living stones for the building up of God's spiritual house (Matt. 16:18; John 1:42; 1 Pet. 2:4-7) and then, in the process of His transforming us (Rom. 12:2a; 2 Cor. 3:18), builds us up into a dwelling place of God (Eph. 2:19-22) so that He may carry out God's eternal economy for God's good pleasure (1:9; 3:9-11).

E. Prosperity in Psalm 118:25 typifies not material prosperity but the heavenly, spiritual, and divine blessings given to us by the Triune God, as described in Ephesians 1:3-14, which come to us by Christ's being the cornerstone.

IV. The whole book of Matthew is for the purpose that Christ would be the cornerstone for the building up of God's house—21:42; 1:21, 23; 2:2, 23; 3:17; 4:16; 12:6, 41-42; 16:16, 18, 27-28; 17:1-2, 5; 25:6:

A. The Lord Jesus came not merely to be the Redeemer but to be the cornerstone for God's building—1:21; 21:42.

B. The Lord said that He would build His church, but the religious ones rejected Him as the cornerstone for God's building, and thus they could not be a part of the building of God—16:18; 21:42.

C. As revealed in the Gospel of Matthew, the Father's will is to build up the church with Christ as the rock and the cornerstone—6:10; 7:21; 12:50:
1. The desire of God's heart is to have a dwelling place on

earth constituted with Christ and according to Christ—Eph. 1:5, 9; 2:20-22.

2. The Lord's word about "a city situated upon a mountain" indicates that God's intention is the building—Matt. 5:14:
   a. This shining light is not an individual believer; the light is a corporate city built up as one entity to shine over the people surrounding it—Rev. 21:23-24a.
   b. In order to be a shining city, we must keep the oneness and be built up as the church, the Body of Christ, in Christ as the cornerstone—Matt. 16:18; 21:42; Eph. 4:1-6; 5:8-9.

V. "Blessed is He who comes in the name of Jehovah; / We bless you from the house of Jehovah"—Psa. 118:26:
   A. The first time that Christ came in the name of Jehovah is mentioned in Matthew; however, He was rejected by the Jewish builders—21:5-11, 42.
   B. When the Lord Jesus comes the second time, the Jews will again welcome Him warmly with these words; this is the time when all the remnant of Israel will turn and believe in Him and be saved—23:39; Rom. 11:23, 26; Zech. 12:10.

MESSAGE SEVEN

CHRIST AS THE CORNERSTONE FOR GOD'S BUILDING

There are tremendous riches in this ministry. Every point in each message outline contains a depth of riches that is seemingly without end. The outlines are so full because this ministry is rich. In Psalm 132:15 Jehovah says concerning Zion, "I will abundantly bless its provision; / I will satisfy its poor with bread." One sign of the Lord's blessing is that there is much provision, much food.

The title of this message is "Christ as the Cornerstone for God's Building." This is a very rich message in which we will see the significance of Christ as our cornerstone. Psalm 118:22 through 29 says,

> The stone which the builders rejected / Has become the head of the corner. / This is from Jehovah; / It is wonderful in our sight. / This is the day that Jehovah has made; / Let us exult and rejoice in it. / O Jehovah, do save, we pray! / O Jehovah, do send prosperity, we pray! / Blessed is He who comes in the name of Jehovah; / We bless you from the house of Jehovah. / Jehovah is God, / And He has given us light; / Bind the sacrifice of the feast with cords / To the horns of the altar. / You are my God, and I give thanks to You. / You are my God; I will exalt You. / Give thanks to Jehovah, for He is good, / For His lovingkindness is forever.

The word *stone* is first mentioned in this psalm in verse 22. Prior to this, the psalmist speaks of the Lord's lovingkindness and gives thanks to the Lord (v. 1). In verse 22 the psalmist says, "The stone which the builders rejected / Has become the head of the corner." *Stone* here refers to Christ. Christ is the stone that was rejected by the builders. Who were the builders? In Matthew 21:42 the Lord Jesus Himself revealed that the builders were the Jewish leaders. The Jews should have been the builders of God's building, but instead of receiving and accepting the stone, who was Christ, they rejected the stone. These Jewish builders

were building something, but Christ did not fit into that building; thus, they rejected Him.

We may apply this in a wider sense to ourselves. As long as what we are building is not for God's building, Christ will not fit in it. Some of us have personal "building projects." For example, we may be building a career, and we may try very hard to fit Christ into our building project. If our career is for God's building, Christ will fit into it. When He fits in, He becomes the cornerstone. But whenever a stone does not fit, we will reject it. In the world people have many building projects into which Christ does not fit. Likewise, the Jews were building their Jewish religion, but Christ did not fit into their building; therefore, they rejected Him. Yet verse 22 clearly says, "The stone which the builders rejected / Has become the head of the corner."

Verse 23 continues, "This is from Jehovah; / It is wonderful in our sight." Sometimes we apply this verse to a brother and sister being joined together in a wonderful way under the Lord's arrangement or when a baby is born. In instances like these we may say, "This is from Jehovah; / It is wonderful in our sight." Indeed such moments are wonderful, but that is not the proper application of this verse according to the context of this psalm. The thing that is from Jehovah and wonderful in our sight is Christ, the rejected stone who has become the head of the corner.

Verse 24 says, "This is the day that Jehovah has made; / Let us exult and rejoice in it." To what day is this verse referring? It is referring to the day that the rejected stone was designated the head of the corner. That is the day of the Lord's resurrection. It is in this day that we should exult and rejoice. In a message entitled "The Lord's Day," Brother Nee alludes to this psalm, saying,

> Psalm 118:22-24 is a very crucial portion of the Word. It says, "The stone which the builders rejected / Has become the head of the corner. / This is from Jehovah, / And it is wonderful in our sight. / This is the day that Jehovah has made; / Let us exult and rejoice in it." Here we see the phrase *the stone which the builders rejected.* A builder decides whether or not a stone is useful. If the builder says that a stone cannot be used, it is discarded. But here is a wonderful thing: God has made Him—"the stone which the builders rejected"—"the head of the corner," that is, the foundation. God has placed the most important duty upon Him. "This is from Jehovah, / And it is wonderful in our sight." This is indeed wonderful. Verse 24 tells us something more wonderful: "This is the day that Jehovah has made; / Let us exult and rejoice in it." This means that the day that Jehovah has made is the very day in which the stone, rejected by the builders, became the head of the corner. Although the builders rejected the stone, Jehovah did a wonderful thing on that day. He caused the stone to become the head of the corner. This then is the day that Jehovah has made.
>
> We need to know what day is the day that Jehovah has made. What is the actual day that the stone rejected by the builders became the head of the corner? What day is this day? Acts 4:10-11 says, "Let it be known to you all and to all the people of Israel that in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified and whom God has raised from the dead, in this name this man stands before you in good health. This is the stone which was considered as nothing by you, the builders, which has become the head of the corner." Verse 10 says, "Whom you crucified and whom God has raised from the dead." Verse 11 says, "The stone which was considered as nothing by you, the builders, which has become the head of the corner." In other words, the stone became the cornerstone at the very time of the Lord Jesus' resurrection. The time of the builders' rejection was the time that the Lord Jesus was crucified on the cross, while the time of His being made the cornerstone was the time that God raised Him from among the dead. Therefore, "the day that Jehovah has made" is the day of the Lord Jesus' resurrection. The One rejected by man has been raised up by God. This resurrection is "from Jehovah." The day of the Lord Jesus' resurrection is the day that Jehovah has made. It is wonderful in our sight because this day was not made by man but by Jehovah. What is the day that Jehovah has made? It is the day the Lord Jesus resurrected. (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee,* vol. 48, pp. 216-217)

The Lord's Day is so significant because this is the day that the Lord Himself has established. The Lord's Day is significant to the New Testament believers because it replaces the Old Testament Sabbath. In the Old Testament the Lord ordained that His people should remember

Him one day of the week, which was the Sabbath. But in the New Testament, in God's New Testament economy, there is another day to celebrate. The Lord's Day is the celebration of the Lord Jesus as the cornerstone. There is not a day to celebrate the Lord as the Lamb, as food, or as light, but there is a day ordained by God to celebrate the Lord being the stone rejected by the builders but who became the head of the corner. This is the day that Jehovah has made.

Psalm 118:25 says, "O Jehovah, do save, we pray! / O Jehovah, do send prosperity, we pray!" According to footnote 1, the phrase *do save, we pray* is the source for the expression *hosanna.* When the crowds welcomed the Lord Jesus into Jerusalem, they cried out, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" (Matt. 21:9).

Psalm 118:26 says, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of Jehovah; / We bless you from the house of Jehovah." The Lord Himself quoted this verse at the end of His debate with and rebuke of the religionists (Matt. 23:39). It is significant that the words of Psalm 118 were spoken both when the Lord entered into Jerusalem, riding on a donkey from Bethphage and at the conclusion of His contending with the religionists. After the Lord Jesus entered into Jerusalem, He began to cleanse the temple, casting out all those who were buying and selling (Matt. 21:12-16). Then the next day He debated with the religionists concerning five matters, which we covered in Message 6. In one of these debates He quoted Psalm 118 in the parable of the vinedressers (Matt. 21:33-46). In this parable there was a vineyard owner who leased his vineyard to some vinedressers. When harvest came, this owner sent his slaves to receive his fruit, but the vinedressers killed the owner's slaves. Then the owner sent his own son, whom the vinedressers also killed. Eventually, the owner came himself and destroyed those evil vinedressers and leased the vineyard to other vinedressers (vv. 33-41). Then in verse 42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures, 'The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner. This was from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?" Hence, the matter of Christ being the cornerstone in Psalm 118 is very significant.

We may say that during the final week before His death, while He was debating and being tested by the religionists and carrying out His mission, the Lord's mind was on Psalm 118. At one point, while He was talking and debating with the religionists, He challenged them with the

question, "What do you think concerning the Christ? Whose son is He?" (Matt. 22:42). When they replied, "David's," He said to them, "How then does David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand until I put Your enemies underneath Your feet'? If then David calls Him Lord, how is He his son?" (vv. 43-45). Thus, the Lord muzzled the religionists by His question concerning the Christ, and they had nothing more to say. Following that, the Lord began to rebuke the religionists and even prophesied that God would forsake and abandon the temple. Then He told them, "You shall by no means see Me from now on until you say, Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord" (23:39). This shows the Lord's view of the situation. Although He saw how the Jews, who were supposed to be the builders, had rejected Him, He would yet become the cornerstone.

The Bible reveals to us that God has two works in the universe—the work of creation and the work of building. The Bible begins with the work of creation in Genesis 1, and it concludes with the work of building. The work of creation took only seven days and was completed in Genesis 1, but throughout the rest of the Bible, we see God's work of building. This work is completed at the end of the Bible with the consummate building of God, the New Jerusalem.

In these two works of God, Christ occupies a pivotal place. In the work of creation, Christ is the Creator. Surely we all recognize how important Christ is as the Creator; however, the second work is more important than the first, since the work of creation merely sets the stage for the work of building. In the work of building, Christ occupies the preeminent place as the cornerstone. From the perspective of God's two works, we can see how significant Christ is as the cornerstone.

If in the first work Christ is the Creator, then it follows that in the second work Christ should be the Builder. However, in the second work Christ is not only the Builder but also the building. In His first work He was not initially part of His creation, but in His second work He is part of the work itself; He is part of the building. Thus, Christ is not only the Builder of the house but also the very building itself as the cornerstone.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHRIST AS THE CORNERSTONE

We need to be impressed with the significance of Christ as the

cornerstone in God's building. I will point out six aspects in which we can see Christ's significance as the cornerstone.

First, we can see how important the revelation of Christ as the cornerstone is by its position in the Psalms. In Message 6 we saw that Psalm 110 contains the highest revelation of Christ in the Psalms. In that psalm Christ is unveiled as the King, the Priest, the Warrior, the Victor, and the Drinker. Surely that is wonderful and the highest revelation of Christ. Psalm 118 reveals Christ in His relationship to the building. Both Psalms 110 and 118 are in Book Five of the Psalms, comprising Psalms 107 through 150. Among the psalms in Book Five, only Psalms 110 and 118 speak of Christ in a specific way. Then Psalm 119 concerns the word. The remaining psalms are psalms of ascent and psalms of praise, psalms of Hallelujahs. Therefore, we may say that Psalm 118 is the consummation of the revelation of Christ in the Psalms, and in this psalm Christ is unveiled as the cornerstone. Thus, the consummation of the revelation of Christ in the Psalms is as the cornerstone. Without His being unveiled as the cornerstone, the revelation of Christ in this book is incomplete. To be sure, Christ is all the wonderful items revealed in the other psalms, especially in Psalm 110, but we need to see Christ as the chief cornerstone in order to complete the entire revelation of Christ in the Psalms. This is the first point that shows the significance of Christ as the cornerstone.

Second, we have seen the significance of Christ as the cornerstone shown in His discourse with the Jewish religionists in Jerusalem during the week before His death. We may say that Christ's mind was set on His being the cornerstone during that time. It is as if that entire week was a fulfillment of Psalm 118, beginning with the people crying out, "Hosanna!" (Matt. 21:9) and ending with Christ's concluding word to the religionists, saying, "You shall by no means see Me from now on until you say, Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord" (23:39).

In Luke 24 the Lord expounded to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus as well as to the rest of the apostles how the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms spoke concerning Him (vv. 27, 44). What was the Lord thinking about when He expounded the things in the Psalms concerning Himself? At least eight times in the Gospels, the Lord quoted the Psalms directly, and of those eight instances, He quoted Psalm 118 at least twice (Matt. 21:42; 23:39). In 21:42 He applied the quote to His rejection by the Jews in His first coming, and in 23:39 He applied the quote to the remnant of Israelites at His second coming. Thus, the Lord Himself pointed out what is significant about Himself in the Psalms, which concerns Him as the cornerstone.

Third, Ephesians 2 concludes with the revelation of Christ as the cornerstone. This chapter unveils that we were dead in our offenses and sins (vv. 1, 5), that we were raised up and seated together in Christ in the heavenlies (v. 6), that He has created us into His masterpiece (v. 10), and that through the cross Christ has abolished all the ordinances to become the peace between the Jews and the Gentiles by Himself being the cornerstone (vv. 15, 20), the goal of which is that the Lord would have a habitation in spirit (v. 22). Therefore, in order for the Lord to have a habitation in spirit, we have been resurrected with Christ, we have been seated with Christ in the heavenlies, Christ has become our peace and the gospel of peace, He has given us the apostles and prophets, He has brought the Jews and Gentiles together, and, more importantly, He has become the cornerstone of God's building. At the same time, we may say that it is for His sake as the cornerstone that we were resurrected together with Him, that He became the ascended One with whom we may also ascend, that He has made us the masterpiece of God, and that He has become the peace between the Jews and the Gentiles. In other words, everything that the Lord has gone through culminates in His being the cornerstone for God's habitation. This is a very important point.

Christ is all-inclusive, and He is the centrality and universality of God's move so that He could be qualified to be the cornerstone. If Christ had not passed through death, resurrection, and ascension, He would not be qualified to be the cornerstone, the chief building block, of God's building. Thus, if there is anything we ought to celebrate, it is in Christ as the cornerstone of God's building.

Fourth, in Acts 4 Peter testified before the Sanhedrin concerning Christ being the cornerstone. In verses 11 and 12 he said, "This is the stone which was considered as nothing by you, the builders, which has become the head of the corner. And there is salvation in no other, for neither is there another name under heaven given among men in which we must be saved." Salvation is only in this One—Christ. In other words, salvation issues and originates from Christ as the universal cornerstone. Hence, Christ as the cornerstone is the gospel. If we have Him as the cornerstone, we have salvation. This is why Brother Lee in a number of instances referred to the Lord as the "Stone-Savior" (*The*

Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 406; *Life-study of Acts,* pp. 129, 133). The Lord is not only the Lamb-Savior; He is also the Stone-Savior.

Fifth, in his first Epistle Peter said, "Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen and precious, you yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it is contained in Scripture: 'Behold, I lay in Zion a cornerstone, chosen and precious; and he who believes on Him shall by no means be put to shame.' To you therefore who believe is the preciousness; but to the unbelieving, 'The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner,' and, 'A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense'; who stumble at the word, being disobedient, to which also they were appointed" (2:4-8). Christ is a living stone, and then we become living stones. This indicates that we have become Christ's duplication as living stones for God's building.

Deuteronomy 32:18 speaks of the begetting Rock, saying, "You have neglected the Rock who begot you / And have forgotten the God who travailed with you." God is the Rock that begot, or regenerated, us. God is not only our strengthening Rock and supporting Rock but also our begetting Rock.

Hence, 1 Peter 2:4-8 reveals that Christ begets us as living stones so that we can be transformed and built up as a holy priesthood for service. Thus, Christ as the cornerstone is related to our organic salvation, which includes our regeneration, our transformation, and our service in God's economy.

Sixth, Christ being the cornerstone is implied in His death, His resurrection, His ascension, His outpouring as the Spirit at Pentecost, and His second coming. Christ being the cornerstone is implied in His death because He was rejected by the Jewish builders (Psa. 118:22). Christ being the cornerstone is implied in His resurrection because verse 24 says, "This is the day that Jehovah has made; / Let us exult and rejoice in it." Here *the day* refers to the day of Christ's resurrection. Christ being the cornerstone is implied in His ascension because this stone has been laid and set in Zion. Actually, Psalm 118 does not mention Zion, but Isaiah 28:16 says, "Therefore thus says / The Lord Jehovah: / Indeed I lay a stone in Zion as a foundation, / A tested stone, / A precious cornerstone as a foundation firmly established; / He who believes will not hasten away." Zion is the highest place in the universe. This means that God chose the rejected Christ in His resurrection and in

His ascension to be the cornerstone of God's building. Christ as the cornerstone is related to Pentecost because the message Peter preached at Pentecost was about Christ as the cornerstone. Then at His second coming, Christ will be welcomed as the cornerstone. This will be the fulfillment of Matthew 23:39, which says, "You shall by no means see Me from now on until you say, Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord."

These six aspects help us to focus our attention on the significance of Christ as the cornerstone of God's building. Most of these points are also contained in the message outline, to which we now turn.

CHRIST BEING NOT ONLY THE LAMB FOR REDEMPTION; HIS BEING ALSO THE STONE FOR GOD'S BUILDING

Christ is not only the Lamb for redemption; He is also the stone for God's building (Psa. 118:22-26; Isa. 28:16; John 1:29; Acts 4:10-12). We all love Christ as the Lamb, but He is the Lamb mainly for us. Christ as the stone is mainly for God's interest. Most Christians read the Bible only for themselves; they do not read it according to God's view or with God's heart in mind. This ministry, however, opens up the Word with God's mind, God's view, and God's intention in life. This is why the ministry is full of riches. When we understand the Bible only according to what we need, all that we appreciate concerning Christ is that He is the Lamb. We may think "Oh, the Lamb of God for me, for me." However, when we approach the Word from God's viewpoint, we see that Christ is not only the Lamb but also the One that accomplishes God's economy for His building; He is the cornerstone. This is the day that the Lord has made! Let us exult and rejoice! There is a great difference between these two viewpoints.

Revelation 5:6 speaks concerning Christ as the Lamb, having seven eyes, and Zechariah 3:9 speaks concerning Christ as the stone, also having seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God (4:10). Thus, we have Christ as the Lamb and as the stone, and we should celebrate Christ not only as the Lamb but also as the stone. He is the Lion-Lamb-stone, and His being the stone is the consummate point.

In Revelation 22 we see Christ as the Lamb on the throne, but the issue of this Lamb on the throne is the building, the New Jerusalem, which is just Christ as the stone. Furthermore, this One on the throne has the appearance of a jasper stone (4:3).

IN THE BIBLE CHRIST BEING REVEALED AS AT LEAST NINE KINDS OF STONES

His Being the Eternal Rock, the Foundation Stone, the Living Stone, the Cornerstone, the Precious Stone, the Topstone, the Cleft Rock, the Crushing Stone, and the Stone of Stumbling

In the Bible Christ is revealed as at least nine kinds of stones. He is the eternal rock (Isa. 26:4; Matt. 16:18), the foundation stone (Isa. 28:16; 1 Cor. 3:11), the living stone (1 Pet. 2:4), the cornerstone (Psa. 118:22; Isa. 28:16; 1 Pet. 2:6; Acts 4:11; Eph. 2:20), the precious stone (Isa. 28:16; 1 Pet. 2:4, 6-7), the topstone (Zech. 4:7), the cleft rock (Exo. 17:6; 1 Cor. 10:4), the crushing stone (Dan. 2:34-35; Matt. 21:44b), and the stone of stumbling (Isa. 8:14; Rom. 9:33). He is the all-inclusive stone.

Christ as the cornerstone includes the thought of His being the foundation stone and the topstone. Isaiah 28:16 says, "Thus says / The Lord Jehovah: / Indeed I lay a stone in Zion as a foundation, / A tested stone, / A precious cornerstone as a foundation firmly established; / He who believes will not hasten away." Here the cornerstone is a foundation firmly established. Furthermore, Psalm 118:22 says, "The stone which the builders rejected / Has become the head of the corner." The Hebrew word *ro'sh* translated "head" in this verse is the same word in feminine form translated "topstone" in Zechariah 4:7, where it says that the topstone will be brought forth with shouts of "Grace, grace to it." In other words, the cornerstone is a foundation, and the stone which became the head of the corner is the topstone. In this sense, the cornerstone is everything; it includes the foundation stone and the topstone. Hallelujah for the cornerstone!

Our Needing to Experience Christ as a Stone in All Positive Aspects; If We Experience Him in These Aspects, Our Having a Complete Building—a Building That Is Actually Christ Himself

We need to experience Christ as a stone in all positive aspects; if we experience Him in these aspects, we will have a complete building—a building that is actually Christ Himself (1 Pet. 2:4-5, 7). In Message 1 we saw at least ten items of what Christ is as a rock. He is the rock in whom we take refuge (Psa. 18:2); the blessed rock (v. 46); a rock of protection (31:2); the rock that is higher than we are (61:2); the unique rock (62:2, 6); the rock of strength (v. 7); a rock of habitation (71:3); an unfailing rock (73:26); the rock of salvation (89:26; 95:1); and the high-tower rock (94:22). Christ as the rock in all these aspects is for our experience. As a rock, He is our refuge, protection, habitation, and salvation; He is a rock for us to receive blessing. He is the higher One, the unique One, and the strengthening One to us; and He is our high tower. We need to experience Christ as a stone in all these positive aspects.

IN PSALM 118:22-26 CHRIST BEING REVEALED AS THE CORNERSTONE

The Stone Which the Builders Rejected Having Become the Head of the Corner, the Chief Cornerstone

This Stone Being Christ, Who Is for God's Building

In Psalm 118:22-26 Christ is revealed as the cornerstone. Verse 22 says, "The stone which the builders rejected / Has become the head of the corner," the chief cornerstone (Matt. 21:42). This stone is Christ, who is for God's building (Isa. 28:16; Zech. 3:9). Christ as the stone for God's building must be the preeminent One. For this reason, He died, rose, and ascended to the throne.

The Builders Being the Jewish Leaders, Who Should Have Been Working on God's Building

The builders are the Jewish leaders, who should have been working on God's building (Matt. 21:42). Although the Jewish leaders were builders, they were not working on God's building. They were working on another building.

When the Jewish Builders Rejected Christ, Their Rejecting Him as the Cornerstone, the One Who Would Join the Gentiles to Them into a Holy Temple in the Lord

When the Jewish builders rejected Christ, they rejected Him as the cornerstone, the One who would join the Gentiles to them into a holy temple in the Lord (Eph. 2:20-22). The Jewish leaders threw out this stone, Christ, because He did not fit into their program or their system.

They rejected Him as the cornerstone, the One who would join the Gentiles with them into a holy temple in the Lord as the goal, the consummate point of Ephesians 2.

In Ephesians 2:20 Our Seeing Christ as the Cornerstone That Joins Together the Two Walls, One Wall Being the Jewish Believers, and the Other, the Gentile Believers

In Ephesians 2:20 we see Christ as the cornerstone that joins together the two walls, one wall being the Jewish believers, and the other, the Gentile believers. Christ as the cornerstone is the joining factor between the two walls—the Jewish wall and the Gentile wall. Without Christ we Gentiles could never be one with the Jews, and the Jews could never be one with us. Actually, this oneness includes not only the Jewish people but also the entire Jewish culture and, by extension, the entire Old Testament economy. Christ is the One that joins these two peoples, cultures, economies, and ministries. He joins the ministry of Peter, which was to the Jews, to that of Paul's, which was to the Gentiles. Christ is the joining factor, the blending factor, and the building factor of all the ministries, races, peoples, and cultures for the accomplishment of God's economy.

In *The Vision and Experience of the Corporate Christ* Brother Lee says,

> The Jewish believers and the Gentile believers represent different walls in God's building, and Christ stands as the connecting cornerstone. The foundation stone lies horizontally to support the whole building, and the cornerstone stands vertically to connect the walls of the building. In Zechariah 4:7 Christ is also revealed as the topstone to cover God's building. The foundation stone supports the building, the cornerstone connects the building, and the topstone completes the building. Christ is the foundation stone, the cornerstone, and the topstone of God's building, and we are precious stones to be built into this building. (p. 49)

As the foundation stone Christ extends horizontally, as the cornerstone He extends vertically, and as the topstone He caps everything. Thus, we have no place in God's building of ourselves; we have a place in God's building only by virtue of our being in Him. In other words, we have our place in Him.

Our Christ is all-inclusive in God's building. In the past we may have considered that Christ as the cornerstone only joins the Jews and the Gentiles. However, this thought is incomplete. Christ as the cornerstone includes more, for He is the universal blending factor, building factor, and propagating factor.

Christ as the Cornerstone Being for the Building Up of the Church in the New Testament Age

Christ as the cornerstone is for the building up of the church in the New Testament age (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Pet. 2:5). First, Christ as the cornerstone implies His accomplishments, including His death, resurrection, and ascension. As the cornerstone, He is the preeminent One who heads up all things. It is because Christ needs to be the cornerstone that He accomplished all that He did. Second, our identification with Christ as the cornerstone implies that we are identified with Him in His death, in His resurrection, and in being His masterpiece. Third, Christ as the cornerstone implies His organic salvation. Fourth, Christ as the cornerstone implies blending—the blending of the Jews and the Gentiles, that is, the blending of two peoples with two cultures and two economies. Fifth, Christ as the cornerstone implies His centrality in God's economy.

For the Building Up of the Church as the Temple of God, Our Needing to Experience Christ as the Cornerstone

For the building up of the church as the temple of God, we need to experience Christ as the cornerstone (vv. 6-7).

To God, Christ as the Cornerstone Being Precious, and to Us His Being the Preciousness

To God, Christ as the cornerstone is precious, and to us He is the preciousness (Matt. 21:42; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:4, 6-7). After considering all the items of what Christ is as the cornerstone, we should have the sense that Christ as the cornerstone is more precious to us and that He is even our preciousness. Of course, if we are building up our own

career, then Christ as the cornerstone will not fit into our scheme. But if we are for God's building, then Christ will be preciousness itself to us.

In Christ, the Cornerstone,
All the Building, Including Both
the Jewish and the Gentile Believers,
Growing into a Holy Temple in the Lord

In Christ, the cornerstone, all the building, including both the Jewish and the Gentile believers, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord (Eph. 2:20-22). In Romans 15, when Paul began to speak regarding the Jewish and Gentile believers being joined as one and glorifying God with one mouth, he was greatly uplifted, so he declared, quoting Deuteronomy 32:43, "Rejoice, Gentiles, with His people" (Rom. 15:10). That was his celebrating Christ as the cornerstone joining all the people together. The gospel is that in Christ as the cornerstone salvation is made available to all people so that whoever calls on Him shall be saved. When we go out to preach the gospel, we need to preach this gospel. This is the gospel that Peter preached in Acts 4.

I wish to emphasize that in Christ as the cornerstone, all the building is *growing*. God's building is not a static building; it is a growing building. As we preach the gospel, more people become living stones joined organically to the building so that the building grows. However, no matter how much the building grows, Christ will continue forever as the cornerstone.

"This Is the Day That Jehovah Has Made; Let Us Exult and Rejoice in It"

Psalm 118:24 says, "This is the day that Jehovah has made; / Let us exult and rejoice in it." *The day that Jehovah has made* is the Lord's Day. All the young people and new believers need to see that as Christians, we celebrate one day out of the week. That day is not a kind of Christian Sabbath but "the Lord's Day" (Rev. 1:10; John 20:1; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2). It is a mandate of God that we set aside one day of the week to remember Christ as the cornerstone, the One who was rejected by the builders but chosen by God a second time. He is the resurrected and ascended One who has been enthroned in Zion. This day, the Lord's Day, is the day that the Lord has made. Let us exult and rejoice!

Ignoring the Lord's Day is as significant as annulling the Sabbath in the Old Testament. As New Testament believers, we do not celebrate the Old Testament Sabbath. To the Jews, we are breaking the fourth commandment, which is to remember the Sabbath day so as to sanctify it (Exo. 20:8). It was a great matter not to keep the Sabbath because God instituted the Sabbath so that man would have one day out of seven for rest. Today, however, God has a much more significant day, and that day is the day of the Lord's resurrection as the cornerstone. This is the day that the Lord has made.

Now that we know how important the Lord's Day is, we should not sleep in on the Lord's Day because it is not our day; it is His day. Some people say that "Sunday" was instituted by Christianity. However, they are wrong; the Lord's Day was instituted by Jehovah in Psalm 118. Long before Christ was born, Jehovah set apart this day. On the Lord's Day we should come to the meetings and rejoice with God's people.

We should rejoice not only for two hours and afterwards return to do our own things. Some consider that the Lord's Day is a day for their family. No, this day is for the Lord. In whatever we do on this day, we should remember the Lord. We may go out and spend some time with our family, but we should do so in a way of exulting and rejoicing in the Lord. We may also rest in our home from the work-week, but our resting on this day should not be for ourselves. The Lord's Day is for exulting and rejoicing in the Lord. Thus, we need to sanctify the Lord's Day.

In *Messages for Building Up New Believers*, there is a chapter entitled "The Lord's Day." In this chapter Brother Nee says,

> We have to mark out the Lord's Day as a special day in our life. At least the first day of the week is marked out for the Lord. This day is not our day; this day is the Lord's day. This time is not ours; this time is the Lord's. Our business is for the Lord. Our rest is also for the Lord. Whether or not we do this or that, we are for the Lord. There is no flavor of the Sabbath here. This is the day that we consecrate to the Lord. This is the meaning of the Lord's Day.
>
> John put it well when he said, "I was in spirit on the Lord's Day" (Rev. 1:10). We hope many of us can say, "I was in spirit on the Lord's Day." We hope that this is the day that the church is in spirit and the day that we are blessed. We hope that new brothers and sisters will pay attention to the Lord's Day from the very beginning. Consecrate the

> first day of the week to the Lord and say to Him, "This is Your day." If we do this from our youth, we will be able to say after seventy years that we have given ten years fully to the Lord. This is a great blessing to the church. "O Lord! I consecrate all my time on this day to You. I come to break the bread with gladness and joy in remembrance of You. I bring all that I have before You, and I consecrate it all to You." If we do this, we will see God's blessing being showered abundantly upon the church. (vol. 1, pp. 222-223)

How wonderful it would be if after seventy years, we could testify that out of all our years, we have separated ten years unto the Lord. We should make a great resolution in our heart to give that day to the Lord.

Recently, a brother had some fellowship with me regarding the positive situation of the church life in his locality. He said that in the church where he meets, the Lord's Day does not last only two hours. He described the situation, saying that when they come together on the Lord's Day, they begin by celebrating and then have the Lord's table. After the Lord's table, they eat together. Since many do not desire to leave after the meal, some will begin playing the guitar and singing to the Lord, others will have fellowship in the kitchen as they cook something, and yet another group will read something together. Thus, they all greatly enjoy the Lord. At about four o'clock in the afternoon, they go out to knock on doors to preach the gospel and return around dinnertime. Then they cook together, have their supper, and sing some more songs. Eventually, by the time they are finished and about to break up, it is nine o'clock in the evening. In this way the saints in that locality are able to separate the entire day to the Lord.

In some other places, when we have asked them to separate the Lord's Day evening for the Lord, some have immediately pointed out that they already give two hours for the Lord on the Lord's Day morning. They may think that they are doing the Lord a favor by giving Him two hours; actually, they do not realize that the whole day should be for the Lord. What we mean by giving the entire day to the Lord is that whatever we do on the Lord's Day, we should have an inward sense, "O Lord, this is Your day. Whether I go out and hike with my family or remain home to read my Life-study messages, I want to sanctify this day to You." This is the day that the Lord has made. I hope that we would make a resolution to sanctify the entire day to the Lord, not merely two hours on the Lord's Day morning.

This Day Being the Day of Christ's Resurrection; on the Day of His Resurrection the Lord Jesus Being Made the Cornerstone by God

This day is the day of Christ's resurrection; on the day of His resurrection the Lord Jesus was made the cornerstone by God (Acts 4:10-12).

Christ Being Chosen by God in Eternity Past to Be the Cornerstone for God's Spiritual Building

Christ was chosen by God in eternity past to be the cornerstone for God's spiritual building (1 Pet. 1:20; 2:4). God's choosing of Christ in eternity was His first time to choose Christ. However, there was another choosing: when Christ was resurrected, He was chosen to be the Head of the corner.

However, the Jewish Leaders as the Builders Rejecting Christ to the Uttermost, to Such an Extent That They Put Him on the Cross

However, the Jewish leaders as the builders rejected Christ to the uttermost, to such an extent that they put Him on the cross (Matt. 21:38-42a). God chose Christ, but the Jewish leaders did not choose Him. Rather, they rejected Him. In Luke 23:35 the rulers of the Jews ridiculed the Lord on the cross. They sneered, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, the Chosen One!" In other words, they were saying, "He is not the chosen One. He is the rejected One. If He is the Messiah, the chosen One, let Him save Himself."

God Choosing Christ as the Cornerstone a Second Time in Christ's Resurrection, Thereby Confirming His Initial Choosing of Christ in Eternity Past

God chose Christ as the cornerstone a second time in Christ's resurrection, thereby confirming His initial choosing of Christ in eternity past (Acts 4:10-12). God chose Christ the first time in eternity past

before the foundation of the earth and the second time in His resurrection, thereby confirming His initial choosing of Christ in eternity past.

After God Resurrected Christ, God Uplifting Him to the Heavens in His Ascension

After God resurrected Christ, God uplifted Him to the heavens in His ascension (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9). Isaiah 28:16 says that He, as the cornerstone, was set in Zion.

Christ's Ascension to Zion in the Heavens Being a Further Confirmation That God Had Chosen Him to Be the Cornerstone

Christ's ascension to Zion in the heavens was a further confirmation that God had chosen Him to be the cornerstone (Rev. 14:1; Isa. 28:16; 1 Pet. 2:6). Thus, Christ was chosen at resurrection and confirmed in ascension.

Both Christ's Resurrection and Ascension Proving and Confirming His Being the Head of the Corner for God's Building

Both Christ's resurrection and ascension prove and confirm that He is the head of the corner for God's building (Acts 2:24, 32, 36). Something great happened at the time of Christ's resurrection and ascension; God made the declaration, "I have chosen this One. I have chosen Him for God's building."

As the All-inclusive Stone, Christ Being the Centrality of God's Move for the Building Up of His Eternal Habitation

As the all-inclusive stone, Christ is the centrality of God's move for the building up of His eternal habitation (Matt. 21:42, 44; Zech. 3:9; 4:7; cf. Rev. 5:6; Acts 4:10-12; Isa. 28:16; Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Pet. 2:4-8; Dan. 2:34-35; Rev. 21:11; cf. 4:3). There are at least six steps of God's move related to Christ being the cornerstone: first, God's move in terminating the Old Testament economy; second, His move in bringing in the New Testament economy; third, His move for the building of His habitation; fourth, Christ's move as the stone with seven eyes for God's final move on earth; fifth, Christ's move as the smiting stone to bring in the kingdom of God; and sixth, Christ's move as the consummating jasper stone in the New Jerusalem. In all these steps of God's move, Christ takes the central place. He is the centrality of God's move as the all-inclusive stone.

Everything Christ Is, Everything He Has Done, and Everything He Is Doing Being Due to the Fact That He Is the Cornerstone

Everything Christ is, everything He has done, and everything He is doing are due to the fact that He is the cornerstone (Eph. 2:20; 4:15-16). Everything that Christ has done, including His death, resurrection, and ascension, is due to the fact that He is the cornerstone. Christ had to be the testimony, the precious One, the cornerstone, laid as a firmly established foundation; otherwise, God's building would be shaken. Thus, He had to die, resurrect, ascend, and secure all that He obtained and attained to so that He could be the cornerstone.

It Is by His Being the Cornerstone That He Could Die for Us, That We Could Be Crucified with Him, Made Alive with Him, Resurrected with Him, and Seated with Him in the Heavenlies, and That He Could Save Us, Transform Us into Precious Stones, and Build Us Together to Be God's Habitation, God's Unique Temple in the Universe

It is by His being the cornerstone that He could die for us, that we could be crucified with Him, made alive with Him, resurrected with Him, and seated with Him in the heavenlies, and that He could save us, transform us into precious stones, and build us together to be God's habitation, God's unique temple in the universe (Gal. 2:20; Eph. 2:5-6, 20-22).

In God's New Testament Economy Christ as the Cornerstone, in His Saving Us, First Making Us Living Stones for the Building Up of God's Spiritual House and Then, in the Process of His Transforming Us, Building Us Up into a Dwelling Place of God So That He May Carry Out God's Eternal Economy for God's Good Pleasure

In God's New Testament economy Christ as the cornerstone, in His saving us (Acts 4:10-12), first makes us living stones for the building up of God's spiritual house (Matt. 16:18; John 1:42; 1 Pet. 2:4-7) and then, in the process of His transforming us (Rom. 12:2a; 2 Cor. 3:18), builds us up into a dwelling place of God (Eph. 2:19-22) so that He may carry

out God's eternal economy for God's good pleasure (1:9; 3:9-11). When we help the new ones, first we preach the gospel to them, and then we help them to come to the Lord as living stones to drink of the milk of the word. As they drink of the milk of the word, they are gradually built up into the vital groups, where they are gradually transformed. As they are being built up, they receive the feeding from the word and become related. In this way they can become the priesthood to serve the Lord by telling forth the virtues of Christ. This is what we do in preaching the gospel, feeding the new ones, teaching them, and building them up. This is begetting, nourishing, teaching or perfecting, and building. This is revealed in 1 Peter 2, and this is the God-ordained way. In a real sense, to take Christ as the cornerstone is to practice the God-ordained way.

Prosperity in Psalm 118:25 Typifying Not Material Prosperity but the Heavenly, Spiritual, and Divine Blessings Given to Us by the Triune God, as Described in Ephesians 1:3-14, Which Come to Us by Christ's Being the Cornerstone

Prosperity in Psalm 118:25 typifies not material prosperity but the heavenly, spiritual, and divine blessings given to us by the Triune God, as described in Ephesians 1:3-14, which come to us by Christ's being the cornerstone. If Christ were not the cornerstone, there would be no gospel, no well speaking, and no blessing from heavenly places. It is because Christ is the cornerstone that Jehovah can bless us out of Zion and that we can receive salvation. This why Psalm 118:25 says, "O Jehovah, do save, we pray! / O Jehovah, do send prosperity, we pray!" God has blessed us from the heavenly places with all spiritual blessings.

THE WHOLE BOOK OF MATTHEW BEING FOR THE PURPOSE THAT CHRIST WOULD BE THE CORNERSTONE FOR THE BUILDING UP OF GOD'S HOUSE

The whole book of Matthew is for the purpose that Christ would be the cornerstone for the building up of God's house (21:42; 1:21, 23; 2:2, 23; 3:17; 4:16; 12:6, 41-42; 16:16, 18, 27-28; 17:1-2, 5; 25:6). The Lord came to Jerusalem the first time as the cornerstone and the stumbling stone, and He was rejected by the Jews. He will come to Jerusalem again as the smiting stone, but this time they will say, "Blessed is He

who comes in the name of the Lord!" (21:9). They will also declare "Hosanna" to Him as the King, but this time He will not be coming in on a donkey but in glory to take possession of the whole earth.

The Lord Jesus Coming Not Merely to Be the Redeemer but to Be the Cornerstone for God's Building

The Lord Jesus came not merely to be the Redeemer but to be the cornerstone for God's building (1:21; 21:42). The Lord did not come to Jerusalem merely as the Lamb, the Redeemer; He came announcing Himself as the cornerstone for God's building. When He quoted Psalm 118 in Matthew 21, the Lord Jesus added two additional items. Psalm 118:22 says, "The stone which the builders rejected / Has become the head of the corner." However, after quoting this verse in Matthew 21, the Lord added some commentary, saying, "He who falls on this stone shall be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it shall crush him to powder and scatter him like chaff" (v. 44).

In this one word, the Lord applied the stone to three types of people. To the believers, Christ is the cornerstone (Isa. 28:16); to the unbelieving Jews, He is the stone of stumbling (8:14; Rom. 9:33); and to the Gentiles, He will be the smiting stone (Dan. 2:34-35). The stone cut out without hands in Daniel 2 smites the human image, the totality of human government, and becomes a great mountain to fill the whole earth. This is the consummation of Christ in the Psalms. In the following messages we will see that the consummation of Zion, and the consummation of the Psalms, is praises to Christ for gaining the whole earth. We are in the stage of consummation.

The Lord Saying That He Would Build His Church, but the Religious Ones Rejecting Him as the Cornerstone for God's Building, and Thus Their Being Unable To Be a Part of the Building of God

The Lord said that He would build His church, but the religious ones rejected Him as the cornerstone for God's building, and thus they could not be a part of the building of God (Matt. 16:18; 21:42). If we are not for the building of God, Christ will not fit into our building project, no matter what it may be. But if we are for the building of God, Christ will fit in perfectly.

As Revealed in the Gospel of Matthew, the Father's Will Being to Build Up the Church with Christ as the Rock and the Cornerstone

The Desire of God's Heart Being to Have a Dwelling Place on Earth Constituted with Christ and according to Christ

As revealed in the Gospel of Matthew, the Father's will is to build up the church with Christ as the rock and the cornerstone (6:10; 7:21; 12:50). The desire of God's heart is to have a dwelling place on earth constituted with Christ and according to Christ (Eph. 1:5, 9; 2:20-22).

The Lord's Word About "a City Situated upon a Mountain" Indicating That God's Intention Is the Building

The Lord's word about "a city situated upon a mountain" indicates that God's intention is the building (Matt. 5:14). In Matthew 16:18 the Lord said to Peter, "You are Peter [a stone], and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." This is the line of building throughout the book of Matthew. When the Lord came to Jerusalem, He came as the stone, the building stone. Thus, He spoke first the parable of the vineyard, where He was essentially saying, "You builders should be building God's house, but instead you have rejected the stone." The Lord then quoted Psalm 118 as an explanation of that parable. Immediately after this, He spoke another parable, the parable of the gospel feast. Thus, in sequence, Christ presented Himself as the stone and then as the gospel feast. Christ first became the stone, and then as the stone He became the Savior. He is the Stone-Savior, and there is no other name in which there is salvation.

This Shining Light Not Being an Individual Believer; the Light Being a Corporate City Built Up as One Entity to Shine over the People Surrounding It

This shining light is not an individual believer; the light is a corporate city built up as one entity to shine over the people surrounding it (Rev. 21:23-24a).

In Order to Be a Shining City, Our Needing To Keep the Oneness and Be Built Up as the Church, the Body of Christ, in Christ as the Cornerstone

In order to be a shining city, we must keep the oneness and be built up as the church, the Body of Christ, in Christ as the cornerstone (Matt. 16:18; 21:42; Eph. 4:1-6; 5:8-9). I am glad that we are in God's building in His economy. We are not only a part of His first work of creation as created beings but also a part of His second work, having been regenerated and being built up as part of God's building to consummate in the New Jerusalem.

"BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF JEHOVAH; WE BLESS YOU FROM THE HOUSE OF JEHOVAH"

Psalms 118:26 says, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of Jehovah; / We bless you from the house of Jehovah." The earth will hear this speaking. This was the Lord's last word to the Jews. In Matthew 23:38 and 39 the Lord said to them, "Behold, your house is left to you desolate. For I say to you, You shall by no means see Me from now on until you say, Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." After that word, He began to speak to His disciples the prophecies in Matthew 24 and 25.

The First Time That Christ Came in the Name of Jehovah Being Mentioned in Matthew; However, His Being Rejected by the Jewish Builders

The first time that Christ came in the name of Jehovah is mentioned in Matthew; however, He was rejected by the Jewish builders (21:5-11, 42). Christ was rejected by the Jewish builders in His first coming, but He will not be rejected in His second coming. When He comes the second time, they will say, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!"

When the Lord Jesus Comes the Second Time, the Jews Again Welcoming Him Warmly with These Words; This Being the Time When All the Remnant of Israel Will Turn and Believe in Him and Be Saved

When the Lord Jesus comes the second time, the Jews will again welcome Him warmly with these words; this is the time when all the remnant of Israel will turn and believe in Him and be saved (23:39;

Rom. 11:23, 26; Zech. 12:10). The Jews will *again* welcome Christ. His first welcome was in Psalm 118, but He was then rejected by the Jewish builders. The second time the Jews will welcome Christ warmly with these words when all the remnant of Israel will turn and believe in Him and be saved (Zech. 12:10). Before that time comes, every Lord's Day we celebrate the Lord's victory in His being resurrected and ascended as the stone set in Zion. "This is the day that the Lord has made; let us exult and rejoice in it!" (Psa. 118:24). Hallelujah for Christ as the cornerstone!—A. Y.

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OF THE PSALMS (2)

The Functions and Blessings of God's Law as His Living Word to His Loving Seekers (Message 8)

Scripture Reading: Psa. 119

I. In Psalm 119 Christ is the reality of the law:
   A. Christ is the reality of the law as the testimony of God, the expression of God; the testimony of God signifies Christ, the embodiment of God (Col. 2:9), as the living portrait of what God is.
   B. Christ is the reality of the law as the word of God, signifying Christ as the living Word of God breathed out by Him—Rev. 19:13b; 2 Tim. 3:16-17:
      1. The written words are the letters, but the living Word is the Spirit, who is the reality of the letters—John 6:63; Eph. 6:17.
      2. The law is the person of Christ, and the person of Christ is the Spirit—1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17.
      3. The Spirit is the reality of whatever God is (John 16:13; 1 John 5:6); hence, as the Spirit, Christ is the reality of the law.

II. There are two aspects of the law—the aspect of the letter and the aspect of the Spirit as the reality of God's blessings—2 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 1:3:
   A. If our attitude in coming to the law is to care for the commandments in letters, we will have the law in the aspect of the killing letter.
   B. However, if we take every part of the law—all the commandments, ordinances, statutes, precepts, and judgments—as the word breathed out by the God whom we love, we will have the law in the aspect of the life-giving Spirit.

III. There are two aspects of the function of the law:

A. The law has a negative aspect:
   1. As God's commandments, the law exposes man's sin and subdues sinners before God—Rom. 7:7b; 3:19-20; 5:20a; 4:15b.
   2. As God's regulations with statutes, ordinances, and rituals, the law functioned to guard God's chosen people in its custody that they might be conducted to Christ—Gal. 3:23-24.

B. The law has a positive aspect:
   1. As God's living word, the law functions to minister the living God to His seekers—Psa. 119:2, 88.
   2. As God's living word, the law functions to dispense God Himself as life and light into those who love the law—vv. 25, 50, 107, 116, 130, 154.
   3. As God's living word, the law functions to restore man's soul and make man's heart joyous—19:7-8.
   4. As God's living word, the law functions to bring us salvation—119:41, 170.
   5. As God's living word, the law functions to strengthen (v. 28), comfort (v. 76), and nourish us (v. 103).
   6. As God's living word, the law functions to uphold us, keep us safe, and cause us to hope—vv. 116-117, 49.
   7. As God's living word, the law causes us to enjoy God as our portion—v. 57.
   8. As God's living word, the law causes us to enjoy God's countenance (v. 58) and the shining of His face (v. 135).
   9. As God's living word, the law causes us to enjoy God as our hiding place and shield (v. 114) and also enjoy God's help and well-dealing (vv. 175, 65).
   10. As God's living word, the law functions to make us wise and give us understanding—vv. 98-99.
   11. As God's living word, the law functions to give us proper discernment and knowledge—v. 66.
   12. As God's living word, the law functions to keep us from sinning and from every evil way—vv. 11, 101.
   13. As God's living word, the law keeps us from stumbling (v. 165), establishes our footsteps, and causes us to overcome iniquity (v. 133).

C. Whether in our experience the law is positive or negative depends on the condition of our heart in receiving the law:
   1. If we love God, humble ourselves, and regard the law as His living word through which we contact Him and abide in Him, the law will become a channel through which the divine life and substance are conveyed to us for our supply and nourishment; being infused with God's substance through the law as God's word, we will become one with God in life, nature, and expression and will spontaneously live a life that expresses God and corresponds to His law—Rom. 8:4; Phil. 1:21a.
   2. However, if in coming to the law we do not seek God in love but rather separate the law from the living God as the source of life, the law, which was intended to result in life but cannot give life of itself, will become a condemning and killing element to us—Exo. 19:8; John 5:39-40; Rom. 7:10-11; Gal. 3:21; 2 Cor. 3:6-7, 9; cf. Exo. 23:19b and footnote 2.

IV. There are two kinds of people in relation to the law:
   A. The first kind is the letter-keepers, illustrated by the Judaizers and Saul of Tarsus—Phil. 3:6b, 2.
   B. The second kind is the God-seekers, illustrated by the psalmists, especially by the writer of Psalm 119, and by the apostle Paul—2 Cor. 3:6:
      1. They seek God with all their heart—Psa. 119:2.
      2. They love God's name and remember it—vv. 132, 55.
      3. They entreat God's face—v. 58.
      4. They ask for God's face to shine on them—v. 135.
      5. They walk in God's presence—v. 168.
      6. They consider God's law to be God's word—vv. 17-18, 28-29.
      7. God's word is sweeter than honey to their mouth—v. 103.
      8. God's word is more precious than fine gold to them—v. 127.
      9. God's word is a lamp to their feet and a light to their path—vv. 105, 130.

V. Psalm 119 expresses the attitude of God's loving seekers toward God's law as His living word:
   A. They choose God's word—vv. 30, 173.

B. They believe God's word—v. 66.
C. They lift up their hand to God's word, indicating that they receive the word of God warmly and gladly and say Amen to it—v. 48a; Neh. 8:5-6.
D. They love God's word—Psa. 119:47-48, 97, 113, 119, 127, 140, 159, 163, 165, 167.
E. They delight in God's word—vv. 16, 24, 35, 47, 70, 77, 92, 174.
F. They taste God's word—v. 103.
G. They rejoice in God's word—vv. 14, 111, 162.
H. They sing God's word—v. 54.
I. They regard God's word—vv. 6, 117.
J. They have a perfect heart in God's word—v. 80.
K. They incline their heart to God's word—vv. 36, 112.
L. They seek God's word (vv. 45, 94), long for it (vv. 20, 40, 131), and hope in it with prayer (vv. 43, 74, 114, 147).
M. They trust in God's word—v. 42.
N. They muse on God's word—vv. 15, 23, 48, 78, 99, 148:
    1. Rich in meaning, the Hebrew word for *muse* implies to worship, to converse with oneself, and to speak aloud; to muse on the word is to taste and enjoy it through careful considering.
    2. Prayer, speaking to oneself, and praising the Lord may also be included in musing on the word; to muse on the word of God is to enjoy His word as His breath (2 Tim. 3:16) and thus to be infused with God, to breathe God in, and to receive spiritual nourishment.
O. They consider God's word—Psa. 119:95b.
P. They esteem God's word to be right in all things—v. 128a.
Q. They learn God's word—vv. 73, 71.
R. They treasure God's word—vv. 14, 162, 72, 127, 111.
S. They treasure up God's word in their heart—v. 11.
T. They remember God's word and do not forget it—vv. 52, 16b, 93.
U. They stand in awe of God's word—vv. 161b, 120.
V. They cling to God's word—v. 31.
W. They do not forsake God's word, do not swerve from it, do not turn aside from it, and do not stray from it—vv. 87, 51, 157, 102, 110.
X. They turn their feet toward God's word—v. 59.

Y. They keep, observe, and do God's word—vv. 33, 69.
Z. They walk in God's word and run the way of God's word—vv. 1, 32a.

MESSAGE EIGHT

THE FUNCTIONS AND BLESSINGS OF GOD'S LAW AS HIS LIVING WORD TO HIS LOVING SEEKERS

In this message we come to Psalm 119, which consists of a hundred seventy-six verses and is the longest of all the psalms. Paul exhorted Timothy to "attend to the public reading" of the Scriptures (1 Tim. 4:13). In this message we will do the same, reading through many of the verses from Psalm 119, while also examining some particular matters that will be quite valuable to us for our future in the Lord.

Psalm 119 is composed of twenty-two sections of eight verses each. Twenty-two times eight gives us the one hundred and seventy-six verses in this psalm. Each of the twenty-two sections of this psalm is designated by one of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, in order. Furthermore, the first word in each verse within a particular section begins with that section's corresponding Hebrew letter. Thus, Psalm 119 is truly a masterpiece of divine and mystical poetry.

This psalm reveals that Christ is the reality of the law as God's living word to infuse His living substance into His loving seekers. Surely, we desire to be Christ's loving seekers, and we all want to know Christ as the reality of the law and as God's living word so that He may infuse His living substance into us. This is the thought conveyed in the twenty-two sections of Psalm 119.

There is another place in the Scriptures that involves the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet—Exodus 28. This chapter describes the breastplate of the high priest, which had twelve stones arranged on it in four rows of three, inscribed with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. Because the names of the twelve tribes of Israel contain only eighteen of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, something called the Thummim, containing the remaining four letters, was added to the breastplate. The word *Thummim* means "completers" or "perfecters," signifying Christ as our Completer and Perfecter. Thus, the addition of the Thummim to the twelve stones engraved with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel enabled all twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet to

be represented on the breastplate of the high priest. Another thing that was included with the breastplate was the Urim; *Urim* means "lights" or "illuminators." The Urim was an illuminator that was inserted into the breastplate under the twelve stones. It had the capacity to contain oil for burning, and the fire used to burn the oil came from the altar. By the shining of the Urim on the precious stones of the breastplate, the full alphabet of twenty-two letters could be used to spell out words and sentences. Thus, when the high priest entered into the Holy of Holies, the breastplate functioned as a divine and mystical typewriter for God to speak to His people.

When the high priest entered into the Holy of Holies, he entered with all twelve tribes of the children of Israel on his breast. Too many times, we enter the Holy of Holies with only ourselves on our breast. The high priest, however, bore all twelve tribes of the children of Israel. Of course, this is a picture of Christ as our great High Priest, but we should also apply this picture to ourselves. In our oneness with Christ, we need to enter into the Holy of Holies with all the saints on our heart of love. Furthermore, we need to intercede for the saints and "read" them, just as the high priest would read the breastplate. We need to read the saints, who are signified by the twelve stones. Then we need to come out of the Holy of Holies with a living message for God's people to meet their need. That living message may be some concrete direction that we feel to give to someone, or it may be a particular leading or some practical fellowship that we have for someone. But whatever we share with that person or persons must be the living word of God and must infuse God's living substance into the loving seekers for whom we are caring. This is what is revealed in Psalm 119 with its twenty-two sections, which correspond to the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet as seen in the function of the breastplate with the Urim and the Thummim. To repeat, when we enter into the Holy of Holies, we need to read the breastplate with the Urim and the Thummim. Then we need to come out with God's living word infused into our being so that we can infuse His living word with His living substance into His loving seekers in order to make them Zion, the reality of the Body of Christ, the body of overcomers, to be His prepared bride to bring Him back.

Psalm 119 shows us Christ as the reality of the law; He is God's living Word to infuse His living substance into His loving seekers. Regarding the law, footnote 1 on Exodus 20:1 says,

The law of God is God's word (in 34:28 the Ten Commandments, the main contents of the law, are called "the ten words"— see footnote there). As such, the law is God's testimony (16:34; 31:18; 32:15; 40:20; Psa. 19:7), God's expression, a revelation of God to His people (see footnote 2 on John 1:1 and footnote 1, paragraph 1, on Heb. 1:1). The law of God reveals God's attributes, showing that He is jealous (Exo. 20:4-6; cf. 2 Cor. 11:2), holy (Exo. 20:7-11), loving (vv. 6, 12-15; cf. Rom. 13:8-10; Gal. 5:14), righteous (Exo. 20:5), truthful (v. 16; cf. 1 John 1:5-6), and pure (Exo. 20:2-3; 17). As the word of God and the testimony, the expression, of God, the law is a type of Christ as God's Word and God's testimony, God's expression (John 1:1, 18; Rev. 19:13; 1:5; Col. 1:15).

The reality of keeping the law is to live God and express God. Such a living, a living in the eternal economy of God, is the living of a God-man, a life of continually denying the self and being crucified to live Christ, who is God's testimony, by the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ for the enlarged and expanded expression of God.

Thus, the law is God's testimony, and Christ is God's living testimony. Thus, not only is the law a type of Christ, but Christ is the reality of the law. The law is called the testimony, implying that it is the portrait of God. Similarly, Christ is the living portrait of what God is. For this reason, when the law, God's testimony, was put into the Ark, the Ark was called "the Ark of the Testimony," and when the Ark was put into the tabernacle, the tabernacle was called "the Tabernacle of the Testimony" (Exo. 25:22; 26:33-34; 38:21).

IN PSALM 119 CHRIST BEING THE REALITY OF THE LAW

Christ Being the Reality of the Law as the Testimony of God, the Expression of God; the Testimony of God Signifying Christ, the Embodiment of God, as the Living Portrait of What God Is

In Psalm 119 Christ is the reality of the law. Christ is the reality of the law as the testimony of God, the expression of God; the testimony of God signifies Christ, the embodiment of God (Col. 2:9), as the living portrait of what God is. Christ is the living portrait of what God is; He is the testimony of God, just as the law is the testimony of God.

Christ Being the Reality of the Law as the Word of God, Signifying Christ as the Living Word of God Breathed Out by Him

Christ is the reality of the law as the word of God, signifying Christ as the living Word of God breathed out by Him (Rev. 19:13b; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). As we pointed out earlier, the Ten Commandments are "the ten words." Hence, Christ is the reality of the law as the word of God, signifying Christ as the living Word of God breathed out by Him.

The Written Words Being the Letters, but the Living Word Being the Spirit, Who Is the Reality of the Letters

The written words are the letters, but the living Word is the Spirit, who is the reality of the letters (John 6:63; Eph. 6:17). Praise the Lord for the Spirit, who is the reality of the letters!

The Law Being the Person of Christ, and the Person of Christ Being the Spirit

The law is the person of Christ, and the person of Christ is the Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17).

The Spirit Being the Reality of Whatever God Is; Hence, as the Spirit, Christ Being the Reality of the Law

The Spirit is the reality of whatever God is (John 16:13; 1 John 5:6); hence, as the Spirit, Christ is the reality of the law. John 16:13 says, "When He, the Spirit of reality, comes, He will guide you into all the reality." The Spirit will guide us into all that Christ is as the living portrait of what God is.

THERE BEING TWO ASPECTS OF THE LAW— THE ASPECT OF THE LETTER AND THE ASPECT OF THE SPIRIT AS THE REALITY OF GOD'S BLESSINGS

There are two aspects of the law—the aspect of the letter and the aspect of the Spirit as the reality of God's blessings (2 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 1:3). Second Corinthians 3:6 says, "Who has also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, ministers not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." The Spirit gives *zoe;* He gives the eternal, divine, indestructible life, the life that is Christ Himself. We do not want anything to do with the letter, for the letter kills; instead, we want the Spirit, for the Spirit gives life. Ephesians 1:3

says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ."

If Our Attitude in Coming to the Law Is to Care for the Commandments in Letters, Our Having the Law in the Aspect of the Killing Letter

If our attitude in coming to the law is to care for the commandments in letters, we will have the law in the aspect of the killing letter.

However, If We Take Every Part of the Law—All the Commandments, Ordinances, Statutes, Precepts, and Judgments—as the Word Breathed Out by the God Whom We Love, Our Having the Law in the Aspect of the Life-giving Spirit

However, if we take every part of the law—all the commandments, ordinances, statutes, precepts, and judgments—as the word breathed out by the God whom we love, we will have the law in the aspect of the life-giving Spirit. Psalm 119 uses many different terms for the law as God's word, including *commandments, ordinances, statutes, precepts, judgments,* and *testimonies.* These words reveal the law as the living word of God.

THERE BEING TWO ASPECTS OF THE FUNCTION OF THE LAW

The Law Having a Negative Aspect

As God's Commandments, the Law Exposing Man's Sin and Subduing Sinners before God

There are two aspects of the function of the law. The law has a negative aspect. As God's commandments, the law exposes man's sin and subdues sinners before God (Rom. 7:7b; 3:19-20; 5:20a; 4:15b). When we as fallen human beings look at the law as a living portrait of what God is, the law exposes who we are in our fallen nature. This is why Paul says, "I did not know sin except through the law; for neither did I know coveting, except the law had said, 'You shall not covet'" (7:7b). Moreover, in Romans 3:19-20 he says, "We know that whatever things the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may fall under the judgment of God; because out of the works of the law no flesh shall be justified before Him; for through the law is the clear knowledge of sin."

As God's Regulations with Statutes, Ordinances, and Rituals, the Law Functioning to Guard God's Chosen People in Its Custody That They Might Be Conducted to Christ

As God's regulations with statutes, ordinances, and rituals, the law functioned to guard God's chosen people in its custody that they might be conducted to Christ (Gal. 3:23-24). On one hand, the law subdues us and exposes our sin; on the other hand, according to Galatians 3:23-24, it acts as a child-conductor to bring us to Christ as the living portrait of what God is. How we love this person who is the living portrait of what God is! Christ is not merely a photograph of God but the living person of God Himself. This photograph, this portrait, is a living person.

The Law Having a Positive Aspect

The law has a positive aspect. This positive aspect is for God's loving seekers. We need to pray, "Lord, save me from being a letter-keeper, and make me a loving seeker."

As God's Living Word, the Law Functioning to Minister the Living God to His Seekers

As God's living word, the law functions to minister the living God to His seekers (Psa. 119:2, 88). According to Deuteronomy 17, whenever the children of Israel were to set a king over the people, there was something particular that the king was supposed to do. Verses 18 through 20 say,

> When he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write out for himself a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the Levitical priests. And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, in order that he may learn to fear Jehovah his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes and doing them, so that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers and he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right or to the left; that he and his sons may extend their days over their kingdom in the midst of Israel.

The king had to write out his own personal copy of the Pentateuch and read in it all the days of his life in order to keep him humble and in the central lane of God's economy. If we would just write out the verses in Psalm 119, the writing of those verses would revolutionize us.

In Joshua 1:8a Jehovah told Joshua, "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth." The fact that Jehovah spoke of the law being in our mouth rather than our mind implies that we need to speak the word. Jehovah also said in verse 8, "You shall muse upon it day and night." To muse upon the word includes to speak the word. It is not just to meditate in the sense of merely thinking about it. Rather, to muse on the word is to pray over it, to "chew the cud" (cf. Lev. 11:3).

Joshua 1:8 continues, saying, "You shall muse upon it day and night so that you may be certain to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous and then you will have success." Then in verse 9 Jehovah told Joshua, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and take courage; do not be afraid or dismayed. For Jehovah your God is with you wherever you go." The footnote on verse 8 says, "Joshua was to be occupied with God's word and to let the word occupy him (cf. Col. 3:16). By being occupied and filled with the word, he would have prosperity and success in taking the God-promised good land." We need to allow the word to occupy us, and we need to be occupied by the word.

Psalm 119:2 says, "Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, / Who seek Him with all their heart." Verse 88 says, "Enliven me according to Your lovingkindness, / And I will keep the testimony of Your mouth." These verses speak of the word and also of God, for God is the One who enlivens us and whom we must seek with all our heart. The one antidote to all our problems is God Himself, and we can find God in His word. When we get into His word and allow His word to get into us, He becomes practical, present, enjoyable, and available to us.

As God's Living Word, the Law Functioning to Dispense God Himself as Life and Light into Those Who Love the Law

As God's living word, the law functions to dispense God Himself as life and light into those who love the law (vv. 25, 50, 107, 116, 130, 154). Psalm 119:25 says, "My soul clings to the dust; / Enliven me according to Your word." The phrase *enliven me* means "give me life." Whenever our soul clings to the dust, we should not remain in the dust. Instead, we should pray, "Enliven me according to Your word."

Psalm 119:50 says, "This is my comfort in my affliction, / For Your word has enlivened me." Verse 107 says, "I have been greatly afflicted; / O Jehovah, enliven me according to Your word." Verse 116 says, "Uphold me according to Your word that I may live, / And do not let me be ashamed of my hope." Verse 130 says, "The opening of Your words gives light, / Imparting understanding to the simple." The Lord does not impart understanding to the complicated but to the simple. Verse 154 says, "Plead my case, and redeem me; / Enliven me according to Your word."

As God's Living Word, the Law Functioning to Restore Man's Soul and Make Man's Heart Joyous

As God's living word, the law functions to restore man's soul and make man's heart joyous (19:7-8). Psalm 19:7 says, "The law of Jehovah is perfect, / Restoring the soul." Often when we get into the word, we find that the word restores our soul. Verses 7 and 8 continue, saying, "The testimony of Jehovah is faithful, / Making the simple wise; / The precepts of Jehovah are right, / Making the heart joyous; / The commandment of Jehovah is clear, / Enlightening the eyes." When we are not joyful, that is an indication that we have not been in the word enough, for when we get into the word and allow the word to get into us, it makes our heart joyous.

As God's Living Word, the Law Functioning to Bring Us Salvation

As God's living word, the law functions to bring us salvation (119:41, 170). Verse 41 says, "May Your lovingkindness also come to me, O Jehovah, / Your salvation according to Your word." Verse 170 says, "Let my supplication come before You; / Deliver me according to Your word."

As God's Living Word, the Law Functioning to Strengthen, Comfort, and Nourish Us

As God's living word, the law functions to strengthen (v. 28), comfort (v. 76), and nourish us (v. 103). How wonderful that God's living word can strengthen, comfort, and nourish us! Verse 28 says, "My soul melts because of grief; / Strengthen me according to Your word." According to this verse, the psalmist was very sincere with God; he did not hide his situation. We need to realize that we cannot hide anything from God. Sometimes when our soul is distressed, we may say that our soul is wonderful, but He knows that it is actually melting with grief. Thus, it is better to simply tell Him how we feel, and when our soul is melting because of grief, our response should be to pray, "Strengthen me

according to Your word." Verse 76 says, "Let Your lovingkindness, I beseech You, be my comfort, / According to Your word to Your servant." Verse 103 says, "How sweet are Your words to my taste! / Sweeter than honey to my mouth!"

As God's Living Word, the Law Functioning to Uphold Us, Keep Us Safe, and Cause Us to Hope

As God's living word, the law functions to uphold us, keep us safe, and cause us to hope (vv. 116-117, 49). Verses 116 and 117 say, "Uphold me according to Your word that I may live, / And do not let me be ashamed of my hope. / Hold me up that I may be safe, / And I will regard Your statutes continually."

Sometimes we have a problem remembering God's word. However, verse 49 says, "Remember the word to Your servant / In which You have made me hope." In this verse the psalmist asks the Lord to remember the word for him. This is the memory of the Holy Spirit, implied in John 14:26, which says that the Spirit will remind us of all the things that the Lord has spoken to us. Thus, whenever we are giving a prophecy, speaking for the Lord, or taking care of the young people or new ones, we should pray, "Lord, remember the word to Your servant in which You have made me hope."

As God's Living Word, the Law Causing Us to Enjoy God as Our Portion

As God's living word, the law causes us to enjoy God as our portion (Psa. 119:57). Verse 57 says, "Jehovah is my portion; / I have promised to keep Your words."

As God's Living Word, the Law Causing Us to Enjoy God's Countenance and the Shining of His Face

As God's living word, the law causes us to enjoy God's countenance (v. 58) and the shining of His face (v. 135). Verse 58 says, "I entreated Your favor with my whole heart; / Be gracious to me according to Your word." The word *favor* in this verse literally means "face." The psalmist was not half hearted in his seeking; he entreated the Lord's face with his whole heart. Verse 135 says, "Cause Your face to shine on Your servant, / And teach me Your statutes."

As God's Living Word, the Law Causing Us to Enjoy God as Our Hiding Place and Shield and Also Enjoy God's Help and Well-Dealing

As God's living word, the law causes us to enjoy God as our hiding place and shield (v. 114) and also enjoy God's help and well-dealing (vv. 175, 65). Verse 114 says, "You are my hiding place and my shield; / In Your word do I hope." Verse 175 says, "Let my soul live, and it will praise You; / And let Your ordinances help me." Verse 65 says, "You have dealt well with Your servant, / O Jehovah, according to Your word."

As God's Living Word, the Law Functioning to Make Us Wise and Give Us Understanding

As God's living word, the law functions to make us wise and give us understanding (vv. 98-99). Verses 98 and 99 say, "Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies, / For they are always with me. / I have more insight than all my teachers, / For Your testimonies are my musing." May these words become a reality to us.

As God's Living Word, the Law Functioning to Give Us Proper Discernment and Knowledge

As God's living word, the law functions to give us proper discernment and knowledge (v. 66). Verse 66 says, "Teach me proper discernment and knowledge, / For I believe in Your commandments."

As God's Living Word, the Law Functioning to Keep Us from Sinning and from Every Evil Way

As God's living word, the law functions to keep us from sinning and from every evil way (vv. 11, 101). Verse 11 says, "In my heart I have treasured up Your word / That I might not sin against You." We need to treasure up the Lord's word in our heart. Verse 101 says, "I have withheld my feet from every evil way, / That I might keep Your word."

As God's Living Word, the Law Keeping Us from Stumbling, Establishing Our Footsteps, and Causing Us to Overcome Iniquity

As God's living word, the law keeps us from stumbling (v. 165), establishes our footsteps, and causes us to overcome iniquity (v. 133).

Verse 165 says, "There is great peace for those who love Your law, / And there is no occasion of stumbling for them." *Law* in this verse is synonymous with *word*. There is great peace for those who love the law as God's word. If we want to have great peace, we need to love God's word. Verse 133 says, "Establish my footsteps in Your word, / And do not let any iniquity have dominion over me." We need to pray this verse, praying that the Lord would establish our footsteps in His word and that He would not let any iniquity have dominion over us.

Whether in Our Experience the Law Is Positive or Negative Depending On the Condition of Our Heart in Receiving the Law

Whether in our experience the law is positive or negative depends on the condition of our heart in receiving the law. There are seven reasons why we may fail to receive help when we come to the Word. Even if we come to the Word often, we will not receive help if we have one or more of these problems. The first few problems relate to our heart.

First, if we have no exercise of heart, we will not receive help when we come to the Word. Although we read the word, perhaps out of a sense of duty, we may not have a heart for the word. If this is our case, we will not receive the blessings that come from the Word.

Second, we may have a divided heart. A young person may love many different things. This causes his heart to be divided. Whenever our heart is divided, reading the Word will not help us. We should not come to the Word halfheartedly or with a divided heart. If we do, we will not receive blessing from the Word. Whenever we come to the Bible, we must come with a whole heart and a single heart. In verse 2 the psalmist says, "Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, / Who seek Him with all their heart." We need to seek Him with all our heart.

The third problem that may cause us not to receive help from the Word is a lack of heart for the Word. This is a very serious problem. When many Christians come to the Bible, they are like dead wood, not having a heart for the Word. As a result, they do not receive help when they come to the Word.

Fourth, there may be coverings, hindrances, and frustrations when we come to the Word. Any problem with the heart is related to things that cover us, separate us from the Lord, or frustrate our contact with the Lord. There may be a certain sin that besets, captures, and possesses us or a sin that we are not willing to confess. If we are not willing to confess a certain sin, we will not receive help when we come to the Word. If someone has offended us and we are unwilling to forgive this offense, this is a sin. Because we are unwilling to forgive that offense, we will not receive help when we come to the Word. We may not be willing to consecrate ourselves to the Lord, to be subdued by Him, or to be convinced by Him. If we do not consecrate our whole life to the Lord and are not willing to be subdued and convinced by Him, we will not receive help when we come to the Word. We need to deal with anything in our heart that is negative or that causes separation between us and the Lord. For this reason, we need to pray the prayer in *Hymns*, #373: "Nothing between, Lord, nothing between." In *Life-study of Exodus* Brother Lee says, "A sister, Margaret E. Barber, used to say that even a small leaf can hide a bright star. Likewise, even a small matter can keep us from receiving blessing from the Bible" (p. 693). We need to pray that there would be nothing between us and the Lord.

Fifth, the Bible demands that we humble ourselves and put aside our self-confidence and self-assurance. No matter how long we have been a Christian or how long we have been in the recovery, we will not receive anything from the Word if we do not humble ourselves when we come to the Word and put aside our self-confidence and self-assurance. When we come to the Word, we should not say, "I have heard this. I have seen that. I know this. I have done that." This kind of thought will only bring us spiritual death. We need to humble ourselves, saying, "Lord, I humble myself and come to Your Word. I put aside my self-confidence and self-assurance." We need to pray that the Lord would have mercy on us when we come to the Word. We should not presume to have the assurance that there are no problems between us and the Lord. We simply do not have the ground for this kind of assurance. James 4:6 says, "God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble." We may love the Lord without ever having humbled ourselves before Him. We need to humble ourselves before the Lord, especially when we come to the Word.

The sixth reason that we may not receive light from the Word is that we have too much confidence in ourselves. We should say, "Lord, I do not have any confidence in myself, and I do not insist on anything. Lord, I open to You, and I ask You to have mercy on me." If this is our attitude in coming to the Bible, we will receive blessing from the Word. The crucial matter is that we humble ourselves before the Lord. Brother Lee says, "In my experience I have found that whenever I humble myself,

do not insist on any opinion, and ask the Lord for His mercy, I have the sense that I come into a realm of light whenever I come to the Word" (pp. 695-696). We need to follow our brother's example.

Seventh, when we come to the Word of God, we need to open our entire being. We need to use our whole being—body, soul, and spirit. We use our eyes to read the words and our mouth to sound out the words. We also use our mind, the main part of the soul, to understand what we read. We may also need to use lexicons, concordances, and different versions and translations of the Bible. To study the Bible also requires the exercise of our emotion to love the word and the exercise of our will to take God's way in His word. This is to exercise our soul. Finally, we need to exercise our spirit. Primarily, this is to pray so that our inner man would be strengthened. If we use our whole being in contacting the Word, we will receive light and life supply. These points are very helpful and precious. May we all humble ourselves when we come to the Word, have no self-confidence or self-assurance, and open our whole being to the Lord so that we may receive new light.

If We Love God, Humble Ourselves, and Regard the Law as His Living Word through Which We Contact Him and Abide in Him, the Law Becoming a Channel through Which the Divine Life and Substance Are Conveyed to Us for Our Supply and Nourishment; Being Infused with God's Substance through the Law as God's Word, Our Becoming One with God in Life, Nature, and Expression and Spontaneously Living a Life That Expresses God and Corresponds to His Law

If we love God, humble ourselves, and regard the law as His living word through which we contact Him and abide in Him, the law will become a channel through which the divine life and substance are conveyed to us for our supply and nourishment; being infused with God's substance through the law as God's word, we will become one with God in life, nature, and expression and will spontaneously live a life that expresses God and corresponds to His law (Rom. 8:4; Phil. 1:21a). This is to become Zion, the reality of the Body of Christ, and to become the same as God in life and nature but not in the Godhead.

However, If in Coming to the Law We Do Not Seek God in Love but Rather Separate the Law from the Living God as the Source of Life, the Law, Which Was Intended to Result in Life but Cannot Give Life of Itself, Becoming a Condemning and Killing Element to Us

However, if in coming to the law we do not seek God in love but rather separate the law from the living God as the source of life, the law, which was intended to result in life but cannot give life of itself, will become a condemning and killing element to us (Exo. 19:8; John 5:39-40; Rom. 7:10-11; Gal. 3:21; 2 Cor. 3:6-7, 9; cf. Exo. 23:19b and footnote 2). In John 5:39-40 the Lord said, "You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that testify concerning Me. Yet you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life." We should not divorce the Lord from the Scriptures. Every time we come to the Bible, we should come to the Lord Jesus so that we can receive life from the word.

Exodus 23:19b says, "You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk." Footnote 2 on this verse says, "This typifies that the milk of the word of God, the life supply of Christ, should be used to nourish new believers in Christ (1 Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:12-13; 1 Cor. 3:2) and not to 'kill' them (2 Cor. 3:6—'the letter kills')." A kid is a baby goat and signifies a new believer. We should feed the new ones with the milk of the word and not "boil" them with it. If we make the word a law, that is, merely the letter, to the new ones, we are "boiling" them with milk instead of feeding them with it.

THERE BEING TWO KINDS OF PEOPLE IN RELATION TO THE LAW

The First Kind Being the Letter-keepers, Illustrated by the Judaizers and Saul of Tarsus

There are two kinds of people in relation to the law. The first kind is the letter-keepers, illustrated by the Judaizers and Saul of Tarsus (Phil. 3:6b, 2).

The Second Kind Being the God-seekers, Illustrated by the Psalmists, Especially by the Writer of Psalm 119, and by the Apostle Paul

Their Seeking God with All Their Heart

The second kind is the God-seekers, illustrated by the psalmists,

especially by the writer of Psalm 119, and by the apostle Paul (2 Cor. 3:6). They seek God with all their heart (Psa. 119:2).

Their Loving God's Name and Remembering It

They love God's name and remember it (vv. 132, 55). Verse 132 says, "Turn to me, and be gracious to me, / As is Your custom with those who love Your name." We need to turn this verse into prayer, saying, "Lord, make me a person who loves Your name. Turn to me, and be gracious to me. This is Your custom, Your habit, with those who love Your name."

Verse 55 says, "I have remembered Your name / In the night, O Jehovah, / And have kept Your law." When we wake up in the night, we need to remember the Lord's name. I recently woke up in the middle of the night, but my first thought was not the Lord's name. Many of these verses from Psalm 119 have caused me to confess, "Lord, forgive me." We need to consider in the Lord's presence how much we remember His name in the night. When we wake up, we should say, "O Lord Jesus. Lord Jesus, I love You." Sometimes when we wake up, we lament that we cannot go back to sleep rather than remembering the Lord's name.

Their Entreating God's Face

The God-seekers entreat God's face. Verse 58 says, "I entreated Your favor [lit., face] with my whole heart; / Be gracious to me according to Your word."

Their Asking for God's Face to Shine on Them

They ask for God's face to shine on them (v. 135). Verse 135 says, "Cause Your face to shine on Your servant, / And teach me Your statutes."

Their Walking in God's Presence

They walk in God's presence (v. 168). The psalmist says in verse 168, "I have kept Your precepts and Your testimonies, / For all my ways are before You." This means that he walked in God's presence.

Their Considering God's Law to Be God's Word

The God-seekers consider God's law to be God's word (vv. 17-18, 28-29). Verses 17 and 18 say, "Deal bountifully with Your servant that I may live / And keep Your word. / Open my eyes that I may behold /

Wondrous things out of Your law." *Law* here is a synonym for *word.* We need to pray as a loving seeker, "Lord, open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Your word." We need our eyes to be opened to behold wondrous things out of the Lord's word. It is the mercy of the Lord that He has opened our eyes through these messages so that we could behold wondrous things out of His word.

Verses 28 and 29 say, "My soul melts because of grief; / Strengthen me according to Your word. / Remove from me the way of falsehood, / And graciously grant me Your law."

God's Word Being Sweeter Than Honey to Their Mouth

God's word is sweeter than honey to their mouth (v. 103).

God's Word Being More Precious Than Fine Gold to Them

God's word is more precious than fine gold to them (v. 127). Verse 127 says, "Therefore I love Your commandments / More than gold, indeed, more than fine gold." The psalmist was not exaggerating when he said this—this was not hyperbole. He truly loved God's word more than fine gold. We need to be the same.

God's Word Being a Lamp to Their Feet and a Light to Their Path

God's word is a lamp to their feet and a light to their path (vv. 105, 130). Verse 105 says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet / And a light to my path," and verse 130 says, "The opening of Your words gives light, / Imparting understanding to the simple."

PSALM 119 EXPRESSING THE ATTITUDE OF GOD'S LOVING SEEKERS TOWARD GOD'S LAW AS HIS LIVING WORD

Psalm 119 expresses the attitude of God's loving seekers toward God's law as His living word. It is a great privilege to read the Bible to others. We need to love the Lord and love the Bible in order to be His loving seekers. If we take Christ as the reality of the law, as God's living word, He will infuse His living substance into us as His loving seekers. The following points concern the functions and blessings of God's law as His living word to His loving seekers.

Their Choosing God's Word

They choose God's word (vv. 30, 173). Verse 30 says, "I have chosen

the way of faithfulness; / Your ordinances I have set before me." Verse 173 says, "Let Your hand be ready to help me, / For I have chosen Your precepts."

Their Believing God's Word

They believe God's word. Verse 66 says, "Teach me proper discernment and knowledge, / For I believe in Your commandments."

Their Lifting Up Their Hand to God's Word, Indicating That They Receive the Word of God Warmly and Gladly and Say Amen to It

They lift up their hand to God's word, indicating that they receive the word of God warmly and gladly and say Amen to it (v. 48a; Neh. 8:5-6). Sometimes when we are in the Word in our personal time with the Lord, God's word becomes real to us as *rhema,* and we spontaneously lift up our hands to that word and say Amen to it. Psalm 119:48a says, "I will lift up my hand to Your commandments, which I love." Nehemiah 8:5-6 says, "Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people (for he was above all the people); and when he opened it, all the people stood up. And Ezra blessed Jehovah the great God; and all the people answered, Amen, Amen, lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshipped Jehovah with their faces to the ground." This is wonderful.

Their Loving God's Word

God's seekers love God's word (Psa. 119:47-48, 97, 113, 119, 127, 140, 159, 163, 165, 167). There are many verses in Psalm 119 concerning loving God's word. Verses 47 and 48 say, "I will take delight in Your commandments, / Which I love. / And I will lift up my hand to Your commandments, which I love; / And I will muse upon Your statutes."

Verse 97 says, "Oh, how I love Your law! / All day long it is my musing." We need the light to shine on us. We love the Lord's word, but is it our musing all day long? We need to pray, "Lord, cause me to love Your word to the extent that all day long it is my musing."

Verse 113 says, "I hate those who are double-minded, / But I love Your law," and verse 119 says, "You do away with all the wicked ones of the earth like dross; / Therefore I love Your testimonies." *Your testimonies* means "Your words."

Verse 127 says, "I love Your commandments / More than gold, indeed, more than fine gold," and verse 140 says, "Your word is very pure, / And Your servant loves it." There are two pure things in the universe—the Triune God and His word.

Verse 159 says, "See how I have loved Your precepts; / O Jehovah, enliven me according to Your lovingkindness." Verse 163 says, "I hate and abhor falsehood, / But I love Your law." Verse 165 says, "There is great peace for those who love Your law, / And there is no occasion of stumbling for them." Verse 167 says, "My soul has kept Your testimonies, / And I love them very much."

Their Delighting in God's Word

They delight in God's word (vv. 16, 24, 35, 47, 70, 77, 92, 174). Verse 16 says, "I will take delight in Your statutes; / I will not forget Your word." We need to keep God's word in our memory. Verse 24 says, "Your testimonies are my delight; / They are my counselors." Verse 35 says, "Cause me to go on the path of Your commandments, / For in it I delight." Verse 47 says, "I will take delight in Your commandments, / Which I love."

Verse 70 says, "Their heart is heavy as with fat; / But I delight in Your law." Verse 77 says, "Let Your compassions come to me, and I will live; / For Your law is my delight." This is not for letter-keepers but for God's loving seekers. Verse 92 says, "Unless Your law had been my delight, / I would have perished in my affliction." Verse 174 says, "I have longed for Your salvation, O Jehovah, / And Your law is my delight."

Their Tasting God's Word

They taste God's word (v. 103). Verse 103 says, "How sweet are Your words to my taste! / Sweeter than honey to my mouth!"

Their Rejoicing in God's Word

They rejoice in God's word (vv. 14, 111, 162). Verse 14 says, "I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies / As much as in all riches." If we were to receive many riches, we would rejoice in our natural man, but the psalmist rejoiced in the way of God's word as much as in *all* riches.

In verse 111 the psalmist says, "Your testimonies are my heritage forever, / For they are the gladness of my heart." It is wonderful to see someone who is filled with gladness because of God's word.

Verse 162 says, "I rejoice at Your word, / Like one who finds great

spoil." When we receive something in God's word, it is like finding great spoil.

Their Singing God's Word

God's loving seekers sing God's word (v. 54). Verse 54 says, "Your statutes have become my songs of praise / In the house of my pilgrimage." We need to sing the hymns in the hymnbook, but we also need more songs of praise by singing the word. We can sing the word by spontaneously making up a tune. We need to sing the word of God in our homes.

Their Regarding God's Word

They regard God's word (vv. 6, 117). Verse 6 says, "I will not be put to shame, / When I regard all Your commandments." Verse 117 says, "Hold me up that I may be safe, / And I will regard Your statutes continually."

Their Having a Perfect Heart in God's Word

They have a perfect heart in God's word (v. 80). Verse 80 says, "May my heart be perfect in Your statutes, / That I may not be put to shame." This word may be translated, "May my heart be sincere in Your statutes, / That I may not be put to shame."

Their Inclining Their Heart to God's Word

They incline their heart to God's word (vv. 36, 112). Our heart may be inclined toward many other things. In verse 36 the psalmist prays to the Lord, "Incline my heart to Your testimonies / And not to unjust gain." We need to ask the Lord to incline our heart to His word. Verse 112 says, "I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes / Forever, to the end."

Their Seeking God's Word, Longing for It, and Hoping in It with Prayer

They seek God's word (vv. 45, 94), long for it (vv. 20, 40, 131), and hope in it with prayer (vv. 43, 74, 114, 147). Verse 74 says, "Those who fear You will see me and rejoice, / For I have hoped in Your word." To fear the Lord means to stand in awe of the Lord, to fear offending Him, and to fear losing His presence. We need to pray that when the saints who fear the Lord see us, they will rejoice because we hope in God's word.

Verse 114 says, "You are my hiding place and my shield; / In Your word do I hope." Verse 147 says, "I anticipated the dawn and cried out; / I hoped in Your words." We may need to repent for not anticipating the dawn. If we wake up before the sun rises, we should look forward to when we will soon meet with the Lord rather than lamenting that we have only a short time left to sleep. The psalmist anticipated the dawn and hoped in God's words.

Their Trusting in God's Word

God's loving seekers trust in God's word (v. 42). Verse 42 says, "Thus I will have an answer for him who reproaches me, / For I trust in Your word."

Their Musing on God's Word

They muse on God's word (vv. 15, 23, 48, 78, 99, 148). Verse 48 says, "I will lift up my hand to Your commandments, which I love; / And I will muse upon Your statutes." Verse 99 says, "I have more insight than all my teachers / For your testimonies are my musings." Verse 148 says, "My eyes anticipated the night watches, / That I might muse upon Your word." Recently, I repented and asked the Lord to forgive me, saying, "Lord, when I wake up in the night, my eyes do not anticipate the night watches so that I can muse upon Your word." We should pray, "Lord, make me a person whose eyes anticipate the night watches, that I might muse upon Your word."

Rich in Meaning, the Hebrew Word for Muse *Implying to Worship, to Converse with Oneself, and to Speak Aloud; to Muse on the Word Being to Taste and Enjoy It through Careful Considering*

Rich in meaning, the Hebrew word for *muse* implies to worship, to converse with oneself, and to speak aloud; to muse on the word is to taste and enjoy it through careful considering.

Prayer, Speaking to Oneself, and Praising the Lord Also Being Included in Musing on the Word; to Muse on the Word of God Being to Enjoy His Word as His Breath and Thus to Be Infused with God, to Breathe God In, and to Receive Spiritual Nourishment

Prayer, speaking to oneself, and praising the Lord may also be

included in musing on the word; to muse on the word of God is to enjoy His word as His breath (2 Tim. 3:16) and thus to be infused with God, to breathe God in, and to receive spiritual nourishment.

Their Considering God's Word

They consider God's word (Psa. 119:95b). Psalm 119:95b says, "I consider Your testimonies." When we read this, we see how greatly the psalmist loved God's word. We need to pray, "Lord, make me a lover of Your word in the way that this psalmist was. I want to love Your word in the same way. Constrain me with Your love. I want to love You to the uttermost and love Your word to the uttermost. I want to be Your loving seeker and be infused with Your living substance through Your living word."

Their Esteeming God's Word to Be Right in All Things

They esteem God's word to be right in all things (v. 128a). Verse 128a says, "I esteem all Your precepts concerning all things to be right."

Their Learning God's Word

They learn God's word (vv. 73, 71). Verse 73 says, "Your hands have made me and fashioned me; / Give me understanding that I may learn Your commandments." Verse 71 says, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, / That I might learn Your statutes." Sometimes we come under God's discipline and enter into a state of affliction or an "oven" situation. According to the psalmist's realization, it was good for him that he had been afflicted so that he might learn God's word and God's statutes experientially and subjectively.

Their Treasuring God's Word

God's loving seekers treasure God's word (vv. 14, 162, 72, 127, 111). Brother Lee said that when he would take time to rest, his hand would automatically reach out for his Bible. He was so much in the Word that when he would wake up very early in the morning but could not get out of bed because he did not want to disturb his wife, he would muse on the word of God for a long time. He received much light that way. This was how our brother was—he treasured God's word.

Verse 14 says, "I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies / As much as in all riches." Verse 162 says, "I rejoice at Your word, / Like one who finds great spoil."

Their Treasuring Up God's Word in Their Heart

They treasure up God's word in their heart (v. 11). Verse 11 says, "In my heart I have treasured up Your word / That I might not sin against You."

Their Remembering God's Word and Not Forgetting It

They remember God's word and do not forget it (vv. 52, 16b, 93). Verse 52 says, "I have remembered Your ordinances from long ago, / O Jehovah, and have comforted myself." It is good to practice to pray-read, study, recite, and prophesy. Of these practices, pray-reading is the most important. We need to pray-read the Word. Ephesians 6:17-18 says, "Receive...the word of God, by means of all prayer." We need to receive the word by various kinds of prayer. When we pray over the Word and pray it into us so that it becomes *rhema* in us, study the Word prayerfully, and recite the Word prayerfully, we will spontaneously prophesy, and that word will stay in our enlightened memory for our whole life. This is our experience. If we give ourselves to pray-read the Word of God, study it, recite it, and prophesy it, the word will stay in our memory.

Their Standing in Awe of God's Word

God's loving seekers stand in awe of God's word (Psa. 119:161b, 120). Verse 161b says, "My heart stands in awe of Your words."

Their Clinging to God's Word

They cling to God's word (v. 31). Verse 31 says, "I cling to Your testimonies; / O Jehovah, do not put me to shame." We need to be persons who cling to God's word.

Their Not Forsaking God's Word, Not Swerving from It, Not Turning Aside from It, and Not Straying from It

They do not forsake God's word, do not swerve from it, do not turn aside from it, and do not stray from it (vv. 87, 51, 157, 102, 110).

Their Turning Their Feet toward God's Word

They turn their feet toward God's word (v. 59). Verse 59 says, "I considered my ways / And turned my feet toward Your testimonies."

Their Keeping, Observing, and Doing God's Word

They keep, observe, and do God's word (vv. 33, 69). Verse 33 says, "Teach me, O Jehovah, the way of Your statutes; / And I will keep it to the end." Verse 69 says, "The proud have plastered lies against me; / With my whole heart I will keep Your precepts."

Their Walking in God's Word and Running the Way of God's Word

They walk in God's word and run the way of God's word (vv. 1, 32a). Verse 1 says, "Blessed are those whose way is perfect, / Who walk in the law of Jehovah." Verse 32a says, "I run the way of Your commandments."

All these points reveal the functions and blessings of God's law as His living word to His loving seekers. I pray that this will inspire us to love the Lord more and to love His word more so that we will have a sevenfold intensified love for the Lord and for His word, which infuses us with His living substance to make us the same as He is in life, nature, and expression but not in the Godhead. In this way, we will become the reality of the Body of Christ, be prepared to be His bride, bring in His kingdom, and bring Him back so that He can recover His title and right over the whole earth.—E. M.

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OF THE PSALMS (2)

The Preciousness of Zion and Jerusalem and the Situation of the Overcomers in Zion (Message 9)

Scripture Reading: Psa. 122:1; 125:1-2; 127:1; 128:5; 131:2; 132

I. Among the Old Testament types, there is God's holy city, Jerusalem, and within this city there is a high peak called Zion, on which the temple was built—Psa. 2:6; 125:1:
   A. Although God is mysterious and invisible, there are two earthly signs of God's existence—Zion and Jerusalem.
   B. Psalms 120 through 134 indicate that Zion, the center, and Jerusalem, the circumference, remained deeply in the consideration of the people of Israel; they were very concerned for Zion and Jerusalem—137:1, 5-6.
   C. On Mount Zion we have the church—the Body of Christ—and God's economy for God's testimony—Heb. 12:18-24.

II. Jerusalem typifies the church, and Mount Zion typifies the overcomers in the church—Psa. 2:6; 20:2; 48:11-12; 53:6a; 87:2:
   A. Zion is the highlight of Jerusalem, the beauty of the holy city—48:2; 50:2.
   B. The characteristics, the life, the blessing, and the establishment of Jerusalem come from Zion—51:18; 102:21; 128:5; 135:21; Isa. 41:27; Joel 3:17.
   C. In the New Testament the overcomers are likened to Zion; in Revelation 14:1 the one hundred forty-four thousand overcomers are not just in Jerusalem—they are on the peak of Zion.
   D. In the church age the God-men who have been perfected and matured are Zion, the overcomers—v. 1:
      1. The church is the heavenly Jerusalem, and the overcomers are Zion as the high peak and the highlight—Heb. 12:22; Rev. 14:1.

2. The church life is today's Jerusalem, and in the church there must be a group of overcomers; these overcomers are today's Zion.
3. The overcomers are for the building up of the Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem—Rom. 12:4-5; Eph. 4:16; Rev. 3:12.
4. The overcomers conquer the satanic chaos in the old creation and carry out the divine economy for the new creation—1 Tim. 1:4; Eph. 1:10; 3:9-10; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15.
5. The Lord needs the overcomers to carry out the economy of God to have a Body and to destroy His enemy—Eph. 1:10; 3:9-10; Rev. 12:11.
6. Without the overcomers the Body of Christ cannot be built up, and unless the Body of Christ is built up, Christ cannot come back for His bride—Eph. 4:16; 5:23, 27, 32; Rev. 19:7-9.

E. The Lord's recovery is to build up Zion—14:1; Eph. 4:16; Rev. 21:2:
1. Zion is the reality of the Body of Christ consummating in the New Jerusalem, and in the Lord's recovery today we must endeavor to reach this high peak—Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4-6, 16; Rev. 21:2.
2. The highest peak in God's economy is Zion, the reality of the Body of Christ, and in the church life we need to reach this high peak—Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:12-13, 27.
3. The reality of the Body of Christ (Zion) is the corporate living of the perfected God-men, who are genuine men but live by the life of the processed and consummated Triune God, whose attributes are expressed through their virtues—Gal. 2:20; Phil. 3:10; 1:19-21a.

F. In the new heaven and new earth, the entire New Jerusalem will become Zion; the New Jerusalem, the eternal Mount Zion, will be the Holy of Holies, the place where God is—Rev. 21:1-2, 16, 22; cf. Ezek. 48:35.

G. The only way to reach the high peak of Zion is by praying; in order to reach Zion by praying, we need to know the significance of prayer for the carrying out of God's economy—1 Tim. 1:4; 2:8:

1. Prayer is man breathing God, obtaining God, and being obtained by God; real prayer is an exhaling and inhaling before God, causing us and God to contact each other and to gain each other—1 Thes. 5:17.
2. Prayer is man cooperating and co-working with God, allowing God to express Himself and His desire from within him and through him and thus accomplish His purpose—Rom. 8:26-27; James 5:17; Eph. 1:16-23; 3:14-21.

III. In the Psalms of Ascents—Psalms 120 through 134—we see the preciousness of Zion and Jerusalem to the saints; in all these psalms the house and the city are the center:

A. In Psalm 122 we see the saints' love for the house of God in Jerusalem—v. 1.

B. Psalm 125 speaks concerning Jehovah's surrounding of His people:
1. Those who trust in Jehovah are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved but abides forever; they love Mount Zion and liken themselves to Mount Zion—v. 1.
2. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so Jehovah surrounds His people from now and to eternity—v. 2.

C. Psalm 127 reveals Jehovah's care for and blessing to His people; instead of laboring in ourselves, we should trust in God, for He will take care of us and He will bless us.

D. Psalm 128 speaks of Jehovah's blessing to Israel from Zion; God always blesses people from Zion, that is, from the overcomers—v. 5; cf. Num. 6:23-27.

E. In Psalm 131 a saint speaks about his humbled heart and quieted soul before Jehovah:
1. The psalmist has calmed and quieted his soul within him; he has been weaned, or stripped, of everything except the Lord—v. 2.
2. When our heart is humbled and our soul is quiet, we are in a condition that is suitable for God to come in to rest—132:14:
   a. In such a situation God can have a resting place, a dwelling—v. 14.
   b. Only when we are humble, calm, and quiet is the situation right for God to rise up, enter us, and take us as

His resting place; this is Zion becoming God's habitation, His resting place, as revealed in Psalm 132.

IV. Psalm 132 speaks concerning Jehovah's habitation and rest in Zion through David (typifying Christ) His anointed:
   A. In verses 2 through 5 we see David's desire for the house of God.
   B. David wanted Jehovah to arise and enter with the Ark into His resting place in Zion; today this resting place is the overcomers in the churches—vv. 6-8.
   C. Verses 7 and 8 are figurative of the recovery of the church life:
      1. The Ark was separated from the tabernacle; this signifies that Christ was with the church but that He has been separated from the church.
      2. Now is the time for us all to say, "Arise, O Jehovah, unto Your resting place, / You and the Ark of Your strength"—v. 8.
   D. Verses 14 through 18 are Jehovah's speaking concerning Zion; this is a picture of the top church life—the situation of the overcomers in Zion, the highest peak of God's mountain:
      1. Psalm 132 mentions seven items related to the overcomers: resting in God, dwelling with God (v. 14), food for satisfaction (v. 15), glorious clothing (v. 16), the horn of victory (v. 17), the enlightening lamp (v. 17), and the shining crown (v. 18).
      2. These items portray the situation of the overcomers in Zion, the highest peak of God's mountain.

MESSAGE NINE

THE PRECIOUSNESS OF ZION AND JERUSALEM AND THE SITUATION OF THE OVERCOMERS IN ZION

Psalms 120 through 134 are a group of fifteen psalms called Psalms of Ascents or Songs of Ascents. The background for many of these psalms is the captivity in Babylon. The reason they are called Songs of Ascents is that the people of Israel literally sang them as they were ascending to Mount Zion three times a year for the feasts in Jerusalem. In this message we will draw out the crystals from this group of psalms.

The title of this message is "The Preciousness of Zion and Jerusalem and the Situation of the Overcomers in Zion." I hope we will become clear that Jerusalem, the city, typifies the church. To be in a genuine local church as an expression of the Body of Christ is to be in Jerusalem. In the city of Jerusalem, however, there was a portion called the City of David, or Zion. That was not only the center but also the uplifting of the city. We need to be deeply impressed that three matters are closely related—Zion, the reality of the Body of Christ, and the overcomers. Those who ascended to worship the Lord at the feasts had a deep sense of the preciousness of Jerusalem and Zion.

The first major part of this message will develop this deeply inward matter. This is a matter of an inward journey as we are practicing the church life. Following this, we will consider the situation of the overcoming ones in Zion—their standing, their status, and their position in relation to their surroundings. They are in Zion, they live in a certain reality, and actually they are this reality.

AMONG THE OLD TESTAMENT TYPES, THERE BEING GOD'S HOLY CITY, JERUSALEM, AND WITHIN THIS CITY THERE BEING A HIGH PEAK CALLED ZION, ON WHICH THE TEMPLE WAS BUILT

Among the Old Testament types, there is God's holy city, Jerusalem, and within this city there is a high peak called Zion, on which the temple was built (Psa. 2:6; 125:1). The Bible presents Zion as a height. We need to understand Zion according to what the Bible presents.

Although God Is Mysterious and Invisible, There Being Two Earthly Signs of God's Existence—Zion and Jerusalem

Although God is mysterious and invisible, there are two earthly signs of God's existence—Zion and Jerusalem.

Psalms 120 through 134 Indicating That Zion, the Center, and Jerusalem, the Circumference, Remained Deeply in the Consideration of the People of Israel; Their Being Very Concerned for Zion and Jerusalem

Psalms 120 through 134 indicate that Zion, the center, and Jerusalem, the circumference, remained deeply in the consideration of the people of Israel; they were very concerned for Zion and Jerusalem (137:1, 5-6). Psalm 84:5 says, "Blessed is the man whose strength is in You, / In whose heart are the highways to Zion." We need to consider what this verse means. Can we say or would we like to be able to say that in our heart there are highways leading into God with the goal of becoming Zion, the reality of the Body of Christ? If the highways to Zion are in our heart, while we are practicing all the matters that God ordained to carry out His New Testament economy and while we are living a practical church life, there will be a corresponding deep and inward development within us. If there is no such development, we are outside the intrinsic significance of the Lord's recovery.

Brother Lee was deeply concerned about this. In his fellowship to some co-workers in 1994, which was published in *The Practical Points concerning Blending,* he says, "You do not know what a heavy burden I have for you all" (p. 42). Then he adds, "You must know the intrinsic scene of all the spiritual things" (p. 46). The psalmists were on an inward journey. Their heart was set on Zion. God's heart was set on Zion, and something in their being matched what was in God's heart. If in our daily, personal conversations with the Lord we pray, "Lord, cause the desire of Your heart to become the desire of my heart," gradually something deep will be wrought into our being.

In Psalm 132 we read of God's direct speaking concerning Zion. Verse 13 says, "Jehovah has chosen Zion; / He has desired it for His habitation." In verse 14 God apparently interrupts the psalmist, saying, "This is My resting place forever; / Here will I dwell, for I have desired it." Have we ever considered what it means for the true and living God to desire something? When we are willing to apply the high peak of the divine revelation—the truth that God became man to make man God in life and nature—we apply it by praying. We may pray, "Lord, make my heart a duplication of Your heart in every possible way." Eventually, at least to some extent, we will become inwardly one with God in the desire of His heart. Because this desire becomes part of our being, it is not doctrine, mere revelation, or even vision; it is part of what we are in Christ. Then in the midst of everything and anything in our human life and in the church life, we will realize that we are on an inward journey.

In the Old Testament there was the physical journey up to Zion to worship God. With us in the Lord's recovery today, it is a journey with the Spirit of reality into God in His economy to reach God's goal. Those who are on this journey have two characteristics. First, Zion and Jerusalem are deeply in their consideration. It would be good for all of us, beginning with the co-workers and continuing with the elders, the responsible ones, the serving ones, the full-time serving ones, and the full-time trainees, to ask ourselves before the Lord, "Do we deeply consider anything in relation to the reality of the Body of Christ?" What are the considerations deep in our being? What occupies us?

Paul identifies a very sad situation in Philippians 2. He was about to send Timothy to the believers in Philippi, but he adds, "I have no one like-souled who will genuinely care for what concerns you" (v. 20). Except for Timothy, who Paul desired to send to them, no one was like-souled with Paul to genuinely care for what concerned the Philippians. Then in verse 21 Paul explains, "For all seek their own things, not the things of Christ Jesus." The others were believers and were in the church. We may even say that they were at least outwardly one with Paul in his ministry, but they were not one with him intrinsically. Their soul did not match the apostle's soul, but Timothy's did. Paul does not say that they sought worldly things or that they were lovers of money but that they were seeking their own things. They sought their own things in such a way that the things concerning Christ Jesus were set aside in their being. This is a great peril. We receive numerous e-mails and other kinds of communication that are rooted in the saints seeking their own things. Surely we have needs, but we also have a Father who already knows what we need. The Lord needs more brothers and sisters with an inward capacity to consider deeply what is on God's heart.

The other characteristic of those on the journey to Zion is that they are very concerned for Zion and Jerusalem. We need to consider before the Lord what we are *very concerned* about in the Lord's recovery. Are

we very concerned for the preparation of the bride of Christ to the extent that we could say, "I live for this. I breathe for this. I exist so that my life would be a contributing factor to the fulfillment of the Lord's longing for a counterpart"? To be sure, we should be balanced. The church life, the human life, the Christian life, and the work are carried out practically. We do many outward things without which little of God's economy could be carried out. However, if that is all that we have, there will be no Zion, no reality of the Body of Christ, and no overcoming ones who are conquering everything that hinders the building up of the Body and the preparation of the bride.

In such matters, the only way is to open our being to the Lord in love, to give Him the ground to touch anything in us that is incompatible with His heart's desire, and to give Him the way to build Himself into our being in order to constitute Himself into us by saturating and permeating us to make us God in life, in nature, and in every possible way apart from the Godhead or being an object of worship. Then our being will correspond to Him, and in our heart there will be the highways to Zion.

On Mount Zion Our Having the Church—the Body of Christ—and God's Economy for God's Testimony

On Mount Zion we have the church—the Body of Christ—and God's economy for God's testimony (Heb. 12:18-24). Here we have the reality of all these things.

JERUSALEM TYPIFYING THE CHURCH, AND MOUNT ZION TYPIFYING THE OVERCOMERS IN THE CHURCH

Jerusalem typifies the church, and Mount Zion typifies the overcomers in the church (Psa. 2:6; 20:2; 48:11-12; 53:6a; 87:2). At this juncture we need to consider the matter of the overcomers. In the Lord's recovery we do not use terms casually; all terms have meaning. The word *overcomer* in our usage is a translation of a Greek verb *nikao,* which means "to conquer" or "to be victorious." When the Lord Jesus was calling for overcomers among the churches in Revelation 2 and 3, He did not address His speaking "to the overcomer"; rather, He used participial phrases, saying, "He who overcomes" (2:11, 26; 3:5, 12, 21) or "To him who overcomes" (2:7, 17). The verb functions with the significance of a noun, indicating someone who is actively conquering something.

Hence, an overcomer is someone who is living, who is serving, and whose being is in the experience of conquering what frustrates God's economy and the carrying out of His economy. The principle with the overcomers is that they bear a responsibility that the entire church should have taken up and carried out but failed to. Thus, the overcomers are not super or special but normal in being willing to carry out this responsibility on behalf of the Lord and of the entire church so that, through their victory, the Lord can consider the church as having fulfilled its mission.

Surely the overcoming ones will receive a reward in the kingdom age, but in their being, the matter of reward is not the primary thing. In their being, in their heart, are the highways to Zion. They have a deep consideration for and are very concerned about Zion and Jerusalem. The Body is something in their being. The desire of the Lord's heart is the desire of their heart. They are united, mingled, and incorporated with the Lord in this. They want the Lord, whom they love and serve, to finally have His counterpart prepared for Him—a glorious church for His satisfaction. They want to see the Body of Christ built up and the new man perfected so that the enemy will be crushed under our feet. Thus, they aspire to overcome for the Lord's sake, and they fight for all the brothers for the sake of the entire church. They are not a super class, nor do they separate themselves as elitists. Rather, the entire Body of Christ is in their heart, and every member matters to them. They are overcoming not mainly that they would receive a crown but that the Lord's purpose would be fulfilled.

With regard to overcoming, we need to avoid an error. According to Paul's pattern, no one has the ground to say that he is an overcomer until the end, until they have finished their course. I have received e-mails from deluded persons who boast that they are overcomers, firstfruits, and part of the man-child. It is serious to make such false claims. One may have a great victory today and be devastated tomorrow. Nevertheless, we can receive from the Lord an aspiration to be an overcomer, and we can pray to be an overcomer.

One specific application of the function of the overcomers to what we are considering in this message is that the overcomers are for the building up of the Body of Christ. No one among the local churches on the earth today who does not care for the building up of the Body of Christ can be an overcomer. We may claim to have overcome our temper, to have overcome our bed to read the Word early every morning, or to have overcome our besetting sin. On one hand, this is good, but on the other hand, that is very individualistic and private. What the

Lord needs today in the churches are saints who are willing to be produced by the Lord as the sevenfold intensified Spirit to be those who give themselves to Him for the building up of the Body of Christ as a reality in the churches.

We may do a splendid work in teaching, in being constituted with the truth, in caring for others with a loving heart, in preaching the gospel, in baptizing many believers, and in establishing many churches. Surely all this is needed. But as the Lord looks into our being, we must consider what our work is for and what it is unto. Is there a connection deep in our being between our reading the Word, our desire to grow in life, our experiencing Christ, our enjoying Christ, our serving in the church, our functioning in the meetings, our preaching the gospel, our laboring in the work, and even our sufferings and dealings and the Lord's desire to have the Body built up as a reality? This is the commission of the overcomers in this age. Therefore, the overcomers see the Body, know the Body, and care for the Body.

In December 1995 Brother Lee met with about eight co-workers in his study for some substantial fellowship; he gave them a personal charge—not advice but a charge. In one of the last few statements during that time, he charged, "You have to be an overcomer to keep every principle of the Body." The general subject of the 1998 Thanksgiving weekend conference was on "Keeping the Principles of the Body" (see *The Ministry,* vol. **3**, nos. 3 and 4). Nevertheless, in the thirteen years since that conference, principle after principle of the Body has been violated. This matter was released in that conference, and many heard it, read it, and know it. After Brother Lee gave that charge, I considered before the Lord, "I receive this word, but I do not even know every principle of the Body. How can I keep what I do not know?" Thus, his word begot an aspiration within me.

The overcomers care for God's interest above everything else, including their necessities. Recently, I had the privilege and the honor of being in India to have fellowship with the dear saints. I can testify on their behalf that the local saints and the co-workers there care for God's interest above everything else. The work of the Body is something in resurrection that the life-giving Spirit can honor.

Zion Being the Highlight of Jerusalem, the Beauty of the Holy City

Zion is the highlight of Jerusalem, the beauty of the holy city (Psa. 48:2; 50:2). In a church, typified by Jerusalem, there should be some overcoming ones, and their being is the factor of the church being beautiful. They do not stand out, for this is not the time of their manifestation, but they are the highlight.

The Characteristics, the Life, the Blessing, and the Establishment of Jerusalem Coming from Zion

The characteristics, the life, the blessing, and the establishment of Jerusalem come from Zion (51:18; 102:21; 128:5; 135:21; Isa. 41:27; Joel 3:17). In actuality, there are Jerusalems (local churches) today with no Zion. Because there is no Zion, the blessing is minimal, and the saints do not have the sense of establishment, solidity, security, and unshakableness.

In the New Testament the Overcomers Being Likened to Zion; in Revelation 14:1 the One Hundred Forty-four Thousand Overcomers Being Not Just in Jerusalem— Their Being on the Peak of Zion

In the New Testament the overcomers are likened to Zion; in Revelation 14:1 the one hundred forty-four thousand overcomers are not just in Jerusalem—they are on the peak of Zion.

In the Church Age the God-men Who Have Been Perfected and Matured Being Zion, the Overcomers

In the church age the God-men who have been perfected and matured are Zion, the overcomers (v. 1). We may say that this is the description of the overcomers. Overcomers are God-men. They are believers who are increasingly mingled with God unto maturity. We need to know the difference between transformation and maturity. Transformation is a matter of being changed in life. Previously, we were natural, but gradually we will be resurrected and transformed beings in life and nature. To be mature, however, is to be filled with the divine life that changes us to the point of overflowing.

If our personal goal is transformation, then our goal is too short. Hebrews 6:1 says, "Let us be brought on to maturity." One of the tactics of the enemy in many older saints is to retard, even stop, their growth in life and then to numb them concerning their lack of growth. These saints may not know that they were actually better off decades

ago than they are today because in these years they have been swallowed up by their disposition and peculiarity. To be matured, we need to be perfected, equipped, supplied, trained, and also touched. Some dear saints wear an invisible sign that says, "Don't touch me." We do not touch them, and they remain the same. They are in the church, in Jerusalem, in the meetings, and at the feasts, doing all the outward things, but there is no Zion with them. The Lord must look for those who are open and available to Him.

I am tired of the so-called consecrations that are really promises to do something. Some consecrate to read all the Life-study messages in three years or to do something else in the way of a promise. Consecration really means that we present ourselves to the Lord to allow Him to work on and in us. Consecration is not a promise to do this or that. We may consecrate to read all the Life-study messages within three years, but the Lord may not have access to our being in those three years. There needs to be a prayer within us concerning this.

This week I was deeply touched and supplied by some e-mails and texts that I received from a dear older brother in an intensive care unit. He had to undergo emergency surgery, and while in the hospital, he suffered a massive heart attack. Yet he is reigning in life in that hospital. He is praising the Lord there. When they took him from one room to another, he was praising and enjoying the Lord, saying, "Lord, it cannot get better than this." The Lord honors such a one, through whom all the saints are supplied and touched by being with him. That is the life, the blessing, and the establishment of Jerusalem that come from Zion.

The Church Being the Heavenly Jerusalem, and the Overcomers Being Zion as the High Peak and the Highlight

The church is the heavenly Jerusalem, and the overcomers are Zion as the high peak and the highlight (12:22; Rev. 14:1).

The Church Life Being Today's Jerusalem, and in the Church There Needing to Be a Group of Overcomers; These Overcomers Being Today's Zion

The church life is today's Jerusalem, and in the church there must be a group of overcomers; these overcomers are today's Zion.

The Overcomers Being for the Building Up of the Body of Christ to Consummate the New Jerusalem

The overcomers are for the building up of the Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem (Rom. 12:4-5; Eph. 4:16; Rev. 3:12). None of us are overcomers yet. By *overcomers* we mean those who are aspiring, who are praying, who are consecrated, who are open, who are exercised to experience and enjoy Christ, and who are constituted with Christ to live and minister Christ for the building up of the Body of Christ as the preparation of the bride of Christ.

The Overcomers Conquering the Satanic Chaos in the Old Creation and Carrying Out the Divine Economy for the New Creation

The overcomers conquer the satanic chaos in the old creation and carry out the divine economy for the new creation (1 Tim. 1:4; Eph. 1:10; 3:9-10; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15). Our brother in that intensive care unit is conquering chaos. What an honor to have fellowship with him and to hear him testify of, thank, and praise the Lord. In so doing he is carrying out the divine economy for the new creation.

The Lord Needing the Overcomers to Carry Out the Economy of God to Have a Body and to Destroy His Enemy

The Lord needs the overcomers to carry out the economy of God to have a Body and to destroy His enemy (Eph. 1:10; 3:9-10; Rev. 12:11). What a commission we have. While we are building up the Body, the enemy is being destroyed.

Without the Overcomers the Body of Christ Being Unable to Be Built Up, and without the Body of Christ Being Built Up, Christ Being Unable to Come Back for His Bride

Without the overcomers the Body of Christ cannot be built up, and unless the Body of Christ is built up, Christ cannot come back for His bride (Eph. 4:16; 5:23, 27, 32; Rev. 19:7-9). Quite a while ago, a dear young brother in a certain place fellowshipped with me, saying that he had heard someone say that the Lord would come back very soon because the bride is nearly ready. I responded, not in the realm of right or wrong, by saying, "Oh, the bride is just about ready? That means the Body of Christ has been built up. Would you take me there? Would you

show it to me?" To have the reality of the Body of Christ means that there is the genuine, corporate God-man living, a living in conformity to Christ's death by the power of His resurrection. In 1994 Brother Lee said with a heavy heart that he did not see the reality of the Body of Christ anywhere (see *The Practical Points concerning Blending,* p. 16). He confessed to the Lord that although he had opened the Bible to the saints and raised up so many churches, the reality of the Body of Christ was lacking. This caused him to be so burdened concerning the matter of blending, because blending is the way into reality.

It has now been seventeen and a half years since our brother spoke those words. Perhaps we have progressed, but perhaps not that much. Do we know precisely what the goal of the Lord's recovery is? Are we clear concerning our commission in the Lord's recovery? The goal of the Lord's recovery is to build up the organic Body of Christ in the local churches as a reality. This is Zion in Jerusalem. When the Lord Jesus comes back, He will come as the Bridegroom for the bride. What comes out from Christ and is built up is His Body; what is presented to Christ at His coming is the bride. Please take note of the fact that the building up of the Body *is* the preparation of the bride. As the Body is being built up by growth in life unto maturity, the bride is being prepared. When, in the eyes of the Lord, the overcomers have built up the Body sufficiently, He will realize that His bride is ready. Then He will say, "My bride is ready! Now I can return."

At this point, I must insert a word concerning the direction of the Lord's move from this day until the time of His manifest coming to establish the kingdom. The direction of the Lord's move among us is first to build up the organic Body of Christ. Second, it is to prepare the bride as the counterpart for the Bridegroom's satisfaction. Third, it is to bring in the kingdom.

However, between the bride and the kingdom, there are two other matters. Thus, the sequence according to the divine revelation is the Body, the bride, the army, the stone, and the kingdom. Everything hinges on the Body being built up. When the Body has been built up, the bride will have been prepared, and she will be raptured. Then the bride herself will become the army. She will not even need to change her clothes or ask, "Lord, what should I wear when I go with You to Armageddon?" He may say, "Dear, what you have on is fine. Your wedding dress is your uniform. Just follow Me!" Then she will be an army

to defeat the army of Antichrist, who will make war directly against God.

At that point, the second major problem that God has must be solved. The first problem was the old creation, which was solved in the Lord's first coming by His death on the cross. The second major problem is human government, which exalts man, worships idols, and rebels against God. The Lord will come with the overcomers as a corporate, smashing stone to crush the ten toes of the image in Daniel 2, and then the entire system of human government will blow away like chaff. The stone will then become the great mountain as the kingdom and will fill the whole earth. Hence, the sequence is Body, bride, army, stone, and kingdom.

Let us consider these in reverse order. In order for there to be the kingdom, there must be the stone. Before there can be the stone, there must be the army. The army must be preceded by the bride, and the preparation of the bride depends on the building up of the Body. Thus, the crucial matter is the building up of the Body. Will we succeed or not in our lifetime? I do not know how long the Lord will give me, but I hope it will be at least long enough to touch with you the reality of Zion in the Lord's recovery. This is Zion. This is the reason for existence in the Lord's recovery. This is the reason for us to get out of bed each morning, and this is the reason we maintain our health. The reason that we seek the Lord and read the Word is so that He may have His heart's desire, which is Zion in the local churches.

The Lord's Recovery Being to Build Up Zion

Zion Being the Reality of the Body of Christ Consummating in the New Jerusalem, and in the Lord's Recovery Today Our Needing to Endeavor to Reach This High Peak

The Lord's recovery is to build up Zion (Rev. 14:1; Eph. 4:16; Rev. 21:2). Zion is the reality of the Body of Christ consummating in the New Jerusalem, and in the Lord's recovery today we must endeavor to reach this high peak (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4-6, 16; Rev. 21:2).

The Highest Peak in God's Economy Being Zion, the Reality of the Body of Christ, and in the Church Life Our Needing to Reach This High Peak

The highest peak in God's economy is Zion, the reality of the Body

of Christ, and in the church life we need to reach this high peak (Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:12-13, 27).

The Reality of the Body of Christ (Zion) Being the Corporate Living of the Perfected God-men, Who Are Genuine Men but Live by the Life of the Processed and Consummated Triune God, Whose Attributes Are Expressed through Their Virtues

The reality of the Body of Christ (Zion) is the corporate living of the perfected God-men, who are genuine men but live by the life of the processed and consummated Triune God, whose attributes are expressed through their virtues (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 3:10; 1:19-21a). This definition puts Zion, reality, and the overcomers together practically. The reality of the Body of Christ (Zion) is the corporate living of the perfected God-men, who are genuine men; that is, they are Jesusly human, approachable human beings, but they live by the life of the processed and consummated Triune God, whose attributes are expressed through their virtues. This is Zion, this is the reality, and these are the overcomers.

I believe that the Lord, in this stage of the intensification of His ministry, is well able to make us Zion. We all came from the same source. We are all the flesh of sin; we are all the old man in the old creation with a body of sin and death. We have a self, a disposition, and peculiarities. Nevertheless, the cross is so powerful that it deals with every negative thing. Resurrection is so prevailing that it brings in every positive thing. We simply need to love the Lord, open to Him, give ourselves to Him, and pray, "Lord, for the sake of Zion, make me part of this corporate God-man."

In the New Heaven and New Earth, the Entire New Jerusalem Becoming Zion; the New Jerusalem, the Eternal Mount Zion, Being the Holy of Holies, the Place Where God Is

In the new heaven and new earth, the entire New Jerusalem will become Zion; the New Jerusalem, the eternal Mount Zion, will be the Holy of Holies, the place where God is (Rev. 21:1-2, 16, 22; cf. Ezek. 48:35). It is wonderful that in the new heaven and new earth the entire New Jerusalem will become Zion; but we do not want to wait until then.

The Only Way to Reach the High Peak of Zion Being by Praying; in Order to Reach Zion by Praying, Our Needing to Know the Significance of Prayer for the Carrying Out of God's Economy

The only way to reach the high peak of Zion is by praying; in order to reach Zion by praying, we need to know the significance of prayer for the carrying out of God's economy (1 Tim. 1:4; 2:8). This refers to praying in a particular way. In order to reach Zion by praying, we need to know the significance of prayer for the carrying out of God's economy. The significance of prayer here is what Brother Nee calls "the principle of prayer." It is not that I feel something, need something, or want something, and hence I ask for it. That may or may not be prayer. What we are referring to is this: In God is a will, a desire, and an intention, but He will not act alone to carry it out. This is not like the creation of the universe, where He did everything by speaking. Rather, He wants His people on the earth to be open to Him, to be one with Him, and to agree with Him so that His will becomes their will, His intention becomes their intention, and His desire becomes their desire in their fellowship with Him. This is the principle of John 15:7: "If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you." Of course, this is absolutely not in the way of our saying, "I wish for a yacht; I wish for this and that." When the words of Christ abide in us, operate in us, and impart to us God's desire, that desire becomes ours. We want it, and thus we may pray something like, "Lord, we want five hundred churches in India by 2020."

Prayer begins with the Lord's will, desire, and intention. As we are in fellowship with Him and as the church is open to Him, He imparts His will, desire, and intention into us. Do not ask me how to bring this about by way of a method. There is no method but only persons who are vitally contacting one another, living in one another, and mingled together in oneness. Then we pray what is deep in our being, and that prayer is the expression of the Lord's desire. Thus, He fulfills His desire by fulfilling our desire, which is the expression in prayer of His desire. To what extent in the larger prayer meetings of the churches this will ever happen, I do not know, but surely it can happen and, in fact, it is happening in genuine vital groups. Where there are a few who are in harmony, who are in absolute oneness with one another and with the

Body, then what the heavens have bound, they bind, and what the heavens have released, they release.

It would be so good if in the church in Anaheim every soul would be quieted and everyone would be subdued to the extent that there is no ripple of the natural life, but I am not waiting for some kind of utopia. It may or may not happen, but it can, will, and is happening in genuine vital groups. These vital groups are Zion in miniature. This is the reality of the Body of Christ and the overcoming life. They are one with the Lord, and their prayer expresses His desire. This is the kind of prayer of which we are speaking.

Prayer Being Man Breathing God, Obtaining God, and Being Obtained by God; Real Prayer Being an Exhaling and Inhaling before God, Causing Us and God to Contact Each Other and to Gain Each Other

Prayer is man breathing God, obtaining God, and being obtained by God; real prayer is an exhaling and inhaling before God, causing us and God to contact each other and to gain each other (1 Thes. 5:17).

Prayer Being Man Cooperating and Co-working with God, Allowing God to Express Himself and His Desire from within Him and through Him and Thus Accomplish His Purpose

Prayer is man cooperating and co-working with God, allowing God to express Himself and His desire from within him and through him and thus accomplish His purpose (Rom. 8:26-27; James 5:17; Eph. 1:16-23; 3:14-21). Zion needs this kind of prayer. In that special fellowship published in chapter 5 of *The Practical Points concerning Blending,* Brother Lee mentions that the only way to reach this high peak is by praying. Time does not allow, but there is much more to say about the kind of prayer that causes us to enter experientially into all the intrinsic things of God's economy for the sake of the Body, the bride, the army, the stone, and the kingdom.

THE PSALMS OF ASCENTS—PSALMS 120 THROUGH 134—SHOWING THE PRECIOUSNESS OF ZION AND JERUSALEM TO THE SAINTS; IN ALL THESE PSALMS THE HOUSE AND THE CITY BEING THE CENTER

Psalm 122 Showing the Saints' Love for the House of God in Jerusalem

In the Psalms of Ascents—Psalms 120 through 134—we see the

preciousness of Zion and Jerusalem to the saints; in all these psalms the house and the city are the center. In Psalm 122 we see the saints' love for the house of God in Jerusalem (v. 1). We are not ashamed to say, "We love the church." I am not ashamed to say, "I love the church in Anaheim. I love the church in Chicago." We love the church.

Psalm 125 Speaking concerning Jehovah's Surrounding of His People

Those Who Trust in Jehovah Being like Mount Zion, Which Cannot Be Moved but Abides Forever; Their Loving Mount Zion and Likening Themselves to Mount Zion

Psalm 125 speaks concerning Jehovah's surrounding of His people. Those who trust in Jehovah are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved but abides forever; they love Mount Zion and liken themselves to Mount Zion (v. 1). How mysterious it is that sometimes, when you contact a constituted sister or brother, you have the sense of meeting a mountain. Such ones are like Mount Zion.

As the Mountains Surround Jerusalem, So Jehovah Surrounding His People from Now and to Eternity

As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so Jehovah surrounds His people from now and to eternity (v. 2).

Psalm 127 Revealing Jehovah's Care for and Blessing to His People; Instead of Laboring in Ourselves, Our Needing to Trust in God, for He Will Take Care of Us and He Will Bless Us

Psalm 127 reveals Jehovah's care for and blessing to His people; instead of laboring in ourselves, we should trust in God, for He will take care of us and He will bless us.

Psalm 128 Speaking of Jehovah's Blessing to Israel from Zion; God Always Blessing People from Zion, That Is, from the Overcomers

Psalm 128 speaks of Jehovah's blessing to Israel from Zion; God always blesses people from Zion, that is, from the overcomers (v. 5; cf. Num. 6:23-27).

In Psalm 131 a Saint Speaking about His Humbled Heart and Quieted Soul before Jehovah

In Psalm 131 a saint speaks about his humbled heart and quieted soul before Jehovah. This psalm merits a little more attention because it is a bridge into Psalm 132, where we see the overcomers' situation on Mount Zion. Psalm 131 is of only three verses:

> O Jehovah, my heart is not proud, / Nor are my eyes haughty; / Nor do I go about in things too great / Or too wondrous for me. / Surely I have calmed / And quieted my soul, / Like a weaned child with its mother; / Like a weaned child is my soul within me. / Hope in Jehovah, O Israel, / From now and to eternity.

As we are approaching Zion and are under the care of the Shepherd of our souls, the Lord cares for us in such a way that causes us to calm down our soul. Then there is nothing haughty in us, no pride in our heart, and we are weaned. We are no longer crying but accept the fact of being weaned, and because we are like a weaned child, our soul is very quiet. This opens the way for God to have His rest among us as Mount Zion.

The Psalmist Having Calmed and Quieted His Soul within Him; His Having Been Weaned, or Stripped, of Everything Except the Lord

The psalmist has calmed and quieted his soul within him; he has been weaned, or stripped, of everything except the Lord (v. 2). The way to Zion is the costly way of loss and then the way of gain. It is the way of stripping, or weaning, until our being finally learns that satisfaction is only in the Triune God Himself. I do not look forward to satisfaction in my marriage; I do not expect it to come through my children. I am not disappointed for their situation. I do not dream that it will come through grandchildren. I do not look for anything outward to satisfy my being. Only my processed and consummated Triune God is my satisfaction. The Lord has to have some with such a vision, who love Him by His love in such a way that they will count all things loss. In the first phase we suffer the loss of all things, and then in the second phase we count all things as refuse (cf. Phil. 3:8). I used to wonder if there might be any deep happiness and satisfaction anywhere. My answer now is no and yes—no to anything natural or human but a great, wonderful yes to the Triune God.

We are coming to the final point in which we will see that God Himself has His rest only in Zion. Likewise, our being cannot have true rest in any other place. Therefore, as the book of Job indicates, the Lord has to strip us of what we think we must have or what we think we are entitled to in order to cause us to be satisfied in this life. He will also strip us of the envy of those whom we think have these things. We will have no more complaints about God not being fair; He will just be God.

One day you consecrated to Him in a real way with real openness. Now He is relentlessly working on the basis of that consecration, which for many is being renewed even during this training, and eventually, He will bring you to the point where your soul is weaned. At such a point, like that of a weaned child, your soul will be quiet and calm. You expect nothing, hope for nothing, and seek for nothing other than the Lord and His heart's desire. You do not want anything in the recovery, you do not want to be anything in the Lord's work, and you do not want to be recognized. You are willing to be martyred, not only psychologically but spiritually. Nothing matters but the Lord's satisfaction and rest.

When Our Heart Is Humbled and Our Soul Is Quiet, Our Being in a Condition That Is Suitable for God to Come in to Rest

In Such a Situation God Being Able to Have a Resting Place, a Dwelling

When our heart is humbled and our soul is quiet, we are in a condition that is suitable for God to come in to rest (Psa. 132:14). In such a situation God can have a resting place, a dwelling (v. 14).

Only When We Are Humble, Calm, and Quiet, the Situation Being Right for God to Rise Up, Enter Us, and Take Us as His Resting Place; This Being Zion Becoming God's Habitation, His Resting Place, as Revealed in Psalm 132

Only when we are humble, calm, and quiet is the situation right for God to rise up, enter us, and take us as His resting place; this is Zion

becoming God's habitation, His resting place, as revealed in Psalm 132. Brothers and sisters, the peace is indescribable. There is such rest, quiet, tranquility, and calm. Regardless of what is swirling around you and regardless of your physical situation or environment, part of you is in another realm, a divine and mystical realm of awesome reality, and you are just resting with God in Zion, the reality of the Body of Christ.

PSALM 132 SPEAKING CONCERNING JEHOVAH'S HABITATION AND REST IN ZION THROUGH DAVID (TYPIFYING CHRIST) HIS ANOINTED

Verses 2 through 5 Showing David's Desire for the House of God

Psalm 132 speaks concerning Jehovah's habitation and rest in Zion through David (typifying Christ) His anointed. In verses 2 through 5 we see David's desire for the house of God.

David Wanting Jehovah to Arise and Enter with the Ark into His Resting Place in Zion; Today This Resting Place Being the Overcomers in the Churches

David wanted Jehovah to arise and enter with the Ark into His resting place in Zion; today this resting place is the overcomers in the churches (vv. 6-8). There must be sisters and brothers in whose being Christ Himself can rest. They have been willing over the years for Him to answer their prayer of Ephesians 3 again and again: "Lord, make Your home deep down in my heart. Fill me unto all the fullness of God." If we would pray this in our conversations with the Lord every day in the coming year, one year from now we will realize that there is more Christ in our being than there is today. This will be especially so when we pray, "Lord, do this not for my spirituality and not merely for my personal overcoming. Do this for Zion. Build Zion by building Yourself into my being. Lord, I love You. I would be only Your simple, even crazy, lover. Kiss me and embrace me. Lord, I abandon my being to You. I have no other purpose for existing. I am not here for anything outward but only for what is real. Only what is real will be manifested in the coming age. Build Yourself into me, work Yourself into me, constitute me, saturate me, permeate me, Christify me, and deify me for the Body of Christ, the bride of Christ, and the kingdom of God."

Psalm 132:7 and 8 Being Figurative of the Recovery of the Church Life

The Ark Being Separated from the Tabernacle; This Signifying That Christ Was with the Church but That He Has Been Separated from the Church

Psalm 132:7 and 8 are figurative of the recovery of the church life. The Ark was separated from the tabernacle; this signifies that Christ was with the church but that He has been separated from the church.

Now Being the Time for Us All to Say, "Arise, O Jehovah, unto Your Resting Place, You and the Ark of Your Strength"

Now is the time for us all to say, "Arise, O Jehovah, unto Your resting place, / You and the Ark of Your strength" (v. 8).

Verses 14 through 18 Being Jehovah's Speaking concerning Zion; This Being a Picture of the Top Church Life—the Situation of the Overcomers in Zion, the Highest Peak of God's Mountain

Verses 14 through 18 are Jehovah's speaking concerning Zion; this is a picture of the top church life—the situation of the overcomers in Zion, the highest peak of God's mountain. Verse 13 says, "Jehovah has chosen Zion; / He has desired it for His habitation." Following this, God speaks in verses 14 through 18:

> This is My resting place forever; / Here will I dwell, for I have desired it. / I will abundantly bless its provision; / I will satisfy its poor with bread. / And its priests I will clothe with salvation, / And its faithful ones will shout with a ringing shout. / There I will cause a horn of David to shoot forth; / I have prepared a lamp for My anointed one. / I will clothe his enemies with shame, / But on him his crown will shine.

Psalm 132 Mentioning Seven Items Related to the Overcomers: Resting in God, Dwelling with God, Food for Satisfaction, Glorious Clothing, the Horn of Victory, the Enlightening Lamp, and the Shining Crown

Psalm 132 mentions seven items related to the overcomers: resting in God, dwelling with God (v. 14), food for satisfaction (v. 15), glorious

clothing (v. 16), the horn of victory (v. 17), the enlightening lamp (v. 17), and the shining crown (v. 18). The first of these items is resting in God. For God to rest is a great thing. God can rest only when the desire of His heart has been satisfied. We see a picture of this in Genesis 1. Once there was a man in His image with His dominion, God beheld what He had created and said, "Very good," and then God rested.

In *The Glorious Church* Brother Nee says, "If we desire to know God's will, His plan, His good pleasure, and His purpose, we have only to look at that which caused Him to rest. If we see that God rests in a certain thing, then we may know that is something He was originally after" (p. 21).

For us to rest in God means that in our union, mingling, and incorporation with Him, we have a mutual appreciation of the fulfillment of His purpose, at least in miniature, by the overcomers. We simply are not working. God Himself is at rest. There is only one place where He can rest, and that is Zion. Actually, God cannot rest that much in Jerusalem. If you are merely in Jerusalem, you will sense within that you are not deeply at rest and that neither is God. However, when we touch Zion together, we rest with God. We dwell with God according to John 14, in the way of coinherence, having become a mutual dwelling place.

Another item related to the overcomers is food for satisfaction: the poor are satisfied with bread. The overcomers sense in their spirit that they are empty, open, and in need of God all the time. Their being is poor without Him, so He satisfies them with the bread of life, the living, heavenly, and true bread, the bread of God.

The next item is glorious clothing. They are clothed with salvation. This surely is the expression of God's full salvation worked out in us. Psalm 132:9 mentions righteousness being the priest's clothing. In verse 16 they are clothed with His salvation; they are saved in life to the uttermost, having the second garment, the wedding garment. They express what they are in their being. Their clothing is salvation itself. Other saints do not have a sense of an unapproachable, awesome spirituality with them. Instead, they realize that here is one who is a sinner saved by grace, one who has been saved in life. If it can happen in him, it can happen also in me. I say Amen—this is their clothing. Sisters, when you get married, I know you have to pay attention to your wedding dress, but I hope that both you and your bridegroom will be clothed with salvation.

Following this is the horn of victory. They touch the absolute victory

of the overcoming Christ over the enemy. Then there is the enlightening lamp; they remain under this gentle shining all the time.

Finally, there is the shining crown on their head; this is reigning in life. These are the overcomers. They are living in the reality of the Body of Christ. They live here, this is their very being, and, actually, they are this reality. They are Zion. They are seemingly ordinary brothers and sisters living the church life like anyone else, but their inner being is in a reality that few of us yet know. They just live here.

Whenever I have the privilege to see a certain dear, older sister among us, even for a moment, I meet such a reality. How blessed we are that she is still with us! May there be more of this reality in all the churches.

Brothers, may the Lord kill and annihilate our ambition, but may He nurture our aspiration to be useful for the building up of Zion.

These Items Portraying the Situation of the Overcomers in Zion, the Highest Peak of God's Mountain

These items portray the situation of the overcomers in Zion, the highest peak of God's mountain. May we all pray to enter into this reality.—R. K.

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OF THE PSALMS (2)

Jehovah's Commanded Blessing of Life on Brothers Who Dwell Together in Oneness (Message 10)

Scripture Reading: Psa. 133—134

I. Psalm 133 is the praise of a saint, in his going up to Zion, concerning Jehovah's commanded blessing of life on brothers who dwell together in oneness; the blessing that is commanded whenever brothers are united under the anointing is "life forever," a full, free, unceasing stream of life:

A. The brothers' dwelling together in oneness is likened to the inestimable goodness of the precious ointment on the head of Aaron and to the incalculable pleasantness of the dew of Hermon on the mountains of Zion—vv. 1-3:

1. As a person typified by Aaron, the church as the one new man includes the Head with the Body as the corporate Christ, the corporate priesthood—Eph. 2:15; 1 Pet. 2:5.
2. As a place typified by Zion, the church is the dwelling place of God—Deut. 12:5-7, 11, 14, 18, 21, 26; Eph. 2:21-22; Rev. 21:3, 22.

B. The genuine all-inclusive oneness (the oneness of the all-inclusive Spirit) is constituted with the spreading ointment and the descending dew for the gradual building up of Christ's Body in the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity:

1. Psalm 133 is equivalent to Ephesians 4; when we are in the Body and are diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit, we have the anointing of the all-inclusive Spirit (vv. 3-6); the anointing oil as the compound ointment is a type of the processed Triune God, the all-inclusive compound Spirit (Exo. 30:23-25):

a. The compound Spirit is the ultimate consummation

of the processed Triune God with the divine attributes, the human virtues, Christ's death with its effectiveness, and Christ's resurrection with its power—Phil. 1:19.

b. We are in the oneness that is the processed Triune God anointed, or "painted," into our being—2 Cor. 1:21-22; 1 John 2:20, 27.

c. Day by day in the church life, all the ingredients of the divine and mystical compound ointment are being wrought into us; through the application of these ingredients to our inward being, we are spontaneously in the all-inclusive one ness—Eph. 4:3-4.

d. The ground of oneness is simply the processed Triune God applied to our being; the anointing of the compound, all-inclusive life-giving Spirit is the element of our oneness—v. 4; cf. John 4:24:

1) If we act apart from the Spirit, who is in our spirit, we are divisive and lose the oneness—Eph. 4:3; cf. 1 Cor. 1:10; 2:14-15; 3:1.

2) If we stay in the life-giving Spirit, we keep the oneness of the Spirit—cf. John 4:24; 1 Cor. 6:17.

e. The compound Spirit is not for those who are individualistic; He is in and for the Body and for the priestly service that builds up the Body—Psa. 133:2; Exo. 30:26-31; Phil. 1:19; Rom. 15:16; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9.

2. The dew of Hermon descending on the mountains of Zion signifies the descending, refreshing, watering, and saturating grace of life (3:7), the Triune God as our life supply for our enjoyment (2 Cor. 13:14):

a. In typology Hermon signifies the heavens, the highest place in the universe—cf. Eph. 1:3; Matt. 17:1-2.

b. The mountains of Zion typify the local churches; there is one Zion, one church as one Body, but many mountains, many local churches—Rev. 1:11-12.

c. Grace is God in Christ as the Spirit experienced, received, enjoyed, and gained by us—John 1:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:10; Gal. 2:20-21; Rom. 5:2, 17, 21.

d. By remaining in the church life, we are preserved in the Lord's grace—Acts 4:33; 11:23.

e. By the grace we receive on the mountains of Zion, we can live a life that is impossible for people in the world to live—20:32; 2 Cor. 12:7-9.

f. The Christian living must be the living of grace, the experience of grace—1:12; 1 Cor. 15:10; 2 Tim. 4:22:

1) We have faith and love through the Lord's superabounding grace—1 Tim. 1:14.

2) By grace we receive the salvation in life through Christ's resurrection and ascension—Eph. 2:5-8.

3) We have obtained access into and stand in God's abounding grace—Rom. 5:2.

4) In this grace we can enjoy God's eternal comfort and good hope—2 Thes. 2:16.

5) We can come forward with boldness to the throne of grace to find grace for timely help—Heb. 4:16; cf. Eph. 2:22.

6) We can receive God's abounding supply of all grace—2 Cor. 9:8.

7) We can constantly enjoy God's multiplying grace—1 Pet. 1:2b; 2 Pet. 1:2; Rev. 22:21.

8) We can enjoy God's greater grace through humility—James 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5.

9) In our experience of the grace in God's economy, we enjoy the Lord's presence in our spirit—2 Tim. 4:22; cf. Luke 1:28, 30.

10) We need to live out Christ as God's righteousness by the grace of God—Gal. 2:20-21.

11) We need to experience the perfecting of the Lord's sufficient grace, Christ's overshadowing power, in our weakness—2 Cor. 12:9.

12) By grace we can overcome the usurpation of temporal and uncertain riches and become generous in ministering to the needy saints—8:1-2.

13) The God of all grace perfects, establishes, strengthens, and grounds us through our sufferings—1 Pet. 5:10.

14) We need to be good stewards of the varied grace of God—4:10; Eph. 3:2.

15) Our word should convey Christ as grace to others—4:29-30.
16) We need to experience Christ as grace to be a surpassing one and to labor abundantly for the Lord—1 Cor. 15:10.
17) We need to receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness to reign in life—Rom. 5:17, 21.

g. The grace given to the local churches in the dark age of the church's degradation is for the believers who seek to answer the Lord's calling to be His overcomers—Rev. 1:4.
h. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ dispensed to His believers throughout the New Testament age consummates in the New Jerusalem as the consummation of God's good pleasure in joining and mingling Himself with man for His enlargement and eternal expression—22:21.

3. In the church life we are daily anointed and graced—Eph. 1:13, 6.
4. The anointing of the Spirit and the supply of grace make it possible for us to live in oneness.
5. The more we experience Christ as the life-giving Spirit, the more our natural constitution and disposition are reduced; as they are reduced through our experience of the Triune God with His divine attributes, we are perfected into one—John 17:23; Eph. 4:1-3.

II. As the conclusion to Psalm 133 and as the last of the Songs of Ascents, Psalm 134 is the praise of a saint, in his going up to Zion, concerning the charge and the blessing of the children of Israel to the serving priests in the house of God:
A. Psalm 134 indicates that the highest people, those who are in Zion, can bless everyone and teach everyone—vv. 1-2; cf. Gen. 47:10; 48:20; 49:28.
B. The blessing comes from Zion, from the highest peak, from the ones who have attained to the top, to the position of the overcomers—Psa. 134:3.
C. In every age and century God's blessing has come to the church because of the overcomers—cf. Rev. 2:7; Num. 6:23-27.

MESSAGE TEN

JEHOVAH'S COMMANDED BLESSING OF LIFE ON BROTHERS WHO DWELL TOGETHER IN ONENESS

This message will cover Psalms 133 and 134, the last two of the fifteen Songs of Ascents. These fifteen psalms were sung by the children of Israel as they were going up to Zion. In the past few decades archaeologists have excavated many areas in Jerusalem. In particular, there have been extensive digs on the southern part of the Temple Mount, including the City of David. The southern steps of the Temple Mount are two hundred feet wide and were probably used by the children of Israel in going up to the temple for the feasts. These steps were constructed by Herod the Great around 19 B.C. Today many tourists read or sing these fifteen Songs of Ascents, one song for each broad step, as they go up to the now-blocked gates of the Temple Mount. This is a wonderful picture of how God's people ascend to Zion, a picture of our experience of ascending to Zion in the church life.

We may use four adjectives to describe our experience in the church life—corporate, ascending, loving, and singing. First, our experience in the church life is always a corporate experience. These fifteen psalms were not intended to be sung alone. When we read some of the other psalms, we realize that they were intended to be sung alone. The fifteen Songs of Ascents, however, are corporate psalms.

Second, the church life is an ascending, or advancing, experience. In the church life we are always advancing; we are always going up. Zion is the place of blessing, and Jericho is the place of curse (Josh. 6:26), so going to Jericho is "going down" (cf. Luke 10:30). However, since we came into the church life, we have been continually going up. The church life is an ever-ascending, advancing experience.

Third, the church life is a loving experience. The church life is characterized by a desire, love, prayer, yearning, and aspiration for Zion. The church life is a love affair with God's habitation.

Fourth, the church life is a singing experience. As the children of Israel were going up to Zion, they were singing. The church life is characterized

by these four things. The church life is corporate, never lonely; it is always advancing; it is a sweet and loving experience; and it is a singing experience. We sing all the way as we ascend; this is why we say that Psalm 133 is a praise of the saints.

In Deuteronomy 16 God's people were commanded to come together three times a year. Verse 16 says, "Three times a year all your males shall appear before Jehovah your God in the place which He will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles." When God's people came together, what were they to do? They were to rejoice: "You and your son and daughter, and your male servant and female servant, and the Levite who is within your gates and the sojourner and the orphan and the widow who are in your midst shall rejoice before Jehovah your God in the place where Jehovah your God will choose to cause His name to dwell...And you and your son and daughter, and your male servant and female servant, and the Levite and the sojourner and the orphan and the widow who are within your gates shall rejoice in your feast. You shall keep the feast to Jehovah your God for seven days in the place which Jehovah will choose, for Jehovah your God will bless you in all your produce and in all your undertakings; therefore you shall be nothing but joyful" (vv. 11, 14-15). The fulfillment of this picture began in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost. The early believers experienced a day-by-day, rejoicing church life. Acts 2:46-47 says, "Day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, they partook of their food with exultation and simplicity of heart, praising God and having grace with all the people. And the Lord added together day by day those who were being saved." Praise the Lord! This is our experience in the church life.

As we are ascending on the road to Zion, we sing together about the goodness of Zion. I do not believe that the children of Israel were speaking to one another about their crops or their families as they were going up to Zion. Perhaps the Lord gave them these fifteen Songs of Ascents in order to cut off all their talking; rather than talking of their own affairs, they would say, "How lovely is Your house, O Lord!" They would sing these psalms to one another. In the church life we are not merely concerned with our families and our jobs; our hearts are set on Zion.

Psalm 133 says, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is / For brothers to dwell in unity! / It is like the fine oil upon the head / That ran down upon the beard, / Upon Aaron's beard, / That ran down upon the hem of his garments; / Like the dew of Hermon / That came down upon the mountains of Zion. / For there Jehovah commanded the blessing: / Life forever."

This psalm begins with the word *behold,* indicating that what is spoken of in this psalm is visible and practical. The church life is not something intangible. In every city we can say to people, "Behold! Look, how good and how pleasant!" How good is the church life? We cannot adequately express it; this is why the psalmist says, "How good!" In this way the psalmist did not need to append an adjective to his statement. In this message we use two wonderful adjectives: *inestimable,* which means "incapable of being estimated or assessed," and *incalculable,* which means "beyond calculation." Thus, the writer of this psalm says, "How good!" for it is better and more pleasant than anything we can imagine when brothers dwell together in oneness.

The ascent to Zion reaches the highest point in Psalm 132. In verse 14 the Lord says, "This is My resting place forever; / Here will I dwell, for I have desired it." Footnote 2 on this verse says, "Psalm 132 mentions seven items related to the overcomers: resting with God, dwelling with God (v. 14), food for satisfaction (v. 15), glorious clothing (v. 16), the horn of victory (v. 17), the enlightening lamp (v. 17), and the shining crown (v. 18). These items are at the top of the church life. They portray the situation of the overcomers in Zion, the highest peak of God's mountain." This is a picture of the top church life, of Zion. Then Psalm 133 portrays the practical living in Zion. We may say that Psalm 132 is on the church life, and Psalm 133 is on the church living. The church life is a very practical thing; it is our living together. The recovery of the Lord is the recovery of the church life.

In the sixteenth century Martin Luther recovered something of the truth in the Bible, but it was in the eighteenth century that there was a gradual yearning among God's seekers to recover the church life. When we say "the church life," we mean "the church living." The wonderful things spoken of in Psalm 133 concerning the anointing oil and the descending dew are experienced as the saints live together. As the saints are living together in the recovery of the church life, God commands the blessing of "life forever." I love the church life! The church life is the corporate living of the saints.

As we will speak later in this message, Psalm 133 is equivalent to Ephesians 4. Ephesians 4 describes a church life that is based on the

revelation presented in Ephesians 1—3. In these chapters we see that Christ has accomplished everything to produce the church as a dwelling place of God in spirit (2:22) and that Paul was given a stewardship (3:2) to announce the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel to the Gentiles (v. 8) so that the multifarious wisdom of God might be made known through the church (v. 10). Thus, Ephesians 1—3 reveals what the church is; then chapter 4 reveals the practical living of the church. In the practical living of the church, the first item is the oneness of the Spirit (v. 3). In verse 1 Paul says, "I beseech you therefore, I, the prisoner in the Lord, to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called." After receiving the wonderful revelation and calling revealed in chapters 1 through 3, we need to have a definite walk.

Brother Nee's book *Sit, Walk, Stand* is based on the book of Ephesians. Ephesians says that we are seated with Christ in the heavenlies (2:6); this is to produce the church. Then in chapter 4 we come to our walk (v. 1), which is based on the fact that we are seated with Christ in the heavenlies.

Psalm 133 speaks of the brothers dwelling in unity (v. 1). We should take note of the phrase *dwell in unity.* When the children of Israel came together three times a year, there was an exhibition of their daily living in the good land. Footnote 1 on Deuteronomy 12:17 says,

> The children of Israel could enjoy the rich produce of the good land in two ways. The common, private way was to enjoy it as a common portion at any time, in any place, and with anyone (v. 15). The special, corporate way was to enjoy the top portion, the firstfruits and the firstlings, with all the Israelites at the appointed feasts and in the unique place chosen by God (see footnote 1 on v. 5). Likewise, the enjoyment of Christ by the New Testament believers is of two aspects—the common, private aspect of enjoying Christ at any time and at any place, and the special, corporate aspect of enjoying the top portion of Christ in the meetings of the proper church life on the unique ground of oneness, the place chosen by God.

The church life is not a religion. In Acts 2 the church life is revealed as a day-by-day and house-to-house living (v. 46); it is the practical living together of the saints. The church life is a demonstration and a manifestation of our living together in oneness.

In Ephesians 4 the first item mentioned related to our walking worthily of our calling is the oneness of the Spirit (v. 3). In speaking of the practical living in the church life, many of us may begin with Ephesians 5, which says, "Wives, be subject to your own husbands as to the Lord" (v. 22) and "Husbands, love your wives" (v. 25). But this is not the first thing that Paul mentions. The first thing that Paul mentions is something that is already in existence, something that was initiated by God and called "the oneness of the Spirit." The believers simply need to keep the oneness of the Spirit. If we have believed in Jesus Christ, then we have received the Spirit. That this oneness is called "the oneness of the Spirit" means that the Spirit is the oneness. Thus, it already exists, and we need only to keep it. When we recognize someone as a Christian, we immediately sense a oneness with him. We do not need to manufacture any kind of oneness with him; the oneness is already present. All we need to do is keep it.

The anointing on Aaron's head, that ran down all the way to the hem of his garments (Psa. 133:2), is real and present in the church life. Second Corinthians 1:21 says, "The One who firmly attaches us with you unto Christ and has anointed us is God." Footnote 6 in this verse says, "Since we have been attached by God to Christ, the anointed One, we are spontaneously anointed with Him by God." This is an accomplished fact. As soon as we become members of Christ, we are joined to Him as the anointed One.

PSALM 133 BEING THE PRAISE OF A SAINT, IN HIS GOING UP TO ZION, CONCERNING JEHOVAH'S COMMANDED BLESSING OF LIFE ON BROTHERS WHO DWELL TOGETHER IN ONENESS; THE BLESSING THAT IS COMMANDED WHENEVER BROTHERS ARE UNITED UNDER THE ANOINTING BEING "LIFE FOREVER," A FULL, FREE, UNCEASING STREAM OF LIFE

Psalm 133 is the praise of a saint, in his going up to Zion, concerning Jehovah's commanded blessing of life on brothers who dwell together in oneness; the blessing that is commanded whenever brothers are united under the anointing is "life forever," a full, free, unceasing stream of life. I love the phrase *dwell together.* Some people do not like to live together with others; they prefer to be alone. But there is a great blessing in living together with others. This is why there is such a great blessing in being married. When we see some married couples, we may say, "Behold, how good and how pleasant for those two to dwell

together. It is like the precious ointment." The precious ointment in our married life does not come from us; it comes from the Head and is upon us already. Some young people do not want to get married; they do not like to be with others. They just want to be alone, to be free. However, there is something wonderful about living together with others. This fellowship concerning married life is applicable because our married life is part of the church life and should be a reflection of the church life.

In the church life we often have brothers' houses and sisters' houses. How good and how pleasant it is for the brothers to live together in oneness! The church life is not just a meeting life. The Psalms do not say, "How lovely is the meeting place of God!" Rather, Psalm 84:1 says, "How lovely are Your tabernacles, / O Jehovah of hosts!" How lovely is God's habitation! God is not for a meeting place; God is for His habitation.

In Psalm 132 Jehovah does not say, "Here will I meet" but "Here will I dwell" (v. 14). Psalm 133:1 says, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is / For brothers to dwell in unity!" Sometimes we may speak of married life as a cross, but here we would like to declare how wonderful it is when we live together. Of course, if we are for our own interests, it is not that wonderful. If a brother is for Zion and his wife is for Zion, nothing else matters. There is the oil and the dew; that is, there is the Spirit and the grace. A husband and wife are "fellow heirs of the grace of life" (1 Pet. 3:7). A husband and wife are hand-in-hand, arm-in-arm fellow heirs of the grace of life. Grace comes like the dew; we do not notice its coming, but suddenly it is there. Some are living in the brothers' house, and then suddenly grace is there. A brother is walking along with his wife, and suddenly grace is there. The church life is the community of grace.

The church life is not a matter of power or of gifts. It is not a matter of one brother impressing another. It is a matter of "life forever." It is a matter of enjoying the Triune God Himself.

The Brothers' Dwelling Together in Oneness Being Likened to the Inestimable Goodness of the Precious Ointment on the Head of Aaron and to the Incalculable Pleasantness of the Dew of Hermon on the Mountains of Zion

The brothers' dwelling together in oneness is likened to the inestimable goodness of the precious ointment on the head of Aaron and to the incalculable pleasantness of the dew of Hermon on the mountains

of Zion (Psa. 133:1-3). The inestimable goodness is the "how good" of the precious ointment on the head of Aaron, and the incalculable pleasantness is the "how pleasant" of the dew of Hermon on the mountains of Zion.

As a Person Typified by Aaron, the Church as the One New Man Including the Head with the Body as the Corporate Christ, the Corporate Priesthood

As a person typified by Aaron, the church as the one new man includes the Head with the Body as the corporate Christ, the corporate priesthood (Eph. 2:15; 1 Pet. 2:5).

As a Place Typified by Zion, the Church Being the Dwelling Place of God

As a place typified by Zion, the church is the dwelling place of God (Deut. 12:5-7, 11, 14, 18, 21, 26; Eph. 2:21-22; Rev. 21:3, 22). We are one in the person of Christ, and we are one in the place of the ground of oneness. Our oneness is not based on our disposition or our taste. Our oneness is based on the person of Christ, and our oneness is also based on the fact that we are all holding the same ground, the ground of oneness. Our oneness is based on a person and a place. Married life is also held together by this same person and by the principle of oneness. Oneness in married life is based on both the brother and the sister being for the Lord. What matters in the church life is not what we like or dislike; what matters is the person of Christ and the ground of oneness.

The Genuine All-inclusive Oneness (the Oneness of the All-inclusive Spirit) Being Constituted with the Spreading Ointment and the Descending Dew for the Gradual Building Up of Christ's Body in the Divine Dispensing of the Divine Trinity

The genuine all-inclusive oneness (the oneness of the all-inclusive Spirit) is constituted with the spreading ointment and the descending dew for the gradual building up of Christ's Body in the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity. This oneness is an accomplished oneness. In John 17 the Lord prayed for this oneness (vv. 11, 21-23), and on the cross He accomplished it. Ephesians 2:13-14 says, "Now in Christ Jesus you who were once far off have become near in the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, He who has made both one and has broken

down the middle wall of partition, the enmity." Christ Himself became our peace and is now the oneness of the Spirit.

The genuine all-inclusive oneness is constituted with the spreading ointment and with the descending dew; the ointment signifies the Spirit, and the dew signifies grace. These two are very important and are very experiential in the church life. Ephesians 1:6 says, "To the praise of the glory of His grace, with which He graced us in the Beloved," and verse 13 says, "In whom you also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation, in Him also believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of the promise." First there is the grace, and then there is the sealing Spirit. In the details of the practical church life in chapter 4, verses 29 and 30 say, "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but only that which is good for building up, according to the need, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed unto the day of redemption." We need to speak words to one another that are good for building up and that supply grace, and we should not grieve the Holy Spirit of God.

In our living together in the church life, words of grace are very meaningful. What we say can either damage or supply grace. Thus, Colossians 4:6 says, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one." To solve or avoid problems in married life, a husband and wife should speak words of grace to each other.

We should not grieve the Spirit. When brothers living together in a brothers' house irritate one another, each one needs to turn to his spirit. When each brother turns to his spirit, the Spirit will give him the anointing. This is very practical.

The genuine oneness is for the gradual building up of Christ's Body in the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity. Some believers want everything overnight, but with God, everything is gradual. Some believers embrace one another in an outward display of love when they come together, but when their meeting is dismissed, they have another kind of living. The church life is not merely our meeting life. The church life is a twenty-four-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week life; it is all of us living together day by day. When we live together in such a way, we gradually sense the Spirit and grace.

At first a new one may be bothered by some of our practices in the church life. However, over the course of a month or two, something

gradually gets into him. This is the nature of the church life. In the church life we have the gradual building up of Christ's Body in the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity. The oil does not flow instantly as a flood; it flows slowly. In the same way, as we are living together, the Spirit comes in gradually. This Spirit is none other than the consummation of the processed Triune God Himself. He is the dispensing of the Divine Trinity.

Ephesians 4:6 speaks of "one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." Verses 4 and 5 speak of "one Spirit" and "one Lord." Here is the presence of the Triune God. Similarly, in Psalm 133 there is the commanded blessing of the Father (v. 3), the grace of the Son as the dew (v. 3), and the anointing Spirit as the fine oil (v. 2). What makes the church life and the brothers' houses so good is the dispensing of the Triune God. This cannot be purchased with money. We might purchase a mansion with money, but that is not how we receive the Triune God. The Triune God is there when the brothers live together in oneness.

The older saints might testify that the best thing in married life is to share the grace of life with one another. The biggest blessing in married life is not a large house or well-behaved children; it is to be fellow partakers. For a married couple to be fellow partakers means that they are partners; if there is any profit, the partners share it together. If there is any blessing from the Triune God, they share it together. This is wonderful! Surely, there are some like Paul or J. N. Darby who never marry. In his old age Darby was alone in his hotel room, and he said, "Lord Jesus, I still love You." One brother told his wife of many years, "Honey, you are still my best friend." Perhaps some would prefer to say, "Lord Jesus, I still love You." But it is also wonderful to say, "Honey, you are still my best friend," or for one to say, "Brother, after many years, we are still the best of brothers."

Psalm 133 Being Equivalent to Ephesians 4; When We Are in the Body and Are Diligent to Keep the Oneness of the Spirit, Our Having the Anointing of the All-inclusive Spirit; the Anointing Oil as the Compound Ointment Being a Type of the Processed Triune God, the All-inclusive Compound Spirit

Psalm 133 is equivalent to Ephesians 4; when we are in the Body and are diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit, we have the anointing

of the all-inclusive Spirit (vv. 3-6); the anointing oil as the compound ointment is a type of the processed Triune God, the all-inclusive compound Spirit (Exo. 30:23-25). When we have the all-inclusive compound Spirit, we have everything. The nature of the church life is not feelings, arguments, or right and wrong, but God Himself. The main function of the teaching of the anointing is to teach us to abide in Him. Instead of teaching us who is right and who is wrong, the teaching of the anointing causes us to "abide in Him" (1 John 2:27).

According to 2 Corinthians 1:21, we are attached to the anointed One. The Spirit, as emphasized in 2 Corinthians, is not the Spirit of power but the anointing Spirit, the sealing Spirit, the pledging Spirit, the inscribing Spirit, the ministering Spirit, the liberating Spirit, the transforming Spirit, the renewing Spirit, and the fellowshipping Spirit (vv. 21-22; 3:3, 6, 17-18; 4:16; 13:14). This is the Spirit that we experience when we dwell together with the brothers in oneness and together are attached to the anointed One. Experiencing the Spirit in this way is much better than experiencing the so-called Spirit of power.

The Compound Spirit Being the Ultimate Consummation of the Processed Triune God with the Divine Attributes, the Human Virtues, Christ's Death with Its Effectiveness, and Christ's Resurrection with Its Power

The compound Spirit is the ultimate consummation of the processed Triune God with the divine attributes, the human virtues, Christ's death with its effectiveness, and Christ's resurrection with its power (Phil. 1:19). This is the Spirit that we need in our daily living. If we are living with the saints and are surrounded by the saints on all sides, we need the ultimate consummation of the processed Triune God with the divine attributes, the human virtues, Christ's death, the effectiveness of Christ's death, and Christ resurrection with its power. If we do not have the compound Spirit, others will find it difficult to be with us, and we will drive them away.

I am reminded of an anecdote concerning two hedgehogs. It was winter, and these two hedgehogs wanted to huddle together to stay warm. Hedgehogs, however, are covered in quills, and the moment they were close enough to each other to huddle together, they poked each other with their quills and drove each other away. Our experience of the church life can be like this if we do not experience the compound Spirit. We love the church life. The world is very cold. But when we try to escape the cold world into the church life, we may repel one another with our "quills." Oh, how we need to experience the compound Spirit with all His wonderful ingredients!

Our Being in the Oneness That Is the Processed Triune God Anointed, or "Painted," into Our Being

We are in the oneness that is the processed Triune God anointed, or "painted," into our being (2 Cor. 1:21-22; 1 John 2:20, 27). In this oneness all our opinions about everything are "painted over" with the processed Triune God as the anointing.

Day by Day in the Church Life, All the Ingredients of the Divine and Mystical Compound Ointment Being Wrought into Us; through the Application of These Ingredients to Our Inward Being, Our Being Spontaneously in the All-inclusive Oneness

Day by day in the church life, all the ingredients of the divine and mystical compound ointment are being wrought into us; through the application of these ingredients to our inward being, we are spontaneously in the all-inclusive oneness (Eph. 4:3-4). The church life is a day-to-day life; it is a life that includes every day of the week.

The Ground of Oneness Being Simply the Processed Triune God Applied to Our Being; the Anointing of the Compound, All-inclusive Life-giving Spirit Being the Element of Our Oneness

The ground of oneness is simply the processed Triune God applied to our being; the anointing of the compound, all-inclusive life-giving Spirit is the element of our oneness (v. 4; cf. John 4:24). The word *simply* here is very important. The ground of oneness is not merely a matter of geography. Neither does it have anything to do with one's practices or doctrinal stands. The ground of oneness is simply the Triune God Himself. That is all. By dispensing Himself as the anointing into us, this anointing as the compound, all-inclusive life-giving Spirit becomes the element of our oneness.

If We Act apart from the Spirit, Who Is in Our Spirit, Our Being Divisive and Losing the Oneness

If we act apart from the Spirit, who is in our spirit, we are divisive and lose the oneness (Eph. 4:3; cf. 1 Cor. 1:10; 2:14-15; 3:1).

If We Stay in the Life-giving Spirit, Our Keeping the Oneness of the Spirit

If we stay in the life-giving Spirit, we keep the oneness of the Spirit (cf. John 4:24; 1 Cor. 6:17). Our oneness has its source solely in God Himself. We are one because we all receive the dispensing of the Triune God. Our oneness does not stem from any human being. If it did, our oneness would exclude certain people. Neither are we one because we agree about doctrine or because we are similar in disposition. In a dispositional oneness, a strong brother may demand that all the saints be subject to him. Such oneness is based on that brother's disposition. Any oneness that is based on anything other than the processed Triune God applied to our being can be likened to the high places in the Old Testament. The highest place in the Old Testament was Zion. However, the Israelites built high places to replace the highest place. If someone has a strong disposition, they may achieve outward oneness. That oneness, however, is not genuine oneness; rather, it is a high place that replaces the oneness of Zion. Similarly, if we declare that we agree on doctrine and make that agreement our oneness, we are building up a high place. We need to tear down all the high places and receive the dispensing of the Triune God.

In *The Speciality, Generality, and Practicality of the Church Life,* Brother Lee points out that according to the Word of God, the only thing that we keep, fight for, contend for, and hold as special is the Christian faith. The main items of the Christian faith are the beliefs concerning the Bible, God, Christ, the work of Christ, salvation, and the church. These are the primary things that we hold as special among us. Hence, whereas we cannot receive anyone who denies the person of Christ (2 John 9-10), we cannot insist on the way that others should dress, talk, or eat. This is the generality of the church. This is similar to a marriage, in which the husband and the wife cannot insist on minor things. If the wife likes yellow, the husband should say Amen. If the brother likes green, the sister should say Amen. This will make their marriage life happy. The practicality of the oneness of the church is not a matter of our merely agreeing with one another. If someone comes into the church life and he wants to keep the Sabbath, we should not dismiss him and send him away to the Seventh-day Adventists. The apostle Paul's attitude toward believers was that as long as a person was received by Christ, he received that person. This was his charge to all believers (Rom. 15:7). Such a receiving is the expression of the genuine ground of oneness.

There are many times in the church life when we do not agree on things. Then again, we are not required to agree on everything. If we were required to agree on everything, we would be in the army, not the church life. Sometimes because of our differences, we may sense distance between us and another brother. However, despite our differences, we are bound by the same thing—we are all here for the Lord. Of course, sometimes in the church life, we all agree. This is a wonderful experience. It is like a honeymoon. After some time, however, we may realize that the saints around us are very different from us. When we realize this, the church life may become very difficult for us to handle. However, this is the church life. The ground of oneness does not subsist because I agree with you or you agree with me; the ground of oneness is simply the processed Triune God.

The Compound Spirit
Being Not for Those Who Are Individualistic;
His Being in and for the Body
and for the Priestly Service That Builds Up the Body

The compound Spirit is not for those who are individualistic; He is in and for the Body and for the priestly service that builds up the Body (Psa. 133:2; Exo. 30:26-31; Phil. 1:19; Rom. 15:16; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9). A very serious charge was attached to Jehovah's word concerning the compound ointment in Exodus 30. If someone used it illegally, he would be cut off from God's people (vv. 32-33).

Do you want to claim the Spirit? Do not try to claim it outside the Body life. If you live in individualistic isolation from the saints, you will be cut off from God's people according to the principle in Exodus. The compound Spirit is reserved for the priestly service and for the Body.

The Dew of Hermon Descending on the Mountains of Zion Signifying the Descending, Refreshing, Watering, and Saturating Grace of Life, the Triune God as Our Life Supply for Our Enjoyment

In Typology Hermon Signifying the Heavens,
the Highest Place in the Universe

The dew of Hermon descending on the mountains of Zion signifies the descending, refreshing, watering, and saturating grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7), the Triune God as our life supply for our enjoyment (2 Cor. 13:14).

In typology Hermon signifies the heavens, the highest place in the universe (cf. Eph. 1:3; Matt. 17:1-2).

The Mountains of Zion Typifying the Local Churches; There Being One Zion, One Church as One Body, but Many Mountains, Many Local Churches

The mountains of Zion typify the local churches; there is one Zion, one church as one Body, but many mountains, many local churches (Rev. 1:11-12).

Grace Being God in Christ as the Spirit Experienced, Received, Enjoyed, and Gained by Us

Grace is God in Christ as the Spirit experienced, received, enjoyed, and gained by us (John 1:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:10; Gal. 2:20-21; Rom. 5:2, 17, 21). In the church life what we experience is grace. First Peter 2:19-20 says, "This is grace, if anyone, because of a consciousness of God, bears sorrows by suffering unjustly. For what glory is it if, while sinning and being buffeted, you endure? But if, while doing good and suffering, you endure, this is grace with God." What is grace? Grace is the consciousness of God in the midst of unjust suffering. While we are suffering in an unjust situation, we may be required to take an action that is contrary to our own desires. The reason we may be required to take such an action is that there is a consciousness of God within us. Perhaps a brother's wife says something unjust to him. He should forgo a retort not because he has nothing to say but because he has a consciousness of God.

Many older translations of the Scriptures translate *consciousness of God* as "conscience toward God." The Greek word in question is, in most other occurrences in the New Testament, usually translated as "conscience." Additionally, the word translated as "God" in this phrase is possessive, indicating that the conscience mentioned is not man's conscience but God's. For these reasons, this verse can be translated as "conscience of God." However, here this does not mean that we should act merely by the principle of conscience. It is true that acting by the conscience is better than acting as if we had no conscience. Real grace, however, is when we act according to the *consciousness* of God. Hence, while one can translate the Greek phrase as "conscience of God," the conscience of God in this verse is, in fact, the consciousness of God.

If a person is put in prison unjustly and while in prison behaves properly for conscience's sake, he may have ground to boast in himself upon his release. If, however, a person is unjustly imprisoned and while in prison behaves properly because of a consciousness of God, he will have nothing to boast in upon his release except the grace of God, which is God Himself. The principle is the same in our living situations. Our corporate living arrangement or our marriage should not be guided by conscience alone; it should be guided by the consciousness of God. This consciousness of God, Peter says, is grace. When we, because of a consciousness of God, do not react to our roommate or our spouse, we will find that the dew of Hermon—God as grace—is there.

In the Chinese Recovery Version Brother Lee did not translate the Greek word for *grace* into the Chinese word for *grace.* Instead, he used the Chinese word for *sweetness.* To act not by reason but by the consciousness of God is something that is very sweet.

Verse 21 continues, "For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered on your behalf, leaving you a model so that you may follow in His steps." Christ Himself left us a model for us to follow. We see this model in Isaiah 53:7: "He was oppressed, and it was He who was afflicted, / Yet He did not open His mouth; / Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter / And like a sheep that is dumb before its shearers, / So He did not open His mouth." First Peter 2:23 contains a similar thought: "Who being reviled did not revile in return; suffering, He did not threaten but kept committing all to Him who judges righteously." The reason Christ did not open His mouth when oppressed, reviled, and threatened is not that He was smart or exercised prudence; the reason He was silent was that He had the consciousness of God in Him.

Peter's word concerning our following in the Lord's steps is similar to Paul's word in Ephesians 4:20-21, where he writes of our learning Christ and being "taught in Him as the reality is in Jesus." The phrase *the reality is in Jesus* refers to the actual condition of the life of Jesus as recorded in the four Gospels. Jesus lived a life in which He did everything in God, with God, and for God. God was in His living, and He was one with God. In other words, Jesus had the consciousness of God. The way we act and react in the church life should be according to our consciousness of God; that is, it should be because we are following the model of Christ. To live in this way is grace.

By Remaining in the Church Life, Our Being Preserved in the Lord's Grace

By remaining in the church life, we are preserved in the Lord's grace

(Acts 4:33; 11:23). The church life is a community of grace. Acts 4:33 speaks of great grace being upon all the saints. Grace was upon all the believers in Jerusalem, and they all received great grace. Then 11:23 says that Barnabas "saw the grace of God" that was in Antioch. The grace experienced by the saints in Antioch was so ubiquitous that people could actually see it. This is the same kind of seeing that is indicated by the word *behold* at the beginning of Psalm 133. These verses indicate that the church life is a community of grace.

By the Grace We Receive on the Mountains of Zion, Our Being Able to Live a Life That Is Impossible for People in the World to Live

By the grace we receive on the mountains of Zion, we can live a life that is impossible for people in the world to live (Acts 20:32; 2 Cor. 12:7-9). In 2 Corinthians 12:7-9 Paul speaks of an experience that was nearly unbearable:

> Because of the transcendence of the revelations, in order that I might not be exceedingly lifted up, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, that he might buffet me, in order that I might not be exceedingly lifted up. Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He has said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly therefore I will rather boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ might tabernacle over me.

In the midst of this kind of situation, Paul was able to know the Lord's all-sufficient grace. As a result, with respect to his labor, Paul could declare, "Not I but the grace of God which is with me" (1 Cor. 15:10). If we are able to do something in ourselves, that is not grace, for grace is something beyond what we are able to do.

The Christian Living Having to Be the Living of Grace, the Experience of Grace

The Christian living must be the living of grace, the experience of grace (2 Cor. 1:12; 1 Cor. 15:10; 2 Tim. 4:22). In this section we will cover seventeen points concerning the total living of a Christian. Such a total living is the living of grace and the experience of grace. In *The*

Law and Grace of God in His Economy, Brother Lee speaks of grace in relation to the total living of a Christian:

> The New Testament believers' living under the grace in God's economy is a total living of experiencing the processed Triune God as grace. It is not a matter of what to do; that is not a total living. A total living means that my entire living is a living of the Triune God processed to be grace in me. It is not a matter of whether or not to judge others; that is not a total living but a fragmented living. A total living means that twenty-four hours a day, whether I am awake or asleep, I take the Triune God as my life and my person. I follow His move; I move with Him. Two spirits become one spirit, two lives live together, and two natures are mingled together. This is the total living of experiencing the Triune God as grace. (p. 56)

The grace we receive is a grace that takes care of every aspect of our living, including our marriage life and our corporate daily life in the church.

In these seventeen points, please pay special attention to the words modifying and describing the word *grace.*

Our Having Faith and Love through the Lord's Superabounding Grace

We have faith and love through the Lord's superabounding grace (1 Tim. 1:14).

By Grace Our Receiving the Salvation in Life through Christ's Resurrection and Ascension

By grace we receive the salvation in life through Christ's resurrection and ascension (Eph. 2:5-8). In other words, we are saved by grace.

Our Having Obtained Access into and Standing in God's Abounding Grace

We have obtained access into and stand in God's abounding grace (Rom. 5:2). Grace is not only something we receive; it is something that we can get into as a realm. Just as the ark was something Noah could enter, grace is a realm into which we can enter.

In This Grace Our Being Able to Enjoy God's Eternal Comfort and Good Hope

In this grace we can enjoy God's eternal comfort and good hope

(2 Thes. 2:16). Many times in our marriage life God's eternal comfort and hope come like the dew—imperceptibly. One moment, we do not sense the grace. The next moment, grace is watering our entire situation.

Our Being Able to Come Forward with Boldness to the Throne of Grace to Find Grace for Timely Help

We can come forward with boldness to the throne of grace to find grace for timely help (Heb. 4:16; cf. Eph. 2:22). It is good to pray together in our corporate living situation. This is why Brother Lee emphasized the vital groups so much. When we pray together with our vital-group partner and the two of us are joined to the throne of grace, we will receive grace for timely help.

Our Being Able to Receive God's Abounding Supply of All Grace

We can receive God's abounding supply of all grace. In 2 Corinthians 9:8 "all grace" is something that will equip us so that we can may abound unto every good work. The God-ordained way to meet and to serve for the building up of the Body of Christ is to beget new believers, nourish them, and teach and perfect them for their functioning in the Body of Christ for its building up. These aspects of the God-ordained way to meet and to serve are examples of the kind of good works mentioned in 2 Corinthians 9:8. Yet all these good works come from the "all grace" of God. When we enjoy all grace, the God-ordained way comes forth spontaneously.

Our Being Able to Constantly Enjoy God's Multiplying Grace

We can constantly enjoy God's multiplying grace (1 Pet. 1:2b; 2 Pet. 1:2; Rev. 22:21). Our constant enjoyment of God's multiplying grace results in our bearing fruit abundantly.

Our Being Able to Enjoy God's Greater Grace through Humility

We can enjoy God's greater grace through humility (James 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5). Humility is not to act humble. Rather, humility is to empty our being so that our heart is broadened with a view to experiencing God's grace for the purpose of caring for one another.

In Our Experience of the Grace in God's Economy, Our Enjoying the Lord's Presence in Our Spirit

In our experience of the grace in God's economy, we enjoy the Lord's presence in our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22; cf. Luke 1:28, 30). The Lord's presence means everything. Do not win an argument and lose God's presence. The Lord appointed the twelve apostles not mainly so that they would cast out demons but "so that they might be with Him" (Mark 3:14). The most important thing is to have the Lord's presence.

Our Needing to Live Out Christ as God's Righteousness by the Grace of God

We need to live out Christ as God's righteousness by the grace of God (Gal. 2:20-21). It is by the grace of God that we are crucified with Christ. We must not nullify the grace of God. Our ability to live the God-man living—to experience the reality of "not I but Christ"—comes not from us but by God's grace.

Our Needing to Experience the Perfecting of the Lord's Sufficient Grace, Christ's Overshadowing Power, in Our Weakness

We need to experience the perfecting of the Lord's sufficient grace, Christ's overshadowing power, in our weakness (2 Cor. 12:9). Sometimes we may tell the Lord, "You're too stingy! Why do You give only sufficient grace and not *abounding* grace?" The Lord gives us just enough grace to take care of our weakness so that we may know His overshadowing power in our weakness. He does this so that we will depend on Him all the time. If He were to give us more grace than we need, we would simply stop coming to Him.

By Grace Our Being Able to Overcome the Usurpation of Temporal and Uncertain Riches and Become Generous in Ministering to the Needy Saints

By grace we can overcome the usurpation of temporal and uncertain riches and become generous in ministering to the needy saints (8:1-2).

The God of All Grace Perfecting, Establishing, Strengthening, and Grounding Us through Our Sufferings

The God of all grace perfects, establishes, strengthens, and grounds us through our sufferings (1 Pet. 5:10). First Peter speaks much concerning suffering. In this Epistle Peter tells God's people how to live in the midst of human government with all the suffering that such a living entails. In the midst of such suffering, there is the consciousness of God that allows the believers to experience all grace.

This grace can be manifested in the family life. For instance, the husband and the wife can share the grace of life together (3:7). In our sojourn through all the sufferings in our human life on earth, grace is the factor that sustains us.

Our Needing to Be Good Stewards of the Varied Grace of God

We need to be good stewards of the varied grace of God (4:10; Eph. 3:2).

Our Word Needing to Convey Christ as Grace to Others

Our word should convey Christ as grace to others (4:29-30). The church life has much do with our speaking. In general, the brothers love to argue. They may even argue about the Scriptures and about spiritual truths. In other words, the brothers love to speak things other than grace. Sisters also love to speak. Their speaking tends to be in the form of gossip, whether it is in person, on the phone, or via text messaging. Instead of arguing and gossiping, we should convey grace to one another.

Our Needing to Experience Christ as Grace to Be a Surpassing One and to Labor Abundantly for the Lord

We need to experience Christ as grace to be a surpassing one and to labor abundantly for the Lord (1 Cor. 15:10). All our labor in the church life should come out of our experience of Christ as grace.

Our Needing to Receive the Abundance of Grace and of the Gift of Righteousness to Reign in Life

We need to receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness to reign in life (Rom. 5:17, 21). We are not controlled by our circumstances, our children, or a demanding job. On the contrary, we overcome all our circumstances by reigning in life through grace.

The Grace Given to the Local Churches in the Dark Age of the Church's Degradation Being for the Believers Who Seek to Answer the Lord's Calling to Be His Overcomers

The grace given to the local churches in the dark age of the church's degradation is for the believers who seek to answer the Lord's calling to be His overcomers (Rev. 1:4).

The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ Dispensed to His Believers throughout the New Testament Age Consummating in the New Jerusalem as the Consummation of God's Good Pleasure in Joining and Mingling Himself with Man for His Enlargement and Eternal Expression

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ dispensed to His believers throughout the New Testament age consummates in the New Jerusalem as the consummation of God's good pleasure in joining and mingling Himself with man for His enlargement and eternal expression (22:21). In the New Jerusalem our testimony will be that everything is grace. When the building of the temple was finished and the topstone was placed on it, there were shouts of "Grace, grace to it" (Zech. 4:7). When the seeker of the Lord has the experiences typified in Song of Songs 8, it is as if she is "leaning on her beloved" (v. 5). The verse continues: "I awakened you under the apple tree: / There your mother was in labor with you; / There she was in labor and brought you forth." The mother mentioned here is grace. One day we will see the Lord. In that day our testimony will be that it is all because of grace.

In the Church Life Our Being Daily Anointed and Graced

In the church life we are daily anointed and graced (Eph. 1:13, 6).

The Anointing of the Spirit and the Supply of Grace Making It Possible for Us to Live in Oneness

The anointing of the Spirit and the supply of grace make it possible for us to live in oneness. Hebrews 10:29 speaks of "the Spirit of grace." This expression, being composed of both *the Spirit* and *grace,* implies the fine anointing oil and the dew mentioned in Psalm 133.

The More We Experience Christ as the Life-giving Spirit, the More Our Natural Constitution and Disposition Being Reduced; as They Are Reduced through Our Experience of the Triune God with His Divine Attributes, Our Being Perfected into One

The more we experience Christ as the life-giving Spirit, the more

our natural constitution and disposition are reduced; as they are reduced through our experience of the Triune God with His divine attributes, we are perfected into one (John 17:23; Eph. 4:1-3). We have this One; now we are being perfected into one.

AS THE CONCLUSION TO PSALM 133 AND AS THE LAST OF THE SONGS OF ASCENTS, PSALM 134 BEING THE PRAISE OF A SAINT, IN HIS GOING UP TO ZION, CONCERNING THE CHARGE AND THE BLESSING OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL TO THE SERVING PRIESTS IN THE HOUSE OF GOD

As the conclusion to Psalm 133 and as the last of the Songs of Ascents, Psalm 134 is the praise of a saint, in his going up to Zion, concerning the charge and the blessing of the children of Israel to the serving priests in the house of God. As the last of the Songs of Ascents and a psalm of blessing, Psalm 134 is not insignificant. After we advance and ascend and after we enjoy the wonderful church life, it is time to bless one another. Psalm 134 is not a psalm in which the priest blesses the people or in which God blesses us; it is a psalm in which the people bless the priests. Furthermore, the blessing comes out of Zion itself. When we have the proper church life, there will be a mutual blessing: you will bless me, I will bless you, and together we will bless one another.

God's commanded blessing is in Psalm 133. Then we see the blessing from the people of God in Psalm 134:1-2. The final verse of Psalm 134 speaks of the blessing that is from Zion. Where there is oneness in our living, blessing is a mandate. It is a commanded blessing. In a sense, it does not even matter whether someone does the right thing or the wrong thing. For example, many times in the church life, in our corporate living, and in our marriage life, we do the wrong thing; nevertheless, we have the blessing. By the same token, sometimes we do all the right things, but we do not have the blessing. What matters is the oneness. Where there is the oneness, there is the commanded blessing.

Psalm 134 Indicating That the Highest People, Those Who Are in Zion, Can Bless Everyone and Teach Everyone

Psalm 134 indicates that the highest people, those who are in Zion, can bless everyone and teach everyone (vv. 1-2; cf. Gen. 47:10; 48:20; 49:28).

The Blessing Coming from Zion, from the Highest Peak, from the Ones Who Have Attained to the Top, to the Position of the Overcomers

The blessing comes from Zion, from the highest peak, from the ones who have attained to the top, to the position of the overcomers (Psa. 134:3).

In Every Age and Century God's Blessing Coming to the Church because of the Overcomers

In every age and century God's blessing has come to the church because of the overcomers (cf. Rev. 2:7; Num. 6:23-27). Ephesians 5:19 tells us that in the practical living of the church life, we need to speak to one another "in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and psalming with our heart to the Lord." Colossians 3:16—4:1 adds to this word by telling us to sing with grace in our hearts to God, to thank God the Father through the Lord Jesus, and to be subject to one another in the fear of Christ (cf. Eph. 5:21). This is the church life that is depicted in Psalm 133:1 "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is / For brothers to dwell in unity!" May we be here all the days of our life. Amen.—A.Y.

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OF THE PSALMS (2)

The Recovery of the Earth through God's Reigning in Christ and His Kingdom (Message 11)

Scripture Reading: Psa. 2:8-9; 8:1; 22:27-28; 48:1-2; 72:8, 19; 93:1; 97:1; 145:1, 11-13

I. It is crucial that we have a clear understanding of the extract, the spirit, of the Psalms—2:6-8; 26:8; 36:8-9; 46:4; 48:1-2; 72:8, 19:
   A. The spirit, the reality, the characteristic, of the divine revelation in the book of Psalms is Christ as the centrality and universality of the eternal economy of God—Luke 24:44.
   B. Christ is first the embodiment of the Triune God, then the house, the habitation of God (signified by the temple), the kingdom of God (signified by the city of Jerusalem), and the Ruler of the entire earth from the house of God and in the kingdom of God—Psa. 2:6-8; 36:8-9; 46:4; 48:1-2; 72:8, 19.
   C. God desires to have an organic habitation on earth, and this habitation is the aggregate of the saints gained by God through the terminating death and germinating resurrection of the all-inclusive Christ—22:22; 26:8:
      1. The saints will be the eternal manifestation and expression of the processed and consummated Triune God, and He will be everything to them in His all-inclusive Christ—Rev. 21:2, 11, 23.
      2. The Triune God will reign on the earth through such an organism in the new universe—11:15; 22:1-5.

II. God created a corporate man to express Himself with His image and to represent Him by exercising His dominion over all the earth—Gen. 1:26-28:
   A. God's intention in giving man dominion is to subdue God's enemy, Satan, who rebelled against God; to recover the earth, which was usurped by Satan; and to exercise God's authority

over the earth in order that the kingdom of God may come to the earth, the will of God may be done on the earth, and the glory of God may be manifested on the earth—Matt. 6:10, 13b; Rev. 11:15.

B. Man is especially related to the earth, and the area where God desires man to rule is the earth; God needs man to recover the earth from the usurping hand of Satan, causing Satan to suffer loss on the earth—Gen. 1:26-28; Psa. 8:1.

C. God's intention that man would express God in His image and represent God with His dominion is fulfilled not in Adam as the first man, the old man, but in Christ as the second man, the new man, comprising Christ Himself as the Head and the church as His Body—Eph. 1:22-23; 2:15; 4:15-16, 24; Col. 3:10-11.

D. The Lord Jesus, the King, taught us to pray, saying, "Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth"—Matt. 6:10:

1. The kingdom is a realm in which God exercises His authority so that He can express His glory—v. 13.
2. After the rebellion of Satan, the earth fell under his usurping hand; thus, the will of God could not be done on earth as in heaven; hence, God created man with the intention of recovering the earth for Himself—Ezek. 28:17; Isa. 14:13-15; Gen. 1:26-28.
3. After the fall of man, Christ came to bring the heavenly rule to earth so that the earth would be recovered for God's interest and so that the will of God could be done on earth as in heaven—Matt. 2:2; 27:11; 4:17; 12:28.
4. The church brings in the kingdom; the work of the church is to bring in the kingdom of God—6:10; 12:22-29; Rev. 11:15; 12:10.
5. The believers must pray for the coming of the kingdom until the earth is fully recovered for God's will in the coming kingdom age—Matt. 18:18-19.

III. The book of Psalms unveils the recovery of the earth through God's reigning in Christ and His kingdom—2:8-9; 22:27-28; 48:1-2; 72:8, 19; 93:1; 97:1; 145:1, 11-13:

A. Christ will set up His universal kingdom with the nations as His inheritance and the ends of the earth as His possession; He will rule the nations with an iron rod—2:8-9; Rev. 11:15.

B. In Psalm 8 the name of the incarnated, crucified, resurrected, ascended, and exalted Jesus is excellent in the earth according to the divine revelation.

C. The church ushers in Christ's kingdom for Christ to rule over the nations—22:27-28:

1. The church, produced by Christ's resurrection, is the reality of the kingdom and a precursor to the manifestation of the kingdom in the millennium—Matt. 16:18-19; Rom. 14:17.
2. Jehovah as Christ will rule over the nations in the millennial kingdom—Psa. 22:28; 2:8-9; Rev. 19:15; 20:4, 6.

D. In Psalm 24 Christ is the King who will regain the entire earth through the church, His Body:

1. At His second coming Christ will take possession of the earth, which has been given to Him as His possession—2:8; Rev. 10:1-2.
2. He will establish God's kingdom on the whole earth, thus recovering God's right over the earth, which has been usurped by His enemy, Satan—Dan. 2:34-35; Rev. 11:15.

E. When the church is enlarged to a city, in which we enjoy God as our everything, God will subdue the peoples and the nations through the city and rule over all the earth in Christ as the great King—Psa. 46:4, 10; 47:2; 48:1-2.

F. Psalm 89 unveils God's intention that Christ, His Anointed, would possess the entire earth—vv. 3-4, 19-29, 34-37:

1. In verses 19 and 20 Christ, the unique One in God's record (87:6), has become God's Holy One, God's mighty One, God's anointed One (Acts 2:27; Isa. 9:6; Matt. 1:16).
2. He has become the Firstborn and "the highest of the kings of the earth"—Psa. 89:27; Rom. 8:29; Rev. 1:5a.
3. God will extend the territory of this unique One so that He will possess the entire earth, setting "His hand on the sea / And His right hand on the rivers"—Psa. 89:25; cf. Rev. 10:1-2.
4. The fact that Christ's territory will be extended to all the rivers indicates that Christ will possess the whole earth—Psa. 2:8.

G. Psalms 93—101 shout joyfully that God will recover His full title and right over the whole earth through the reign of Christ:
   1. These psalms reveal that Christ's reign is through the house and city of God—93:5; 96:6; 99:1-2; 100:1-4; 101:8.
   2. God has the right over the earth because the earth with all its fullness—all the different peoples of all races and colors—was created by Him—93:1:
      a. Thus, He is the Possessor of the earth and holds the title deed—24:1.
      b. He has the full right to claim the earth, and He will do it through the reign of Christ—2:8; Rev. 10:2; 11:15.
   3. Psalm 95 unveils that Jehovah as Christ is a great King who possesses the earth—vv. 4-7.
   4. Psalm 96:3-13 indicates that Jehovah as Christ will come to judge the earth, the world, and the peoples with righteousness and truth and that He will reign over the nations; the word *peoples* in verses 3, 5, 7, 10, and 13 indicates that people of every race and color will be judged by Christ in His reign over the nations—cf. Matt. 25:31-46.
   5. According to Psalm 97:1-2, 4-6, 8-9, and 11, Jehovah as Christ will reign, and because of this the earth will be glad and rejoice.

H. In Psalm 145:1 and 11-13 David praises God for His reigning in Christ and His kingdom—cf. 1 Chron. 29:10-13.

MESSAGE ELEVEN

THE RECOVERY OF THE EARTH THROUGH GOD'S REIGNING IN CHRIST AND HIS KINGDOM

The subject of the Psalms according to sequence is Christ, house, city, and earth. This message concerns Christ's gaining, recovering, possessing, and taking ownership of the whole earth. Before we see this, we need to know that according to the Bible, Christ has two comings. He came first to solve our personal problem. When He comes the second time, it will be to deal with all the things on the earth. This is an important truth. In *The Normal Christian Faith* Brother Nee says,

> The Bible shows us clearly that Christ has to come to earth two times. The first happened in the past. The second has not yet come. During His first coming, He accomplished certain things. In the second coming, He will accomplish more things.
>
> .. .In His first coming, He mainly dealt with sin, delivered the sinners, and dispensed a new life to them. In His second coming He will take care of the social problems and renew the political system. Our personal salvation was clearly settled at His first coming. Our nation, society, and existing systems will be taken up effectively at His second coming.
>
> ...We want to look at the problems of our present situation, our country, and our political systems...We are not trying to solve all the problems. Only when Christ comes the second time will these matters be thoroughly settled.
>
> We admit that there are many vices in our society. We cannot deny that our country has many needs. The system is basically unhealthy; there are numerous contradictions in our political framework. Tensions build up constantly on an international scale, and the future is gloomy. Modern youth are especially concerned about these issues. The more they ponder these matters, the more they are confused. Everywhere there are intelligent men trying to tackle these

problems, and everywhere you can find more problems. Some wonder how man can survive on this planet in the next generation. Others study the global impact of food shortage. Then there is the question of the environment and transportation. People ask why there has to be crime and injustice and why the prisons are always filled with inmates. Others challenge the validity of class existence with some members of society being fed well while doing nothing, while others sweat all day only to find themselves in deeper poverty. Everywhere there are crises: between nations, between races, and between colors...

What should our attitude be as Christians towards all these problems?...We have to see that God has already prepared the solution to all these problems.

When Christ came the first time, He saved us individually. He did not deal with the world or its systems. He did not touch any social problems. His first coming was to settle the spiritual issues, not the material ones. But this does not mean that He ignores the latter. Christ will take up these problems; He will deal with each in a thorough way. (pp. 173-175)

When Christ comes again, He will recover the whole earth. Some wish that man could go back to paradise—the garden of Eden—but that was only a small part of the earth. Genesis 2:8 says, "Jehovah God planted a garden in Eden, in the east." God is not recovering us back to paradise; rather, He is recovering the whole earth. The earth is the Lord's! It does not belong to Satan, nor does it belong to man only. When Christ comes, He will return the earth to its pristine, pure, primeval, beautiful state—as God created it. It is concerning this that the Psalms prophesy.

In *Christ and the Church Revealed and Typified in the Psalms* Brother Lee summarizes the aspects of the earth as seen in the Psalms. He says,

Now let us consider briefly the aspects of the earth as seen in the Psalms. The word *earth* appears about one hundred ninety times altogether in the Psalms.

1. The earth has been given to Christ as His possession—Psa. 2:8
2. His name will be excellent in all the earth—Psa. 8:1
3. The earth is the Lord's and its fullness—Psa. 24:1
4. The earth was created by the Lord—Psa. 24:2
5. Christ will come back to take the earth—Psa. 96:13
6. Christ will reign over the earth—Psa. 72:8
7. Christ will make His saints princes in all the earth—Psa. 45:16
8. The earth will return to Christ—Psa. 22:27
9. The earth will remember Christ—Psa. 22:27
10. The earth will worship Christ—Psa. 22:27, 29
11. The earth will praise Christ—Psa. 98:4
12. The whole earth will be filled with His glory—Psa. 72:19

The main psalms concerning the earth: Psalms 47, 68, 72, 89, 145, 146, 148, and 149 (p. 232)

The earth belongs to Christ.

In all five books of the Psalms the earth is the consummate point. In Book One, Psalm 22 concerns Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, and Psalm 23 concerns His shepherding in His heavenly ministry. This leads to a coming day that Psalm 24:1 describes in this way: "The earth is Jehovah's, and its fullness, / The habitable land and those who dwell in it." Then verse 7 says, "Lift up your heads, O gates; / And be lifted up, O long enduring doors; / And the King of glory will come in."

In Book Two we see the house and the city in full, and the conclusion of this book is Psalm 72, which climaxes in Christ's reign over the whole earth. Verses 6 through 8 say, "He will drop like rain upon mown grass, / Like abundant showers dripping on the earth. / In His days the righteous will flourish, / And there will be an abundance of peace / Until the moon is no more. / And He will have dominion from sea to sea / And from the River unto the ends of the earth."

This psalm reveals that when Christ comes again, He will solve seven problems that humanity cannot solve. First, Christ's coming like abundant showers dripping on the earth indicates that He will take care of all the ecological problems (v. 6). Second, Christ will take care of humanity's territorial problems, such as boundary disputes. When He comes, there will be an abundance of peace (v. 7). Christ's kingdom will be from sea to sea and extend to the ends of the earth (v. 8). Third, Christ will take care of all racial problems, which no one else can solve. Verses 10 and 11 say, "The kings of Tarshish and of the coastlands / Will pay tribute; / The kings of Sheba and Seba / Will present gifts. / And all

the kings will bow down before Him." All the kings, representing all the races and nationalities, will bow down before Christ. When Christ comes, all racial problems will be solved.

The fourth unsolvable problem is the political problem. Verse 11 says, "All the nations will serve Him." There will be no need for the United Nations when Christ comes, for all the political problems will be resolved immediately. Fifth, Christ will solve humanity's economic problems. Verses 12 and 13 say, "He will deliver the needy man when he cries, / And the poor man who has no one to help him. / He will have pity on the weak and needy." When Christ comes, we will not need human government to take care of economic problems, for He will take care of them. Sixth, Christ will solve humanity's problems of social injustice, such as the difference between the rich and the poor and the various classes, which is the source of oppression. Verse 14 says, "From oppression and violence / He will redeem their soul, / And their blood will be precious in His sight." The seventh seemingly unsolvable problem of humanity that Christ will solve when He comes is violence and crime. There will be no need for prisons. We will be able to walk safely down the street with no need for the police. This is not a utopian dream; this is what the Word of God says. The result, the sum total, of all these points in Psalm 72 is in verse 19, which says, "May His glory fill the whole earth. / Amen and Amen." Christ's coming will take care of all the problems that cannot be taken care of by humanity, and His glory will fill the whole earth. This is how Book Two ends.

Book Three concerns Christ, the house, the city, and finally, in Psalm 89, the earth. Verse 25 says, "I will set His hand on the sea / And His right hand on the rivers." He will be the highest of the kings of the earth (v. 27). His throne will be "as the days of heaven" (v. 29).

All of Book Four and especially the central part, Psalms 93—101, concerns the recovery of the earth. Psalms 93—101 shout joyfully that God will recover His full title and right over the whole earth through the reign of Christ.

Book Five, Psalms 107—150, indicates that Christ will come to reign over the whole earth through the house and city of God—the church. In Psalm 145:1 and 11-13 David praises God for His reigning in Christ and His kingdom, which will be how He recovers the earth. Everything in the book of Psalms eventually points to one thing, which is that Christ will come back and recover the whole earth.

IT BEING CRUCIAL THAT WE HAVE A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF THE EXTRACT, THE SPIRIT, OF THE PSALMS

It is crucial that we have a clear understanding of the extract, the spirit, of the Psalms (2:6-8; 26:8; 36:8-9; 46:4; 48:1-2; 72:8, 19). This is taken from the concluding word of the *Life-study of the Psalms* (pp. 512-513).

The Spirit, the Reality, the Characteristic, of the Divine Revelation in the Book of Psalms Being Christ as the Centrality and Universality of the Eternal Economy of God

The spirit, the reality, the characteristic, of the divine revelation in the book of Psalms is Christ as the centrality and universality of the eternal economy of God (Luke 24:44).

Christ Being First the Embodiment of the Triune God, Then the House, the Habitation of God (Signified by the Temple), the Kingdom of God (Signified by the City of Jerusalem), and the Ruler of the Entire Earth from the House of God and in the Kingdom of God

Christ is first the embodiment of the Triune God, then the house, the habitation of God (signified by the temple), the kingdom of God (signified by the city of Jerusalem), and the Ruler of the entire earth from the house of God and in the kingdom of God (Psa. 2:6-8; 36:8-9; 46:4; 48:1-2; 72:8, 19). Psalm 2:8 says that Christ will be given the nations as His inheritance and the limits of the earth as His possession. Psalm 36:8 says that we will enjoy the fatness of His house and the river of His pleasures. Psalm 46:4 says, "There is a river whose streams gladden the city of God." These verses speak of the house and the city. Psalm 48:1-2 says, "Great is Jehovah, / And much to be praised / In the city of our God, / In His holy mountain. / Beautiful in elevation, / The joy of the whole earth, / Is Mount Zion, the sides of the north, / The city of the great King." Here Zion is mentioned with the view of the whole earth. Psalm 72:8 says, "He will have dominion from sea to sea / And from the River unto the ends of the earth." Verse 19 indicates that His glory will fill the whole earth. In these verses much is spoken concerning the whole earth.

God Desiring to Have an Organic Habitation on Earth, and This Habitation Being the Aggregate of the Saints Gained by God through the Terminating Death and Germinating Resurrection of the All-inclusive Christ

The Saints Being the Eternal Manifestation and Expression of the Processed and Consummated Triune God, and His Being Everything to Them in His All-inclusive Christ

God desires to have an organic habitation on earth, and this habitation is the aggregate of the saints gained by God through the terminating death and germinating resurrection of the all-inclusive Christ (22:22; 26:8). The saints will be the eternal manifestation and expression of the processed and consummated Triune God, and He will be everything to them in His all-inclusive Christ (Rev. 21:2, 11, 23).

The Triune God Reigning on the Earth through Such an Organism in the New Universe

The Triune God will reign on the earth through such an organism in the new universe (11:15; 22:1-5). The Triune God will reign over every part of the earth through the organism of the Triune God, which is the aggregate of the saints gained by God. Romans 8:19-22 says, "The anxious watching of the creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God. For the creation was made subject to vanity, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will also be freed from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans together and travails in pain together until now." Everything in the universe is groaning and waiting, for as soon as the sons of God are revealed, all the problems will be solved. The trees, the winds, and the whole earth are groaning. It as if they are saying, "Sons of God, be manifested, for then we will be redeemed." The church bears the responsibility not only for the redemption of itself or even the redemption of humanity but also for the redemption of the whole inhabited earth. Hebrews 2:5 says, "It was not to angels that He subjected the coming inhabited earth, concerning which we speak." Hebrews 2 is speaking of the coming inhabited earth. We are speaking concerning not only our personal salvation but also the destiny of the whole creation.

GOD CREATING A CORPORATE MAN TO EXPRESS HIMSELF WITH HIS IMAGE AND TO REPRESENT HIM BY EXERCISING HIS DOMINION OVER ALL THE EARTH

God created a corporate man to express Himself with His image and to represent Him by exercising His dominion over all the earth (Gen. 1:26-28). We need to come back to the beginning. Many Christians preach a gospel that begins with the fall of man, but in the Lord's recovery we preach a gospel that precedes the fall. Genesis 1:26 says, "God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." Man is made in the image of God and has dominion over everything in the sea, in the air, and on land. This includes enough things to fill an encyclopedia, but the crux of man's dominion is "over all the earth" and particularly "over every creeping thing." Man's main mandate is to have dominion over the earth itself. Within this mandate of dominion over the earth, one crucial element is dominion over the creeping things, which typify Satan, the serpent, and the angels and demons that follow him. This is man's commission.

Verse 27 says, "God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him." Man was not created in his own image but in the image of God. In other words, man was created according to Christ's image for the purpose that men would become little "Christs" on earth as His agents, exercising dominion for Christ.

Verse 28 says, "God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it." Man's mandate is not only to be fruitful and multiply but also to fill and subdue the earth. Man has been fruitful and multiplied, but he has not filled the earth. Rather, he has depleted the earth. Neither has man subdued the earth. To subdue the earth refers mainly to subduing the enemy, the devil. Satan hates this message because it is driving him not only out of the church but also off of the earth. Man's mandate is to clean up the earth in this way.

Psalm 8 and Hebrews 2 both have Genesis 1 in view. In Psalm 8 David saw beyond all the earthly realm (v. 3) and said, "What is mortal man, that You remember him, / And the son of man, that You visit him?" (v. 4). He went back to God's original intention in His creation of man (vv. 5-8; cf. Gen. 1:26-28). In Psalm 8 man is revealed in four stages: created man (Adam—v. 5), fallen man (Enosh, meaning "frail, mortal"—v. 4), regenerated man (babes and suckling—v. 2), and overcoming

man (the Body of the overcoming One, Christ, under whose feet are all things—v. 6). At first, as God-created men, we are Adam. By realizing that we are frail, we become Enosh. Then by calling on the Lord, (vv. 1, 9; Gen. 4:26) we are regenerated to become babes and sucklings. Finally, through His constituting work, we become part of the Body of Christ, and all things are under our feet. This is our destiny.

Hebrews 2:5 speaks of the coming inhabited earth. Quoting Psalm 8:6, Paul says, "You have subjected all things under His feet" (Heb. 2:8a). Then Paul adds a note concerning the subjecting of all things, saying, "For in subjecting all things to Him, He left nothing unsubject to Him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to Him" (v. 8b). According to God's intention in creation, man's destiny is to subject all things. Verse 10 speaks of God leading many sons into glory through Christ as the prototype. Thus, Christ is leading God's many sons into glory by making them His reproduction, His duplication. This is man's destiny.

God's Intention in Giving Man Dominion Being to Subdue God's Enemy, Satan, Who Rebelled against God; to Recover the Earth, Which Was Usurped by Satan; and to Exercise God's Authority over the Earth in Order That the Kingdom of God May Come to the Earth, the Will of God May Be Done on the Earth, and the Glory of God May Be Manifested on the Earth

God's intention in giving man dominion is to subdue God's enemy, Satan, who rebelled against God; to recover the earth, which was usurped by Satan; and to exercise God's authority over the earth in order that the kingdom of God may come to the earth, the will of God may be done on the earth, and the glory of God may be manifested on the earth (Matt. 6:10, 13b; Rev. 11:15). Although we have spoken of humanity's seven problems, there is actually only one problem—Satan. If Satan is dealt with, the earth will have no more problems. Thus, the church's commission is to deal with Satan.

Before we were saved through believing, we were under God's judgment. As Christians, we have been delivered from God's judgment, but that is not all there is. Man's destiny, the destiny of Christians, is not merely to escape perdition and be free from judgment but to exercise judgment on Satan. First Corinthians 6:3 says, "Do you not know that we will judge angels?" We need to take up this responsibility in our prayer. The church should pray to be empowered so that when we pray,

"Your kingdom come," we will inflict loss on Satan. This is the prayer of the age—the prayer that will end the age. It deals with the problem of problems, which is Satan.

Man Being Especially Related to the Earth, and the Area Where God Desires Man to Rule Being the Earth; God Needing Man to Recover the Earth from the Usurping Hand of Satan, Causing Satan to Suffer Loss on the Earth

Man is especially related to the earth, and the area where God desires man to rule is the earth; God needs man to recover the earth from the usurping hand of Satan, causing Satan to suffer loss on the earth (Gen. 1:26-28; Psa. 8:1). The earth was created wonderfully, but it was spoiled. God recovered it once in Genesis 1, and He will recover it again. The first time, He recovered it by His speaking. The second time, He will recover it through His agents, His representatives. The church's commission on the earth is to cause Satan to suffer loss. We need to preach the gospel in the Hindu lands, the Muslim lands, and the lands where idols are worshipped so that Satan will suffer loss. We need to preach the gospel to those in the leading academic institutions because they have been deceived by the world and by the god of this age (2 Cor. 4:4). When we preach the gospel to these ones, we are causing Satan to suffer loss.

God's Intention That Man Would Express God in His Image and Represent God with His Dominion Being Fulfilled Not in Adam as the First Man, the Old Man, but in Christ as the Second Man, the New Man, Comprising Christ Himself as the Head and the Church as His Body

God's intention that man would express God in His image and represent God with His dominion is fulfilled not in Adam as the first man, the old man, but in Christ as the second man, the new man, comprising Christ Himself as the Head and the church as His Body (Eph. 1:22-23; 2:15; 4:15-16, 24; Col. 3:10-11). As one corporate person, this second man will crush Satan under his feet (Gen. 3:15; Rom. 16:20).

The Lord Jesus, the King, Teaching Us to Pray, Saying, "Your Kingdom Come; Your Will Be Done, as in Heaven, so Also on Earth"

The Lord Jesus, the King, taught us to pray, saying, "Your kingdom

come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth" (Matt. 6:10). The focus of the prayer in Matthew 6:9-10 is the earth. In these verses the Lord taught us to pray for three things: that the Father's name would be sanctified, that His kingdom would come, and that His will would be done, *as in heaven, so also on earth.* According to this prayer, there is no problem with heaven; the target of this prayer is the earth. We should pray, "Father, just as it is in heaven, so also let it be on the earth. Let Your name be sanctified on the earth, let Your kingdom come on the earth, and let Your will be done on the earth." When the disciples asked the Lord how they should pray, the Lord directed them to pray for the earth.

The purpose of redemption is to recover creation; the purpose of the gospel is to recover the earth; and the purpose of salvation is to recover mankind, not merely to save us from perdition. Redemption brings us back to God's original intention in creation. In *The Glorious Church* Watchman Nee says, "To redeem means to restore and recover; to create means to determine and initiate. Redemption is something afterward so that God's purpose in creation may be fulfilled" (p. 18). In other words, the purpose of redemption is to redeem God's original creation. Hebrews 2:9 says that through the suffering of death, Christ tasted death on behalf of everything. He did not taste death merely for mankind; He tasted death for the entire old creation. Thus, redemption is for the recovery of the entire old creation, which is eagerly waiting for the sons of God to be revealed (Rom. 8:19).

The goal of the gospel is to recover the earth, and the main obstacle to the recovery of the earth is the enemy, Satan. Thus, in our preaching of the gospel, we must deal with the enemy. We must destroy the works of the devil and cause his kingdom to suffer loss (1 John 3:8). This often involves casting out demons. The Lord Jesus began His gospel work by casting out demons (Mark 1:23-26). In *Vessels Useful to the Lord* Brother Lee told the trainees in Taiwan that when they went out to the campuses, communities, and villages, they had to do two things—heal the sick and cast out demons. He also told them that they should heal the sick only when asked but that they needed no one's permission to cast out demons. He said, "When you go out, you have to cast out demons whenever necessary and without consideration...You must cast out the demons in the Lord's name...You must cast out the demons whenever you encounter them" (p. 177).

Once, I asked the trainees in Taiwan how many of them had experienced casting out a demon, and about half of them raised their hands.

That surprised me. The demons are very active in Taiwan, but they are also very active on the college campuses in the United States, although in a hidden and subtle way. In the United States it is less common for us to deal with evil spirits and demons directly. Instead, we must deal with the demons behind philosophies, addictions, and other kinds of bondage in people's minds. Thus, as gospel preachers, our responsibility is to announce the gospel of the kingdom and to cast out all the demons for the recovery of the earth.

A brother told me that he was visiting a certain tropical country, and as he was praying with some saints, a large snake suddenly fell down from the ceiling. In some countries the "snakes" are manifested in a physical way; in others, they are hidden in the psychological and spiritual realms. Regardless, the work of the preaching of the gospel is to go forth and bind all the snakes. We must go to the college campuses and bind the snakes. We must go to Bangladesh, Turkey, and Rome to bind the snakes through prayer. Wherever we go, we must bind the snakes. This is the commission of the church. The purpose of redemption is to recover the entire old creation, and the purpose of the gospel is to recover the whole earth.

Finally, the purpose of salvation is to recover mankind. Man needs salvation, not merely to be saved from sin and eternal perdition but to be recovered back to God's original purpose for man so that he might fulfill the purpose for which God created him—to express God and exercise His dominion on the earth (Gen. 1:26).

The Kingdom Being a Realm in Which God Exercises His Authority So That He Can Express His Glory

The kingdom is a realm in which God exercises His authority so that He can express His glory (Matt. 6:13).

After the Rebellion of Satan, the Earth Falling under His Usurping Hand; Thus, the Will of God Not Being Able to Be Done on Earth as in Heaven; Hence, God Creating Man with the Intention of Recovering the Earth for Himself

After the rebellion of Satan, the earth fell under his usurping hand; thus, the will of God could not be done on earth as in heaven; hence, God created man with the intention of recovering the earth for Himself

(Ezek. 28:17; Isa. 14:13-15; Gen. 1:26-28). Man is like a recovery team created to recover the earth from the hand of Satan. There was once an unbeliever who had befriended a woman who was involved in dark satanic practices. This woman contacted demons and spirits and was familiar with the satanic realm. The unbeliever began coming to the church meetings, and he and then his mother were saved. Next, he invited the other woman to come, but when she arrived at the meeting hall, she told them that she did not dare to enter because there was too much power in that place. The demons are very real; they can see us. However, they are afraid of us. Hallelujah, we are here to recover the earth!

After the Fall of Man, Christ Coming to Bring the Heavenly Rule to Earth So That the Earth Would Be Recovered for God's Interest and So That the Will of God Could Be Done on Earth as in Heaven

After the fall of man, Christ came to bring the heavenly rule to earth so that the earth would be recovered for God's interest and so that the will of God could be done on earth as in heaven (Matt. 2:2; 27:11; 4:17; 12:28).

The Church Bringing In the Kingdom; the Work of the Church Being to Bring In the Kingdom of God

The church brings in the kingdom; the work of the church is to bring in the kingdom of God (6:10; 12:22-29; Rev. 11:15; 12:10). The church's commission is to bring in the kingdom. Matthew 24:14 says, "This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole inhabited earth...and then the end will come." *The end* in this verse refers to the coming of the great tribulation at the end of this age. Thus, the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom to the whole inhabited earth will bring in the tribulation, but for the kingdom to be brought in, the church is needed. In other words, our preaching the gospel of the kingdom will trigger the beginning of the great tribulation, but it is the church that will bring in the kingdom. When the man-child, representing the overcomers as the stronger part of the church, is taken up, then the kingdom of God will come (Rev. 12:5).

In Matthew 11, after Christ had been rejected by those in Chorazin and Bethsaida, verse 25 says, "At that time Jesus answered and said, I

extol You, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants." The Lord's declaration here was the carrying out of His prayer in Matthew 6. The Lord Jesus' extolling the Father was the sanctification of the Father's name, and His declaring the Father to be "Lord of heaven and of earth" was the coming of the Father's kingdom.

In Daniel 2 God is called the God of the heavens (vv. 18, 37), but whenever there was a man standing on the earth for God's interest, He was no longer merely called the God of the heavens but the Lord of heaven and earth (cf. Gen. 14:19, 22). Because the Lord Jesus was standing for the Father's interest on the earth, the rule of heaven came down to earth, and the Father's will was done on earth as in heaven. This is the example that the Lord set for us. Therefore, we all should pray, "O Lord, Your name be sanctified, Your kingdom come, and Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth. I want You to be not merely the Lord of the heavens but the Lord of heaven and earth."

The Believers Needing to Pray for the Coming of the Kingdom until the Earth Is Fully Recovered for God's Will in the Coming Kingdom Age

The believers must pray for the coming of the kingdom until the earth is fully recovered for God's will in the coming kingdom age (Matt. 18:18-19). We need to pray strategic prayers, kingdom prayers, prayers that will end this age. We need to pray for God's work in every country throughout the whole earth, whether those countries are Muslim, Christian, or otherwise. Recently, I received a map of the world, on which is a question in large, bold letters that says, "Will you pray?" Will we pray not merely for our own interests or for our family but also for North Korea, Iran, or Turkey? Will we pray for all the campuses in America that are so dark? Will we pray, "Father, Your kingdom come, as in heaven, so also on earth"? We should keep this image of the world in our mind so that every time we pray, we will pray for God's interest on the whole earth.

What God wants is a kingdom. To illustrate this point, we need to examine four periods in the history of God's people in the Old Testament. In the first period, during the time of the judges, there was a people but no king (cf. Judg. 17:6). In the second period, after David was anointed as king, there was a king but not a people (cf. 1 Sam. 16:1, 13). In the third period, while David was in his sojourning, some people

began to follow him (22:1). These people were the overcomers, the mighty men, who followed David first to the cave of Adullam, then to En-gedi (23:29), and eventually to Hebron, where David was crowned as king, not by all the people but by those who had discernment (2 Sam. 2:1, 4). During this period, there was a king and some people. Finally, in the fourth period, all the people anointed him as king, and David and his mighty men stormed the stronghold of Zion and made it the city of God (5:3, 5, 7). Hence, in that period there was a king with a complete kingdom.

We may say that the first period—in which there was no king but a people—represents the Old Testament, the period before the incarnation of Christ the King. The second period—in which there was a king but no people—represents the Gospels, the age of Christ's incarnation. The third period—in which there was a king with some people—represents the New Testament age, in which a minority of the believers follow Christ as their King. The purpose of the New Testament age is for God to gain the overcomers as Zion so that the entire earth can be subdued and become the kingdom of God. This is the fulfillment of the fourth period, in which King David captured Zion and gained the entire kingdom of Israel.

Today God is in the third stage of this process. As our David, He is calling men to join Him in His sojourning. Although the majority of God's people, like the children of Israel, have rejected Him, there are some who have turned to follow Him, who have made the "honor roll" of being one of His mighty men. David's mighty men were those who were one with David's heart. When David thirsted for water from the well of Bethlehem, three of his mighty men burst through the enemy camp, drew some of that water, and brought it to David risking their lives (1 Chron. 11:17-18). David's mighty men were also those who fought boldly, as did Abishai, who killed three hundred men with a single spear, and Benaiah, who killed a lion in a pit on a snowy day (vv. 20, 22). These men might have seemed poor or insignificant, like the fishermen of Galilee, but they followed David all the way to Zion. We need to be like David's mighty men, those who are one with the Lord's heart and who are bold in fighting. Then, according to Revelation 14, we aspire to be part of the one hundred forty-four thousand who will be raptured to Zion and to the Lamb. The Lamb is already standing on Mount Zion waiting for them.

Psalm 68 portrays the move of the individual Christ from His

incarnation to His ascension, typified by the moving of the Ark from Mount Sinai to Zion (Num. 10:35-36). Then Hebrews 11 and 12 reveal that a corporate people, including all the Old Testament saints and the New Testament overcomers, will end up joining Christ in Zion (12:22). First, Christ Himself ascended to Zion, and eventually, the overcomers will also be there with Him. We want to be among those overcomers. Therefore, we need to pray, "O Lord Jesus, make me an overcomer! Make me one of Your mighty men." When David took the stronghold of Zion from the Jebusites who were inhabiting it, he said, "Whoever strikes the Jebusites first will be the chief and the captain," and Joab went up first and thus was made the chief among David's mighty men (1 Chron. 11:5-6). One day the Lord Jesus will return to the earth at the Mount of Olives, the same place from which He ascended, and according to Joel 3:11, His mighty ones will descend with Him. Surely we want to be there. We would like to be enrolled in that "honor roll" as one of the Lord's mighty ones. We must therefore pray, "O Lord Jesus! Come quickly!"

During World War II, after the Japanese took over the Philippines, forcing General Douglas MacArthur to leave, MacArthur said in a famous speech, "I shall return." The church today has been waiting for Christ's return for nearly two thousand years. During this time the enemy and the unbelievers have been saying, "Nothing will happen; He will not come back." However, our General in the heavens is saying, "I shall return!" And one day He will return to the Mount of Olives with all the overcomers. Hallelujah! Come, Lord Jesus! If we truly see the fact that Christ will return one day, we will be beside ourselves. One day Christ will return to Zion, and we will be with Him!

Sister M. E. Barber was one who truly believed that the Lord would come back quickly. On the last day of 1925, while praying with Brother Nee, she prayed, "Lord, do You really mean to say that You will let 1925 pass by, that You will wait until 1926 before You come back?" Then a few days later when she saw Brother Nee again, she said to him, "It is really strange that up to this day He has not yet come back" (*The Up-to-date Presentation of the God-ordained Way and the Signs concerning the Coming of Christ,* p. 68). On this day, the last day of 2011, we should pray, "Lord Jesus, come back!" But if He does not come back today, when we awake tomorrow morning, we should pray, "Lord Jesus, come back this year!" We want to be those who are waiting for His coming. *Hymns,* #959 says, "Whene'er 'tis raining, or strong winds are

blowing, / Whene'er the moon shines, or rises the sea, / We ever hope to discover Thy coming; / How disappointed when no sign of Thee!" This should be our attitude. Every time something happens or we hear of something happening, we should think, "Perhaps this is the time of the Lord's coming." We should be like Sister Barber, always waiting and expecting.

THE BOOK OF PSALMS UNVEILING THE RECOVERY OF THE EARTH THROUGH GOD'S REIGNING IN CHRIST AND HIS KINGDOM

The book of Psalms unveils the recovery of the earth through God's reigning in Christ and His kingdom (2:8-9; 22:27-28; 48:1-2; 72:8, 19; 93:1; 97:1; 145:1, 11-13). In *Christ and the Church Revealed and Typified in the Psalms,* Brother Lee says regarding Psalms 2, 8, 16, 22, 23, and 24, "Notice that the word *earth* is a key word in almost all of these six psalms" (p. 61). He also indicates that the earth is one of "the precious stones, the gems, the vital points" in these psalms (p. 62).

Christ Setting Up His Universal Kingdom with the Nations as His Inheritance and the Ends of the Earth as His Possession; His Ruling the Nations with an Iron Rod

Christ will set up His universal kingdom with the nations as His inheritance and the ends of the earth as His possession; He will rule the nations with an iron rod (Psa. 2:8-9; Rev. 11:15).

In Psalm 8 the Name of the Incarnated, Crucified, Resurrected, Ascended, and Exalted Jesus Being Excellent in the Earth according to the Divine Revelation

In Psalm 8 the name of the incarnated, crucified, resurrected, ascended, and exalted Jesus is excellent in the earth according to the divine revelation.

The Church Ushering In Christ's Kingdom for Christ to Rule over the Nations

The church ushers in Christ's kingdom for Christ to rule over the nations (22:27-28). The church, produced by Christ's resurrection, is the reality of the kingdom and a precursor to the manifestation of the kingdom in the millennium (Matt. 16:18-19; Rom. 14:17). Jehovah as Christ will rule over the nations in the millennial kingdom (Psa. 22:28; 2:8-9; Rev. 19:15; 20:4, 6).

In Psalm 24 Christ Being the King Who Will Regain the Entire Earth through the Church, His Body

In Psalm 24 Christ is the King who will regain the entire earth through the church, His Body. At His second coming Christ will take possession of the earth, which has been given to Him as His possession (2:8; Rev. 10:1-2). He will establish God's kingdom on the whole earth, thus recovering God's right over the earth, which has been usurped by His enemy, Satan (Dan. 2:34-35; Rev. 11:15).

In 1968 I visited Taiwan for the first time. I remember very clearly as we drove through the island that when we stopped at town after town and village after village, the saints came out to greet us. At that time, the gospel had not yet reached the whole island, and many cities did not have churches. Nevertheless, we felt like the entire island belonged to the Lord. When we arrived in one town, the saints were there to meet us, and when we arrived in another town, there were more saints to greet us. Imagine that as you are driving from California to Texas, wherever you stop, there are saints waiting for you. In town after town saints are there waiting for you. Ultimately, there will be no police stations, no crime, and no thieves because the whole earth will be the Lord's. This may seem like a dream, but let us dream this dream!

Hudson Taylor once said, "I have found that there are three stages in every great work of God: first, it is impossible, then it is difficult, then it is done" (*A Passion for the Impossible,* Lyall, p. 5). This is how God works. What seems impossible to us may suddenly be done tomorrow. Someday Christ will come and take over the whole earth. In the meantime, we must possess it city by city by evicting Satan. We must go to all the countries throughout the earth and to all the cities, large and small, and speak to all kinds of people, including Muslims and atheists, until the kingdom of God comes down.

During World War II, Winston Churchill said, "Even though large tracts of Europe and many old and famous States have fallen or may fall...we shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end...we shall fight on the seas and oceans...we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills...until, in God's good time, the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the old" ("We Shall Fight on the Beaches," June 4, 1940). We should have this attitude regarding Christ's coming back to reign. Brothers

and sisters, a new world order is coming! Thus, we must fight in the large cities and the small cities, fight in the land of the Antichrist, and fight all the way to Jerusalem, and then the end will come. Hallelujah!

When the Church Is Enlarged to a City, in Which We Enjoy God as Our Everything, God Subduing the Peoples and the Nations through the City and Ruling over All the Earth in Christ as the Great King

When the church is enlarged to a city, in which we enjoy God as our everything, God will subdue the peoples and the nations through the city and rule over all the earth in Christ as the great King (Psa. 46:4, 10; 47:2; 48:1-2).

Psalm 89 Unveiling God's Intention That Christ, His Anointed, Would Possess the Entire Earth

Psalm 89 unveils God's intention that Christ, His Anointed, would possess the entire earth (vv. 3-4, 19-29, 34-37). In verses 19 and 20 Christ, the unique One in God's record (87:6), has become God's Holy One, God's mighty One, God's anointed One (Acts 2:27; Isa. 9:6; Matt. 1:16). He has become the Firstborn and "the highest of the kings of the earth" (Psa. 89:27; Rom. 8:29; Rev. 1:5a). God will extend the territory of this unique One so that He will possess the entire earth, setting "His hand on the sea / And His right hand on the rivers" (Psa. 89:25; cf. Rev. 10:1-2). The fact that Christ's territory will be extended to all the rivers indicates that Christ will possess the whole earth (Psa. 2:8).

Psalms 93—101 Shouting Joyfully That God Will Recover His Full Title and Right over the Whole Earth through the Reign of Christ

Psalms 93—101 shout joyfully that God will recover His full title and right over the whole earth through the reign of Christ. Psalms 93—101, the last part of Book Four of the Psalms, are also its central part, its heart. According to these psalms, the title and rights over all this earth belong to Christ. These psalms also mention the following ten titles of Christ—the mighty One (93:4); the Judge of the earth (94:2); the Maker who has made everything, including the land and the sea (95:5-6); the reigning One, who is over all peoples, nations, races, and colors (96:10); the Lord of the whole earth and the Most High over all the earth (97:5, 9); the King (98:6); the Legislator who institutes His statutes, laws, and testimonies (99:7); the Executor, the One who executes justice and righteousness (v. 4); the Shepherd over us, the sheep of His pasture (100:3); and finally, the Destroyer of the wicked (101:8). These are all Christ's titles.

Psalms 93—101 also describe Christ's rights over the earth. For example, Psalm 95:4 says, "In His hand are the depths of the earth," indicating that Christ holds the right to the earth's depths, including all its minerals. Verse 4 also says, "The heights of the mountains are His also," implying that He holds the right to the earth's heights and the airspace around it. Verse 5 says, "The sea is His, and He made it," indicating that Christ holds the maritime rights and the right to the coastal territories. Verse 5 also says, "His hands formed the dry land," implying that He holds the right to the land. Thus, Christ holds the rights to the land, the air, the sea, and even the depths of the earth, and Satan has no rights to anything. Hallelujah!

With today's world governments there is a need for the separation of powers. Most governments have a legislative power, an executive power, and a judicial power, which must remain independent. However, according to the ten titles mentioned in Psalms 93—101, Christ holds in Himself all the legislative power, all the executive power, and all the judicial power. Everything is in Him. There is no need to have three separate branches of government. Instead, there is only one branch of government—Christ.

These Psalms Revealing That Christ's Reign Is through the House and City of God

These psalms reveal that Christ's reign is through the house and city of God (93:5; 96:6; 99:1-2; 100:1-4; 101:8).

God Having the Right over the Earth Because the Earth with All Its Fullness—All the Different Peoples of All Races and Colors—Was Created by Him

God has the right over the earth because the earth with all its fullness—all the different peoples of all races and colors—was created by Him (93:1). Thus, He is the Possessor of the earth and holds the title deed (24:1). He has the full right to claim the earth, and He will do it through the reign of Christ (2:8; Rev. 10:2; 11:15).

Psalm 95 Unveiling That Jehovah as Christ Is a Great King Who Possesses the Earth

Psalm 95 unveils that Jehovah as Christ is a great King who possesses the earth (vv. 4-7).

Psalm 96 Indicating That Jehovah as Christ Will Come to Judge the Earth, the World, and the Peoples with Righteousness and Truth and That He Will Reign over the Nations; the Word Peoples *Indicating That People of Every Race and Color Will Be Judged by Christ in His Reign over the Nations*

Psalm 96:3-13 indicates that Jehovah as Christ will come to judge the earth, the world, and the peoples with righteousness and truth and that He will reign over the nations; the word *peoples* in verses 3, 5, 7, 10, and 13 indicates that people of every race and color will be judged by Christ in His reign over the nations (cf. Matt. 25:31-46).

According to Psalm 97, Jehovah as Christ Reigning, and because of This the Earth Being Glad and Rejoicing

According to Psalm 97:1-2, 4-6, 8-9, and 11, Jehovah as Christ will reign, and because of this the earth will be glad and rejoice. Jehovah reigns! Let the earth be glad, and let the many islands rejoice.

In Psalm 145 David Praising God for His Reigning in Christ and His Kingdom

In Psalm 145:1 and 11-13 David praises God for His reigning in Christ and His kingdom (cf. 1 Chron. 29:10-13). In Psalm 145 we see the consummation of God's move in the Psalms and the recovery of His reign and His kingdom over the whole earth. Verses 10 through 12 say, "All Your works will praise You, O Jehovah; / And Your faithful ones will bless You. / They will speak of the glory of Your kingdom / And tell of Your power, / To make known to the sons of men Your mighty acts / And the glorious splendor of Your kingdom." All the peoples, races, and nations of the entire earth will know the Lord's mighty acts and the glorious splendor of His kingdom. Then verse 13 says, "Your kingdom is an eternal kingdom, / And Your dominion is throughout all generations." This will be a kingdom that according to

Daniel 2:44, "will never be destroyed, and its reign will not be left to another people...and it will stand forever."

Psalm 145:21 says, "My mouth will speak the praise of Jehovah, / And all flesh will bless His holy name forever and ever." The phrase *all flesh* means all peoples, or the entire human race. This is why we need to go and preach the gospel of the kingdom to the whole inhabited earth. This is why we need to migrate to so many cities in the United States and to so many countries in Europe and Asia where they have not heard the gospel of Christ. We all should declare, "We will go!"—not to preach the low gospel but to drive out Satan. Brother Nee says that God's emphasis in this age is "the expatriation of Satan" (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 8, p. 20). Our going to the college campuses is to expatriate Satan from the campuses. Our going to Bangladesh is to expatriate Satan from Bangladesh. One day we will have blending meetings in Tehran, Istanbul, Cairo, Beijing, and even Pyonyang. Let us all pray for the recovery of the earth through God's reigning in Christ and in His kingdom.—A. Y.

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OF THE PSALMS (2)

Offering the Consummate Praise to God for the Recovery of Christ, the House, the City, and the Earth (Message 12)

Scripture Reading: Psa. 146—150; 2:6-7; 27:4; 48:1-2; 72:8; 22:22b; Heb. 2:12b; 13:15

I. Praise is the highest work carried out by God's children—Psa. 119:164; 34:1:
   A. The highest expression of a saint's spiritual life is his praise to God—146:2; Heb. 13:15; Rev. 5:9-13; 19:1-6:
      1. The Christian life soars through praises—Acts 16:19-34.
      2. To praise is to transcend everything to touch the Lord—Rev. 14:1-3; 15:2-4.
   B. Spiritual victory does not depend on warfare—it depends on praise—2 Chron. 20:20-22.
   C. We need to see that God is above everything and that He is worthy of our praise—Psa. 18:3; 1 Chron. 29:10-13; Rev. 4:1-3, 10-11; 5:6, 9-13.

II. Exodus 15:1-18 is a song of praise to God for His salvation and His victory, leading to God's habitation and God's kingdom:
   A. Salvation is related to God's people, and victory, to His enemy; at the time God defeated the enemy, He also saved His people—cf. Heb. 2:14-15.
   B. Exodus 15:13 speaks of God's habitation, even though the temple as God's dwelling place was not built until centuries later.
   C. Verse 18 refers to the kingdom: "Jehovah shall reign forever and ever":
      1. God's habitation, God's house, brings in God's kingdom, God's reign.

2. Today the church is first God's house and then His kingdom; the church brings the kingdom to the earth—1 Tim. 3:15; Rom. 14:17; Eph. 2:19; Matt. 16:18-19.
3. Exodus 15:1-18 indicates that the goal of God's salvation is the building of His dwelling place for the establishing of His kingdom, and for this we, like Moses and the children of Israel, should praise the Lord—cf. Rev. 15:2-4.

III. The book of Psalms is a book of praise; in the Psalms we find the greatest and highest praise:

A. The following verses reveal crucial aspects of praise in the Psalms:

1. "O Jehovah my God, I will praise You forever"—30:12b.
2. "Every day I will bless You, / And I will praise Your name forever and ever"—145:2.
3. "I will bless Jehovah at all times; / His praise will continually be in my mouth"—34:1.
4. "I will praise Jehovah while I live; / I will sing psalms to my God while I yet have being"—146:2.
5. "Then they believed His words; / They sang His praise"—106:12.
6. "Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, / My lips praise You"—63:3.
7. "I will cause Your name to be remembered in all generations; / Therefore the peoples will praise You forever and ever"—45:17.
8. "Great is Jehovah, / And much to be praised / In the city of our God, / In His holy mountain"—48:1.
9. "Praise befits You, O God, in Zion"—65:1.
10. "That the name of Jehovah may be declared in Zion, / And His praise, in Jerusalem"—102:21.
11. "Let the high praises of God be in their throats, / And a two-edged sword in their hand, / To execute vengeance on the nations / And punishment among the peoples; / To bind their kings with fetters / And their nobles with chains of iron; / To execute upon them the judgment written. / This honor is for all His faithful ones. / Hallelujah!"—149:6-9.
12. "You are holy, You who sit enthroned / Upon the praises of Israel"—22:3.

B. The praise of Jehovah in Psalms 103—106 issues in Hallelujahs, beginning in 104:35, because the earth has been fully recovered by God and brought under the reign of Christ in His kingdom—cf. Rev. 19:1-6; 11:15.

C. Psalms 146 through 150—the Hallelujah psalms—are the consummate praise:

1. Psalm 146 concerns the praising of Jehovah for His reigning from Zion—v. 10.
2. Psalm 147 is a praise to Jehovah for the rebuilding of Jerusalem.
3. Psalm 148 is a praise to Jehovah for His exalted name and for His transcending majesty—v. 13.
4. Psalm 149 is a praise to Jehovah for His taking pleasure in His people, Israel, and His adorning of the lowly with salvation—v. 4.
5. Psalm 150 is on praising Jehovah God:
   a. This psalm is a concluding charge to everything that has breath to praise God—v. 6.
   b. Psalm 150 is not only the conclusion of the Psalms—it is the consummation of the entire Bible, for the Psalms are a miniature of the whole Bible.
   c. The consummate praise in Psalm 150 corresponds with the praise at the end of Revelation—Rev. 19:1-6.

D. The Psalms reveal that the Lord has turned us from the law to Christ, that Christ has brought us to the house, that He is enlarging the house into the city, and that from the city He will gain the earth; then God's purpose will be fulfilled, and we will declare, "O Jehovah our Lord, / How excellent is Your name / In all the earth!"—2:6-7; 27:4; 48:1-2; 72:8; 8:9.

IV. In the church life and in our personal life, we need to offer consummate praise to God—22:22b; Heb. 2:12b; 13:15:

A. "In the midst of the assembly I will praise You"—Psa. 22:22b:

1. The assembly here refers to the church, in which the resurrected Christ sings hymns of praise to God the Father.
2. This is the firstborn Son's praising of the Father within the Father's many sons in the church meetings—Heb. 2:10, 12:
   a. When we, the many sons of God, meet as the church and praise the Father, the firstborn Son praises the

Father in our praising; He praises within us and with us through our praising—v. 12b.

b. The church on earth today is one corporate Body with the firstborn Son of God—Rom. 8:29; 12:4-5:

1) To gain more of the firstborn Son, we need to praise the Father; the more we praise the Father, the more we gain the firstborn Son.

2) The more we sing, the more we will enjoy His singing in our singing; the best way to cooperate with Christ and to have Him work together with us is by singing praises to the Father—Heb. 2:12.

B. "Through Him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise continually to God, that is, the fruit of lips confessing His name"—13:15:

1. When we pass through reproach and suffering, we should continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God—vv. 12-14.

2. Since in the church life we enjoy the unchanging Christ as grace and follow Him outside religion, we should offer through Him spiritual sacrifices to God—vv. 8-10, 15:

a. In the church we should offer up through Christ a sacrifice of praise to God continually—v. 15.

b. In the church He and we, we and He, praise the Father together in the mingled spirit—2:12b; 1 Cor. 6:17:

1) He, as the life-giving Spirit, praises the Father in our spirit, and we, by our spirit, praise the Father in His Spirit—15:45b; John 4:24; Eph. 2:18; Jude 20-21.

2) This is the best and highest sacrifice that we can offer to God through Him—Heb. 2:12b; 13:15; cf. Hosea 14:1-3.

3. Through the Christ whom we have experienced and enjoyed, we need to offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually—Heb. 1:2-3; 2:9, 17; 3:1; 4:14; 6:20; 7:25; 8:1; 12:2; 13:8, 15:

a. The real praise to the Father comes out of our experience and enjoyment of Christ in our daily life; this is a very pleasing praise to the Father, gladdening and rejoicing His heart—Eph. 3:8, 17a; John 4:24.

b. The praises out of our experience and enjoyment of Christ—the spiritual praises about Christ—are the best praise to the Father—Psa. 45:1-2; 145:1.

C. "I will praise You, O Lord my God, with all my heart; / And I will glorify Your name forever"—86:12.

D. "Jehovah will reign forever, / Your God, O Zion, forever and ever. / Hallelujah!"—146:10.

MESSAGE TWELVE

OFFERING THE CONSUMMATE PRAISE TO GOD FOR THE RECOVERY OF CHRIST, THE HOUSE, THE CITY, AND THE EARTH

In the book of Psalms, there is a wonderful progression of the divine revelation, a progression that represents the entire Bible because Psalms is a miniature of the whole Scripture. This progressive revelation shows the advance of the Lord's recovery. The Lord needs to turn His loving seekers from religion and the law to the wonderful all-inclusive Christ. We need to enjoy this Christ, experience Him, have a personal and affectionate relationship with Him, and receive His loving care so that we can love Him and love one another in Him for the church. Christ will then show us that He wants a corporate expression and enlargement that is real yet practical on the earth today. This corporate expression is the church as the house of God. In Christ, with Christ, and through Christ, we should live in the church as God's house.

In the house we drink of the river of His pleasures, and we are abundantly satisfied with the fatness of His house. In the house we discover the fountain of life, and in His light, we see light. Thus, the first stage of the church as God's building is the stage of the house, but the house must be strengthened to become the city, the kingdom. There is a great need and desire in God for the church to be not only the house but also the city where the unique headship of Christ is honored and where we are built up as an unshakable kingdom. It is through the church as the city that the earth will be recovered.

In order to carry out the Lord's commission, we must disciple the nations, making them the kingdom people, immersing them into the Triune God, teaching them to observe all that the Lord has commanded us, and establishing them as local churches. Unless we reach the stage of the city, however, the Lord's promise to return cannot be fulfilled quickly. God in Christ will recover the earth to the Lord through the church as the city of God. When the earth is recovered, the earth will see the greatest dispensational change that it has ever seen,

because the Lord of glory, the Possessor of heaven and earth, will personally take possession of the entire earth. From Greenland to Patagonia, from California to Catalonia, from Boston to Beijing, from Reykjavik to New Zealand, from Morocco to Pretoria, the Lord will gain the whole earth.

This message is entitled "Offering the Consummate Praise to God for the Recovery of Christ, the House, the City, and the Earth." The expression *consummate praise* points to praise at the highest, fullest level. This is ultimate praise, total praise, and universal praise. Everything that has breath will praise the Lord. Our offering of consummate praise to God is our service. The expression *consummate praise* also indicates that there are rising levels of praise leading up to the consummate praise. Such consummate praise does not just spring forth in a moment of joy or ecstasy. There is a process that leads up to it. Eventually, every limitation will be broken through, and consummate praise will ascend. The title of this message indicates a progression in praise toward consummate praise. When something of Christ is really recovered to us, in us, and with us, there will be praise. Whenever we see something new and fresh of Christ, we will praise Him. Whenever He cares for us in a particular way, we will praise Him.

Often when the Lord comes to us unexpectedly in a particular situation, we can only kneel down and worship and thank and praise Him. We all should expect more of Christ to be recovered to us, in us, and with us. Then in our new-creation being, our mingled spirit, we will praise Him because we are so happy and thankful that Christ is our Christ.

When we participate in the recovery of the house with an impartial love for all the members of the household, with a mutual pursuit of God's purpose, and with the joy of meeting together, fellowshipping together, serving together, and suffering together, our praise will be expanded and deepened. When there is praise in the house, we are touching Bethel, and when God is the God of the house of God to us, our praise will be uplifted.

After recovering the house of God, the Lord will recover the city. This is a costlier experience; it involves something solid, unshakable, and altogether in resurrection life. In the city we will sense the reigning presence of the Lord of glory, and we will live more and more in the reality of the kingdom under the shining of His face. We will treasure being in the kingdom of the Son of God's love, where there is no fear and no human control but only the Lord's delightful rule in love, life,

and light. This, in turn, will further deepen, uplift, and expand our praise. This progression is headed toward that glorious day when Christ comes because the Body has been built up sufficiently and the bride has made herself ready. At that point the man-child will be resurrected and raptured to the heavens, and the firstfruits will be raptured and stand before God on Mount Zion. Then the overcomers will descend with Christ, and He will claim His title and right to the whole earth. When He claims His title, the praise will be consummate. This is how praise develops in the Psalms.

PRAISE BEING THE HIGHEST WORK CARRIED OUT BY GOD'S CHILDREN

Praise is the highest work carried out by God's children (119:164; 34:1). The crucial points related to praise in this message are drawn from the booklet entitled *Praising.* I hope that we all could read this booklet, which contains fellowship given by Watchman Nee for new believers. Thus, when we read it, we should be like beginners and learners. It is quite wonderful.

The Highest Expression of a Saint's Spiritual Life Being His Praise to God

The highest expression of a saint's spiritual life is his praise to God (146:2; Heb. 13:15; Rev. 5:9-13; 19:1-6).

The Christian Life Soaring through Praises

The Christian life soars through praises (Acts 16:19-34). In Acts 16 Paul and Silas were beaten, their wounds were unattended, and they were thrown into prison and put into stocks. This was a reaction to their casting out a demon from a woman who had a divining spirit. When her masters saw this, they were angry because of their loss of future income from her divining ability. Hence, they dragged Paul and Silas into the marketplace, and the magistrates ordered them to be beaten with rods and thrown into prison. Yet at midnight, their spirits were soaring in praise. They were praising. They were not calling down judgment upon those who had wronged them, nor were they moaning; they were praising.

Praising Being to Transcend Everything to Touch the Lord

To praise is to transcend everything to touch the Lord (Rev. 14:1-3; 15:2-4). In the coming year there will be many things that we will need to transcend. In one situation after another, we will discover that the only way out, the only way through, is through praise. When we touch this, we will take an important step beyond simply praising when we are in a good mood. It is easy to praise when we are in a good mood. At such times, we can utter one Hallelujah after another, but this is mainly emotional. It is easy to praise when we receive some unexpected benefit, such as a greater than expected income tax refund. When we are "bubbling with praise" in our natural life, we have no thought of our need for transcendence. Nevertheless, some of us need to open the way for others, by learning to transcend everything by praise.

Spiritual Victory Not Depending on Warfare—It Depending on Praise

Spiritual victory does not depend on warfare; it depends on praise (2 Chron. 20:20-22). Second Chronicles 20:20-22 says,

> They rose up early in the morning and went out to the wilderness of Tekoa. And as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood up and said, Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem. Believe in Jehovah your God, and you will be established; believe in His prophets, and you will succeed. And when he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed them to sing to Jehovah and give thanks in holy array as they went out before the army and say, Give thanks to Jehovah, for His lovingkindness endures forever. And when they began to shout in song and to praise, Jehovah set ambushes for the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir.

This is how the children of Israel fought.

Earlier in this chapter, the king took the lead to say, "O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no strength before this great multitude that is coming against us, and we do not know what to do; but our eyes are upon You" (v. 12). There will be no praise if our eyes are set on the enemy, if our eyes are set on ourselves, if our eyes are set on our circumstances, or if our eyes are set on our behavior. It is so good to be able to say, "Lord, I do not know what to do about this situation, but my eyes are set on You." Then as our eyes are set on Him, something will be rising up within us to say, "Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!" When we praise, victory will come.

In 1 Chronicles 29:10-13 David says,

> You are blessed, O Jehovah, God of Israel, our Father, from eternity to eternity. Yours, O Jehovah, is the greatness and the power and the splendor and the victory and the majesty, indeed all that is in heaven and on earth; Yours, O Jehovah, is the kingdom, and You are exalted as Head over all. Both riches and glory proceed from You, and You rule over all. In Your hand are power and might, and it is in Your hand to make great and to give strength to all. Now therefore, our God, we thank You and praise Your glorious name.

David blessed Jehovah in the sight of all the assembly. He took the lead to say, "You are blessed, O Jehovah…Yours is the greatness and the power and the splendor and the victory and the majesty, indeed all that is in heaven and on earth; Yours, O Jehovah, is the kingdom." We need to be trained in this way. Only the Lord knows what we will experience in the coming year, but will He have to wait for us to feel better, be healthier, or get a job before we praise Him? Or will some of us praise Him simply because we see that He is above everything?

We need to advance through four levels in our experience of praise. These levels are all necessary and valid. The first level involves praising the Lord for what He gives, whether it is something spiritual or something practical in His care for us. We should praise the Lord for giving us a spouse who loves us. We should praise Him for bringing us together and for blessing our courtship. What can be more precious than the Lord giving us a counterpart? Surely, this is deserving of our praise. We should not be so spiritual as to think that this arrangement is not transcendent enough. In marriage there are many opportunities to experience the Lord's transcendence. May our young people be saved from this thankless generation with its feeling of entitlement and learn to thank the Lord for what He gives.

As we ascend to the second level of praise, we will learn to praise the Lord for what He does. Although He is very active, much of what He does is hidden. Even though we may not be initially aware of His actions, they will become manifest at some point in time. At such a time, He will surely be deserving of our praise, especially if His actions come at a cost to another member of the Body.

When we ascend to the third level, we will begin to praise the Lord for what He is. In John 11 the Lord was the resurrection life. When He

heard that Lazarus was sick, He did nothing. Even though Lazarus's sisters tried to manipulate Him to come quickly to intervene by sending some to say, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick" (v. 3), the Lord did not come quickly. When He arrived at the house in Bethany, He was greeted with opinions: "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died" (v. 21). Martha wanted Him to be the God of prevention, but He wanted to be the God of resurrection.

This does not mean that we need to be "heros" and look for troubling situations. When Paul experienced a thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. 12:7), he did not say, "Enemy, is that the biggest thorn you have?" Instead, he entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from him (v. 8).

The focus of Mary and Martha was on what the Lord could do, but what the Lord does is based on what He is. We may want Him to "raise someone from the dead," which He may eventually do, but He wants us to realize what He is. He wants us to treasure what He is above what He does. If we are ill and He heals us, we will praise Him, thank Him, and testify of Him. But will we praise Him even if He does not heal us? We have to overcome the part of our being that wants things done for us. If we value the Lord more for what He is than what He does for us, we will grow. We should not remain so small. As our sense of spiritual value develops, we will praise the Lord for what He is. This is a realm of unlimited praise because He is all-inclusive; He is all in all. For example, we can praise Him for being the Shepherd and not only for His shepherding. There is, however, another level that we need to experience.

Needing to See That God Is above Everything and That He Is Worthy of Our Praise

We need to see that God is above everything and that He is worthy of our praise (Psa. 18:3; 1 Chron. 29:10-13; Rev. 4:1-3, 10-11; 5:6, 9-13). Although we should praise the Lord for what He gives, for what He does, and for what He is, we should also praise Him simply because He is. We can see this through our human relationships. Are we not glad just for the fact that certain people are alive because their mere existence is a blessing to us? Such ones do not have to give us anything, they do not have to do anything for us, and they do not even need to be something particular to us. Instead, they just are, and we are so thankful. Our deepest sense of loss occurs simply when they are not with us. In this regard,

the Hallelujah psalms speak of Jehovah, who is the I Am, praising Him simply as the self-existing and ever-existing God.

EXODUS 15:1-18 BEING A SONG OF PRAISE TO GOD FOR HIS SALVATION AND HIS VICTORY, LEADING TO GOD'S HABITATION AND GOD'S KINGDOM

Exodus 15:1-18 is a song of praise to God for His salvation and His victory, leading to God's habitation and God's kingdom. I believe this is the first record of praise in the Bible, so it establishes the principle of praise, which is to praise the Lord for His victory and for His salvation that lead us to His dwelling place and His kingdom.

Verses 1 and 2 say, "Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to Jehovah and spoke, saying, I will sing to Jehovah, for He has triumphed gloriously; / The horse and its rider He has cast into the sea. / Jah is my strength and song, / And He has become my salvation; / This is my God, and I will praise Him." How we will praise Him when we see Satan bound and thrown into the abyss! I am looking forward to that day. Satan will be so angry when he is cast down to the earth, but even then the man-child will pursue him to bind him. We will praise the Lord for this tremendous victory.

Verse 13 says, "In your lovingkindness You have led the people whom You have redeemed; / You have guided them in Your strength to Your holy habitation." Verses 17 and 18 say, "You will bring them in and plant them in the mountain of Your inheritance, / The place, O Jehovah, which You have made for Your dwelling, / The sanctuary, O Lord, which Your hands have established. / Jehovah shall reign forever and ever." Praise ascends in the church as the city of God because of the reality of His reigning in us. Outwardly, the earth will rejoice when He is reigning, but even now we can live in the reality of the kingdom, being under His direct rule in love, light, and life. This is so endearing and precious. Deep praise should rise up in us for our indwelling King.

Salvation Being Related to God's People, and Victory, to His Enemy; at the Time God Defeated the Enemy, His also Saving His People

Salvation is related to God's people, and victory, to His enemy; at the time God defeated the enemy, He also saved His people (cf. Heb. 2:14-15).

Exodus 15:13 Speaking of God's Habitation, Even Though the Temple as God's Dwelling Place Not Being Built until Centuries Later

Exodus 15:13 speaks of God's habitation, even though the temple as God's dwelling place was not built until centuries later.

Verse 18 Referring to the Kingdom: "Jehovah Shall Reign Forever and Ever"

God's Habitation, God's House, Bringing In God's Kingdom, God's Reign

Verse 18 refers to the kingdom: "Jehovah shall reign forever and ever." God's habitation, God's house, brings in God's kingdom, God's reign.

Today the Church First Being God's House and Then His Kingdom; the Church Bringing the Kingdom to the Earth

Today the church is first God's house and then His kingdom; the church brings the kingdom to the earth (1 Tim. 3:15; Rom. 14:17; Eph. 2:19; Matt. 16:18-19).

Exodus 15:1-18 Indicating That the Goal of God's Salvation Is the Building of His Dwelling Place for the Establishing of His Kingdom, and for This We, Like Moses and the Children of Israel, Needing to Praise the Lord

Exodus 15:1-18 indicates that the goal of God's salvation is the building of His dwelling place for the establishing of His kingdom, and for this we, like Moses and the children of Israel, should praise the Lord (cf. Rev. 15:2-4). We should praise the Lord even before we see the building, and when we touch the vision of it, we touch the reality of it.

THE BOOK OF PSALMS BEING A BOOK OF PRAISE; IN THE PSALMS OUR FINDING THE GREATEST AND HIGHEST PRAISE

The Following Verses Revealing Crucial Aspects of Praise in the Psalms

The book of Psalms is a book of praise; in the Psalms we find the greatest and highest praise. The following verses reveal crucial aspects

of praise in the Psalms. Just consider, how much do we praise the Lord from day to day? Although much of our praise may come forth from an uplifted meeting or conference, that praise may not characterize our daily life with the Lord. The psalmists, however, lived such a praising life. As we consider the following verses, we get some impression that the psalmists were persons of praise. In *The God-man Living*, Brother Lee uses the expression *a man of prayer*. This is not merely a man who prays but a man of prayer. Eventually, the Lord wants us to be men of praise. Something needs to be wrought into our being so that as we breathe the Lord in, as we tell the Lord that we love Him, as we consecrate ourselves to Him afresh each day, and as we turn our heart to Him every morning, we could say, "Lord, I praise You simply because You are. You do not have to do anything or give me anything. I just praise You because You are You."

"O Jehovah My God, I Will Praise You Forever"

Psalm 30:12b says, "O Jehovah my God, I will praise You forever." It would be good, when you have the opportunity, to not only "praise-read" the Word but to praise-read it in faith. Exercise your faith to believe that this will be your future. Do not believe in your past. Do not believe in your weakness. Believe that you will be such a person who can say, "O Jehovah my God, I will praise You forever."

"Every Day I Will Bless You, and I Will Praise Your Name Forever and Ever"

Psalm 145:2 says, "Every day I will bless You, / And I will praise Your name forever and ever." This was the psalmist's determination rather than his vow, but he did this every day. Consider what it would be like if at the end of the coming year we could say, "Lord, I praise You for the fact that every day this year, I praised You at least a little." I believe He will be happy, and we will be happy.

"I Will Bless Jehovah at All Times; His Praise Will Continually Be in My Mouth"

Psalm 34:1 says, "I will bless Jehovah at all times; / His praise will continually be in my mouth." We can even bless Jehovah when our flight is delayed for several hours. We can bless the Lord when the freeway we need to use gets closed down. We can praise the Lord when our car will not start. We can praise the Lord when our spouse is in a mysterious

mood. We can praise the Lord at all times. His praise will be continually in our mouth. This verse does not say that His praise will continually be in my *heart* but in my *mouth*.

"I Will Praise Jehovah While I Live; I Will Sing Psalms to My God While I Yet Have Being"

Psalm 146:2 says, "I will praise Jehovah while I live; / I will sing psalms to my God while I yet have being." This is a wonderful way to finish one's course. There may be a very sick elderly saint. Everyone knows that there will be no miracle to save this one, and no one wants an extraordinary medical intervention. It may be that this elderly saint's time has come. This one may be weak, with no energy and little breath. But with his or her last breath, you may hear, "Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord." How marvelous are these last words. You may only have a little being left, but with the breath that remains, you can say Hallelujah.

"Then They Believed His Words; They Sang His Praise"

Psalm 106:12 says, "Then they believed His words; / They sang His praise." If we exercise to believe, praise will come forth.

"Because Your Lovingkindness Is Better Than Life, My Lips Praise You"

Psalm 63:3 says, "Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, / My lips praise You." We need to be those who can say, "Lord, there is something better to me than my soul life itself. It is Your lovingkindness, Your sweetness, Your tender love, Your affectionate care. You are my Beloved. Your lovingkindness is sweeter to me than life itself. So my lips will praise You."

"I Will Cause Your Name to Be Remembered in All Generations; Therefore the Peoples Will Praise You Forever and Ever"

Psalm 45:17 says, "I will cause Your name to be remembered in all generations; / Therefore the peoples will praise You forever and ever." We brothers who serve in the training have a fresh commission to give ourselves to the Lord so that we will cause the Lord's name to be remembered in this young generation so that they will praise Him forever and ever. This is our bequest—forever and ever praise. So whenever you

think of the brothers, you would say, "Praise the Lord." If we are beings of praise, we will beget praise.

"Great Is Jehovah, and Much to Be Praised in the City of Our God, in His Holy Mountain"

Psalm 48:1 says, "Great is Jehovah, / And much to be praised / In the city of our God, / In His holy mountain."

"Praise Befits You, O God, in Zion"

Psalm 65:1 says, "Praise befits You, O God, in Zion." We would say, "Lord, in Zion, there is something that perfectly matches You. It is our praise." Just consider how all over the earth the Lord's name is cursed, blasphemed, and used in vain, but in Zion there is something that matches Him. We can pray, "Lord, this is our invitation. Come visit us in Zion, and we will praise You with our whole being."

"That the Name of Jehovah May Be Declared in Zion, and His Praise, in Jerusalem"

Psalm 102:21 says, "That the name of Jehovah may be declared in Zion, / And His praise, in Jerusalem."

"Let the High Praises of God Be in Their Throats, and a Two-edged Sword in Their Hand, to Execute Vengeance on the Nations and Punishment among the Peoples; to Bind Their Kings with Fetters and Their Nobles with Chains of Iron; to Execute upon Them the Judgment Written. This Honor Is for All His Faithful Ones. Hallelujah!"

Psalm 149:6-9 says, "Let the high praises of God be in their throats, / And a two-edged sword in their hand, / To execute vengeance on the nations / And punishment among the peoples; / To bind their kings with fetters / And their nobles with chains of iron; / To execute upon them the judgment written. / This honor is for all His faithful ones. / Hallelujah!" This is prayer in warfare. This prayer uses the two-edged sword to judge the enemy and bind him. Recently, there was a direct attack from the enemy against the training, which tried to stop all the speaking. However, with praise in my mouth, I can declare, "Satan, you were defeated! We used the sword of the Spirit to cut you to pieces. While you are suffering, we are saying, 'Hallelujah! Christ is Victor!'"

Today we are closer to the Lord's coming than a year ago. Our Lord destroyed the devil on the cross. He did the work. We are wearing soft armor, and our responsibility is to execute the judgment pronounced on him by the Son of Man on the cross. The time is coming when the Lord will return with His mighty ones, and we will go to country after country and say, "Satan, get out of here! The Lord has given us this territory as co-kings, and we will bind you while we are praising the Lord. Hallelujah!"

"You Are Holy, You Who Sit Enthroned upon the Praises of Israel"

Psalm 22:3 says, "You are holy, You who sit enthroned / Upon the praises of Israel." We would say, "Lord, You are on the throne in the heavens. When You come, You will sit on Your throne in Jerusalem. We praise You that You have entered into God's being and sat down there, and You are the King with all authority in heaven and on earth, but we, Your lovers and seekers, would like to end this year by enthroning You upon our praise!" The more we praise Him, the more His throne is here. We will bring in the kingdom by our praising.

The Praise of Jehovah in Psalms 103—106 Issuing in Hallelujahs, Beginning in 104:35, Because the Earth Has Been Fully Recovered by God and Brought under the Reign of Christ in His Kingdom

The praise of Jehovah in Psalms 103—106 issues in Hallelujahs, beginning in 104:35, because the earth has been fully recovered by God and brought under the reign of Christ in His kingdom (cf. Rev. 19:1-6; 11:15). Romans 8:19-21 foretells a great moment for the earth, because the whole creation is travailing and expecting the revelation of the sons of God. The meaning of *eagerly awaits* in verse 19 implies one who is on tiptoe straining his neck as he waits to see a thing happen. The creation may say, "Are the sons of God ready yet? Is Zion built up yet? Any sign of their coming? Here they come! The glorified sons of God are coming! We are released from corruption, from vanity!" I believe at that time the birds will make glorious noises. There will be a tremendous response from everything that has breath because the Lord has come to recover the earth.

Psalms 146 through 150—the Hallelujah Psalms—Being the Consummate Praise

Psalm 146 concerning the Praising of Jehovah for His Reigning from Zion

Psalms 146 through 150—the Hallelujah psalms—are the consummate praise. Psalm 146 concerns the praising of Jehovah for His reigning from Zion (v. 10).

Psalm 147 Being a Praise to Jehovah for the Rebuilding of Jerusalem

Psalm 147 is a praise to Jehovah for the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

Psalm 148 Being a Praise to Jehovah for His Exalted Name and for His Transcending Majesty

Psalm 148 is a praise to Jehovah for His exalted name and for His transcending majesty (v. 13). He is so majestic, and His name is transcendent. We simply want to praise Him! I believe that in the coming year, some of us, in our own rooms, will be dancing. We are going to leap, being beside ourselves to Christ. Every believer should have at least one personal, private moment of ecstatic praise, in which we are fully out of our introspective and conservative disposition, fully released so that our whole being is dancing and praising the Lord because He is majestic and His name is transcendent. Nothing has changed in our environment, and there is no outward sign of any blessing, but we are ecstatic simply because He is.

Psalm 149 Being a Praise to Jehovah for His Taking Pleasure in His People, Israel, and His Adorning of the Lowly with Salvation

Psalm 149 is a praise to Jehovah for His taking pleasure in His people, Israel, and His adorning of the lowly with salvation (v. 4).

Psalm 150 Being on Praising Jehovah God

Psalm 150 is on praising Jehovah God. Psalm 150 says, "Hallelujah! / Praise God in His sanctuary; / Praise Him in the expanse that manifests His power. / Praise Him for His mighty acts; / Praise Him according to His vast greatness. / Praise Him with the blast of the trumpet; / Praise Him with the harp and lyre; / Praise Him with the tambourine and with dancing; / Praise Him with the stringed instrument and the pipe. / Praise Him with the loud cymbals; / Praise Him with the loud clanging cymbals. / Let everything that has breath praise Jehovah. / Hallelujah!"

This Psalm Being a Concluding Charge to Everything That Has Breath to Praise God

This psalm is a concluding charge to everything that has breath to praise God (v. 6). This charge is tremendous.

Psalm 150 Being Not Only the Conclusion of the Psalms—It Being the Consummation of the Entire Bible, for the Psalms Are a Miniature of the Whole Bible

Psalm 150 is not only the conclusion of the Psalms—it is the consummation of the entire Bible, for the Psalms are a miniature of the whole Bible.

The Consummate Praise in Psalm 150 Corresponding with the Praise at the End of Revelation

The consummate praise in Psalm 150 corresponds with the praise at the end of Revelation (Rev. 19:1-6). Revelation 19:1-6 says,

> After these things I heard as it were a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, Hallelujah! The salvation and the glory and the power are of our God…And a second time they said, Hallelujah!...And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God, who sits upon the throne, saying, Amen, Hallelujah! And a voice came out from the throne, saying, Praise our God, all His slaves and those who fear Him, the small and the great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunders, saying, Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.

One reason for these Hallelujahs is that one woman is going and another is coming. Babylon the Great is going. Actually, she has been terminated. The great harlot has been annihilated, the one who shed the blood of the saints. And the woman who is coming is the bride. Revelation 19:7 says, "Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory

to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." How wonderful!

The Psalms Revealing That the Lord Has Turned Us from the Law to Christ, That Christ Has Brought Us to the House, That He Is Enlarging the House into the City, and That from the City He Will Gain the Earth; Then God's Purpose Being Fulfilled, and Our Declaring, "O Jehovah Our Lord, How Excellent Is Your Name in All the Earth!"

The Psalms reveal that the Lord has turned us from the law to Christ, that Christ has brought us to the house, that He is enlarging the house into the city, and that from the city He will gain the earth; then God's purpose will be fulfilled, and we will declare, "O Jehovah our Lord, / How excellent is Your name / In all the earth!" (2:6-7; 27:4; 48:1-2; 72:8; 8:9). This could have been an appropriate place to end the training. We could have ended with the consummate praise and with some impression of the development of praise and the factors of praise—Christ, house, the city, and the earth. And maybe it would have been quite wonderful to spend some time singing and praising, but that is not the Lord's leading in the way to conclude this training. I believe that the Lord impressed me to compose the final section of this message outline with something in view.

Probably all of us would confess that we do not yet live a life of praise. Actually, praising might be rare for us. We may be so much in our feelings, in ourselves, and in our situation that it simply may not even occur to us. Nevertheless, our Lord is not disappointed with us. He understands us, and He cares for us. But I believe that it is in His heart to point us in the direction of development and that this development will be genuine in the way of life, so it will be gradual, largely unnoticeable, but very real.

IN THE CHURCH LIFE AND IN OUR PERSONAL LIFE, NEEDING TO OFFER CONSUMMATE PRAISE TO GOD

"In the Midst of the Assembly I Will Praise You"

In the church life and in our personal life, we need to offer consummate praise to God (22:22b; Heb. 2:12b; 13:15). Psalm 22:22b says, "In the midst of the assembly I will praise You." Now we need to turn to Hebrews, which draws very much from the Psalms.

Consider how many Lord's table meetings you attended this year.

In how many of them did you really praise the Lord? In how many of them did you come with a spirit of praise, praising the Lord Himself, and worshipping the Father by praising Him with Christ? This is a matter of development.

What would our Lord's table meeting be like if we did not have the hymnal, if we could not quote anything, and if we could only speak out in the assembly with the Firstborn the praise that has been wrought into us? I am not saying that we should leave our hymnal at home, but the Lord does not want us to have a flash of praise to conclude this wonderful training, then another moment of praise during the upcoming Memorial Day weekend conference, and again some more praise in the next summer training. He would like, and it would be a glory to Him, for there to be a praising life developed among us in the churches.

The Assembly Here Referring to the Church, in Which the Resurrected Christ Sings Hymns of Praise to God the Father

The assembly here refers to the church, in which the resurrected Christ sings hymns of praise to God the Father.

This Being the Firstborn Son's Praising of the Father within the Father's Many Sons in the Church Meetings

When We, the Many Sons of God, Meet as the Church and Praise the Father, the Firstborn Son Praising the Father in Our Praising; His Praising within Us and with Us through Our Praising

This is the firstborn Son's praising of the Father within the Father's many sons in the church meetings (Heb. 2:10, 12). When we, the many sons of God, meet as the church and praise the Father, the firstborn Son praises the Father in our praising; He praises within us and with us through our praising (v. 12b). But if we are there in our self, in our mood, or in our feeling, with no worship, no praise, and only half-hearted singing, there is no way for the firstborn Son to sing in our singing. We need to praise and sing with our whole being.

The Church on Earth Today Being One Corporate Body with the Firstborn Son of God

To Gain More of the Firstborn Son, Our Needing to Praise the Father; the More We Praise the Father, the More Our Gaining the Firstborn Son

The church on earth today is one corporate Body with the firstborn

Son of God (Rom. 8:29; 12:4-5). To gain more of the firstborn Son, we need to praise the Father; the more we praise the Father, the more we gain the firstborn Son.

The More We Sing, the More Our Enjoying His Singing in Our Singing; the Best Way to Cooperate with Christ and to Have Him Work Together with Us Being by Singing Praises to the Father

The more we sing, the more we will enjoy His singing in our singing; the best way to cooperate with Christ and to have Him work together with us is by singing praises to the Father (Heb. 2:12).

"Through Him Then Let Us Offer Up a Sacrifice of Praise Continually to God, That Is, the Fruit of Lips Confessing His Name"

Hebrews 13:15 says, "Through Him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise continually to God, that is, the fruit of lips confessing His name." I would encourage you, please do not say, "Lord, I consecrate to praise You continually in the coming year." One day you will realize that you can never fulfill such a promise. It is through Him that you can offer up the sacrifice of praise continually to God. Who is the "Him" in this verse? The "Him" in this verse is the complete Christ revealed in the book of Hebrews. You must pass through Him as the channel, the agent, and the means. Do not be unnecessarily disappointed with your inability to offer the sacrifice of praise. But it is sweet to the Lord when praise is a sacrifice, that is, when your whole natural being inclines you in one direction or when you have suffered a great loss. You may be in pain, you may be in great need, but then you realize that the Lord is the I Am, that He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He is our God, and He is our Lord. With this realization you can pray, "Lord, in the midst of this situation, through You I will offer praise as a sacrifice, continually." This is to be a praising person; this is to be a being of praise.

Our offering up a sacrifice of praise to God continually can only be through Him, because only the Lord Himself is this kind of person. We need to learn what it is to do everything through Him and to pass through many experiences through Him. The overcomers sing a new song that no one else can learn (Rev. 14:3). They learn it by passing through things as they follow the Lamb wherever He may go. They may not realize it, but as they are passing through the things, both the words

and the melody are being composed within their being. Eventually, they will sing a song that the universe has never heard, a new song.

When We Pass through Reproach and Suffering, Our Needing to Continually Offer Up a Sacrifice of Praise to God

When we pass through reproach and suffering, we should continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God (Heb. 13:12-14). This praise is offered by those who are outside the camp, who are outside the city; they are not in the earthly realm, and they have left religion. There is no praise like this in religion. The ones who sing and praise in this way are those who are outside the camp bearing His reproach, taking the way of the cross.

Since in the Church Life We Enjoy the Unchanging Christ as Grace and Follow Him outside Religion, Our Offering through Him Spiritual Sacrifices to God

Since in the church life we enjoy the unchanging Christ as grace and follow Him outside religion, we should offer through Him spiritual sacrifices to God (vv. 8-10, 15). Consider David's statement when he wanted to purchase the threshing floor of Ornan to build an altar, and Ornan said to him, "Take it; and may my lord the king do whatever seems good in his sight"—David said, "No; but I will surely buy it for the full price, for I will not take what is yours for Jehovah and offer up burnt offerings that cost me nothing" (1 Chron. 21:23-24).

We can praise the Lord again and again, but eventually, the Lord will ask, "For what?" What is the Lord to us? What have we experienced of Him? What have we passed through with Him? Then at times, there will be the sacrifice. One who has been suffering very much will pray in the worship of the Father, but he does not testify of his suffering. Yet this one's praise ascends as a sacrifice. This is so precious.

We need not be afraid of this, and we should not make up our mind to be a hero and promise to do this. It is only possible *through Him.* In the church we should offer up Christ as the sacrifice of praise to God continually. In the church He and we, we and He, praise the Father together in the mingled spirit. He, as the life-giving Spirit, praises the Father in our spirit, and we, by our spirit, praise the Father in His Spirit. This is the best and highest sacrifice that we can offer to God through Christ.

In the Church Our Offering Up through Christ a Sacrifice of Praise to God Continually

In the church we should offer up through Christ a sacrifice of praise to God continually (Heb. 13:15). Through the Christ whom we have experienced and enjoyed, we need to offer a sacrifice of praise to God continually. If you do not enjoy Him or experience Him, you can still say, "Praise the Lord. Hallelujah," but there may not be much substance. But when you experience Him and enjoy Him, there is substance to your praise, and you can praise the Father for what Christ has been to you in that particular situation

Hebrews 10:1-18 is a section that reveals that Christ came to replace all the sacrifices and offerings with Himself as the reality. We could begin by learning to experience, enjoy, and praise Christ as the offerings.

I recommend the book *Experiencing Christ as the Offerings for the Church Life.* I am a learner, but I can praise like this, and I do praise like this: "Oh, my Sin Offering, I praise You. Trespass Offering, the One who bore all my sins, I praise You. I praise You, Burnt Offering. I praise You, Meal Offering with Your divinely enriched humanity. Peace, I praise You. Peacemaker, I praise You. Peace Offering, I praise You. I praise You, my Wave Offering. I am with You, waving in resurrection. Praise You, my Heave Offering. Praise You, Vine. Praise You, Drink Offering." We have to begin somewhere. I would like to testify to you how good it is to begin the day by solving all our problems with the all-inclusive Christ as the offerings. I am still in the flesh of sin, but Christ is my sin offering. I have had failures this year, but Christ is my trespass offering, my burnt offering.

In the Church He and We, We and He, Praising the Father Together in the Mingled Spirit

He, as the Life-giving Spirit, Praising the Father in Our Spirit, and We, by Our Spirit, Praising the Father in His Spirit

In the church He and we, we and He, praise the Father together in the mingled spirit (2:12b; 1 Cor. 6:17). He, as the life-giving Spirit, praises the Father in our spirit, and we, by our spirit, praise the Father in His Spirit (15:45b; John 4:24; Eph. 2:18; Jude 20-21).

This Being the Best and Highest Sacrifice That We Can Offer to God through Him

This is the best and highest sacrifice that we can offer to God through Him (Heb. 2:12b; 13:15; cf. Hosea 14:1-3).

Through the Christ Whom We Have Experienced and Enjoyed, Our Needing to Offer the Sacrifice of Praise to God Continually

The Real Praise to the Father Coming Out of Our Experience and Enjoyment of Christ in Our Daily Life; This Being a Very Pleasing Praise to the Father, Gladdening and Rejoicing His Heart

Through the Christ whom we have experienced and enjoyed, we need to offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually (Heb. 1:2-3; 2:9, 17; 3:1; 4:14; 6:20; 7:25; 8:1; 12:2; 13:8, 15). The real praise to the Father comes out of our experience and enjoyment of Christ in our daily life; this is a very pleasing praise to the Father, gladdening and rejoicing His heart (Eph. 3:8, 17a; John 4:24).

The Praises out of Our Experience and Enjoyment of Christ—the Spiritual Praises about Christ—Being the Best Praise to the Father

The praises out of our experience and enjoyment of Christ—the spiritual praises about Christ—are the best praise to the Father (Psa. 45:1-2; 145:1).

"I Will Praise You, O Lord My God, with All My Heart; and I Will Glorify Your Name Forever"

Psalm 86:12 says, "I will praise You, O Lord my God, with all my heart; / And I will glorify Your name forever."

"Jehovah Will Reign Forever, Your God, O Zion, Forever and Ever. Hallelujah!"

Psalm 146:10 says, "Jehovah will reign forever, / Your God, O Zion, forever and ever. / Hallelujah!"

Prayer: Lord, we end this training by taking You as our Hallelujah. We praise You with our whole being, for what You have given to us, what You have done for us, what You are to us, but, even more, that You are. We have never loved You more in our whole life than we do

right now. We appreciate You so much. Thank You for shepherding us into the house of God. Thank You that we are becoming the city of God. Thank You, Lord, that soon, maybe in our lifetime, the whole earth will turn to You because Lord, You are coming again. So we say, Lord, Amen. Hallelujah! Come, Lord Jesus! Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! Amen!—R. K.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

INFORMATION CONCERNING UPCOMING CONFERENCES AND TRAININGS

The following is a schedule of upcoming conferences and trainings sponsored by Living Stream Ministry. Information is also available online at:

http://www.lsm.org/upcoming-conf-info.html

Int'l Training for Elders & Responsible Ones (Anaheim, CA)	March 30—April 1, 2012
Int'l Memorial Day Weekend Conference (Bellevue, WA)	May 25-28, 2012
2012 Summer Training (Anaheim, CA)	July 2-7, 2012
Int'l Training for Elders & Responsible Ones (Yokohama, Japan)	October 4-6, 2012
Int'l Thanksgiving Weekend Conference (Oklahoma City, OK)	November 22-25, 2012
2012 Winter Training (Anaheim, CA)	December 24-29, 2012

INFORMATION CONCERNING EUROPEAN CONFERENCES, SEMINARS, AND WEEKEND TRAININGS

For information related to upcoming conferences, seminars, and weekend trainings in Europe and Israel, please consult the Amana Trust website at:

http://www.amanatrust.org.uk/events