WEEK 3 — OUTLINE

The Purpose of God's Calling

Scripture Reading: Exo. 3:7-8, 10, 12, 17-18; Eph. 1:4-5; 2 Tim. 1:9-10; 1 Pet. 2:9, 20; 5:10; 1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Thes. 2:14; 1 Thes. 2:12

‹‹DAY 1››

I. As revealed in Exodus, the purpose of God's calling was to deliver the children of Israel, God's chosen people, out of the tyranny of the Egyptians and out of Egypt, the land of bondage, and to bring them into Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey (3:7-8, 10, 17):

A. The nation of Egypt typifies the kingdom of darkness, and Pharaoh typifies Satan, the devil (Col. 1:13; 1 John 5:19b; John 12:31; Heb. 2:14-15; Rev. 12:9a):

1. The world is not a source of enjoyment; it is a place of tyranny, and every aspect of the world is a form of tyranny (Gal. 4:8).
2. In the world Satan is keeping God's chosen people, those destined for the fulfillment of God's purpose, under his usurping hand (Eph. 2:2; Luke 13:11-12):

a. To exist is one thing, but to exist for the divine purpose is another thing (Rom. 8:28; Eph. 1:11; 3:11; 2 Tim. 1:9).

b. Satan has usurped people so that they care only for their existence, not for God's purpose in their existence (Matt. 6:25, 31-33).

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B. To bring a person out of Satan's hand and out of the kingdom of darkness is a mighty work (12:28-29; Luke 11:21-22; Acts 26:16-18; Col. 1:13):

1. For this reason, the divine revelation in the New Testament places a very high value on the preaching of the gospel (Rom. 1:16; Matt. 24:14; Mark 16:15).
2. One aspect of God's purpose in calling us is to use us to bring others out of the usurpation and tyranny of Satan and the world (Acts 26:18; Eph. 3:9).

C. In typology, bringing the children of Israel into Canaan, a good land flowing with milk and honey, signifies bringing people into the all-inclusive Christ with His unsearchable riches (v. 8; Col. 1:12):

1. Ultimately, the purpose of God's calling is to bring His people into the good land so that they may enjoy Christ in His all-inclusiveness (Eph. 3:18; Col. 2:6-7, 16-17; 3:11).
2. We need to bring others all the way from the world into the all-inclusive Christ for God's kingdom and God's building (Eph. 3:8; 2:19-22).

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D. Exodus 3 reveals that in fulfilling the purpose of God's calling there are three stations—the wilderness, the mountain, and the good land (vv. 8, 12, 17-18):

1. In 3:18 the term wilderness is used in a positive sense to denote a place of separation from the world:

a. As soon as a person is saved, he should be brought out of the world into the wilderness where there is no Egyptian element.

b. We need to have the power of resurrection in our preaching of the gospel so that others are raised out of their tombs and brought into the wilderness—a realm in resurrection—by a journey of three days (John 5:25; Eph. 2:1, 5-6; Col. 2:13).

2. The mountain is where we receive the revelation regarding God's eternal purpose (Exo. 3:12; 19:2; 24:9-13, 18):

a. At the mountain the children of Israel received the revelation concerning what God is and concerning God's desire to have a dwelling place on earth (19:3-6; 20:2; 25:8-9).

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b. On the mountain, where the sky is clear, we can see the vision of God's economy (24:10; Rev. 21:10).

c. Here we come to know what is on God's heart, and we see what God desires to have on earth today (Eph. 1:5, 9; Phil. 2:13).

3. If we would reach the ultimate goal of God's calling, we need to journey onward and enter into the good land (Exo. 3:8, 17; Deut. 8:7-10):

a. The people of Israel entered into the good land by the Ark with the tabernacle (Josh. 3:3, 6, 8, 13-17; 4:10-19), through burial in the Jordan River (vv. 1-9, 20), and by circumcision (5:2-4) in order to enjoy the riches of the land (Deut. 8:7-10).

b. Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians show us Christ as the all-inclusive land—Christ as the center and circumference, the centrality and universality, of God's eternal economy (Col. 2:9; 3:11).

c. We need to help others experience Christ in all His unsearchable riches so that God may be able to establish His kingdom and have His dwelling place on earth today (Eph. 3:8; 2:21; Rom. 10:12; 14:17).

‹‹DAY 5››

II. The purpose of God's calling is fully revealed in the New Testament:

A. God's calling is according to His predestination (Eph. 1:4-5), His purpose (2 Tim. 1:9; Rom. 8:28), and His grace (2 Tim. 1:9-10).

B. God's calling is in Christ (1 Pet. 5:10) and through the gospel (2 Thes. 2:14).

C. The New Testament reveals various aspects of the purpose of God's calling:

1. God has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Pet. 2:9):

a. Darkness is a sign of sin and death; it is the expression and sphere of Satan in death.

b. When God calls us, He opens our eyes and turns us from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to Himself; to be turned to God means to be turned to the authority of God, which is God's kingdom of light (Acts 26:18).

2. God's calling is that His chosen ones may be separated and made holy unto God, to be the holy ones, the saints (Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2).

‹‹DAY 6››

3. God has called us so that we may enter into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, to partake of and enjoy His all-inclusive riches (vv. 9, 30).

4. God has called us into the sufferings of Christ (1 Pet. 2:20-21).

5. For the Body of Christ, God has called us into the peace of Christ (Col. 3:15).

6. God has called us for the purpose of obtaining the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ; He has called His chosen ones unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth so that they might obtain the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thes. 2:13-14).

7. God's calling is by His own glory and with the goal of our entering into the eternal glory of God (2 Pet. 1:3; 1 Pet. 5:10):

a. God has called us not only by His glory but also to His glory.

b. In order that we might enter into His eternal glory, the God of all grace is ministering to us the riches of the bountiful supply of the divine life in many aspects and in many steps of the divine operation on and in us in God's economy (v. 10; 2 Pet. 1:3).

8. God has called us into His kingdom (1 Thes. 2:12):

a. The kingdom of God is an organism constituted with God's life as a realm of life for His ruling, in which He reigns by the divine life and expresses Himself in the divine life (John 3:3, 5-6; Matt. 6:10, 13).

b. Today we, the called ones, should live in the church as the kingdom of God so that we may grow and develop in the life of God unto full maturity; through this growth and development, the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly supplied to us (Rom. 14:17; 2 Pet. 1:5-11).

‹‹ WEEK 3 — DAY 1 ››

Morning Nourishment

2 Tim. 1:9 Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the times of the ages.

Rom. 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

At the time God called Moses, Egypt was the leading country on earth, and Pharaoh had absolute power. Here was a man now eighty years of age, one who had spent the last forty years of his life shepherding a flock in the wilderness. How could such a one deliver the Israelites from Pharaoh's tyrannical power? To Moses, it might have seemed impossible. Nevertheless, this was the purpose of God's calling on the negative side.

The purpose of God's calling was not only to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt, the land of bondage, but to bring them into Canaan, a land "flowing with milk and honey" (Exo. 3:8, 10, 17). Humanly speaking, the positive side of God's calling was even more of an impossibility than the negative side. Such a thing could only be a dream. But this is precisely what God was calling Moses to do. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 61-62)

Today's Reading

Pharaoh was a type of Satan, and Egypt was a type of the world. Just as Pharaoh was the ruler of Egypt, so Satan is the ruler of this world (John 12:31). God is still seeking to deliver His chosen people out of the usurping hand of Satan and out of the tyranny of the world. As God's called ones, we need a clear view of what the world is. The world is not a source of enjoyment; it is a place of tyranny. In the world Satan is keeping God's chosen people, those destined for the fulfillment of God's purpose, under his usurping hand.

Every aspect of the world is a form of tyranny. In Exodus Pharaoh kept the children of Israel under tyranny by forcing them to do hard labor. The same principle operates today. As people work, they suffer under various forms of tyranny. Even making a long drive to work on a crowded freeway is one kind of tyranny. Likewise, the competition for promotion and the insecurity about losing a job are also kinds of tyranny. Nevertheless, anyone who does not labor for Pharaoh in the world will not receive the supply of the Nile....Shopping is another form of the world's tyranny. Many young women are held in tyranny in a subtle way through shopping for the latest fashions.

Recently some saints told me that they do not have the time to pray or read the Bible. I pointed out that they have plenty of time to make telephone calls or to read the newspaper. This indicates that even the telephone or the newspaper may be a means of tyranny.

For us to live for Christ, we need to exist. Without our human existence we cannot live Christ. But today those in the fallen world care for nothing but their existence; they do not care for the purpose of their existence. To exist is one thing, but to exist for the divine purpose is another thing. The purpose ordained by God for our existence is to live Christ, to live God out, and to have God's testimony. But the people of this world have only their existence; they have no purpose. Eventually they make their existence itself the purpose of their existence. They know nothing but existence. Satan picks up the existence of human beings or of human living and uses this existence to usurp people so that today the whole world cares only for existence, not for God's purpose in existence.

All things necessary for our human existence need to be under a divine limitation. Anything that exceeds our need becomes worldly, "Egyptian," something of Pharaoh, and it frustrates us from the economy of God's purpose....Our living and our existence depend on the provision from the heavenly source, not on the supply from the world. For this we need the vision, and we need the exercise of our faith. Moses was a man of great faith to lead two million people out of Egypt into the wilderness, where there was no earthly supply for their human existence. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 121-122, 156)

Further Reading: Life-study of Exodus, msg. 6

‹‹ WEEK 3 — DAY 2 ››

Morning Nourishment

Col. 1:12-13 Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light; who delivered us out of the authority of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.

The nation of Egypt typifies the kingdom of darkness, and Pharaoh typifies Satan, the devil. How can God's people be delivered out of the hand of such an evil power and be rescued from the kingdom of darkness? Today this is done through the preaching of the gospel. Do not think that preaching the gospel to bring people to salvation is an easy task. To bring a person out of Satan's hand and out of the kingdom of darkness is a mighty work. For this reason, the divine revelation in the New Testament places a very high value on the preaching of the gospel. Paul says that the gospel is the power of God (Rom. 1:16). (Life-study of Exodus, p. 62)

Today's Reading

It is easy to preach to people, but it is very difficult to bring them out of the usurpation and tyranny of Satan and the world. As we shall see, Moses did not preach to the children of Israel, but he was able to rescue them from Pharaoh. Today we also need to have the authority to bring God's people out of the usurping hand of Satan. One aspect of God's purpose in His calling is to use us to bring others out of the usurpation and tyranny of Satan and the world.

The purpose of God's calling is a matter of tremendous significance. In typology, bringing the children of Israel into the good land signifies bringing people into Christ, the all-inclusive person typified by the land of Canaan. Christ today is a good land flowing with milk and honey. In His wisdom God uses the expression flowing with milk and honey to describe the riches of the good land.

The purpose of God's calling...is not to give His people a little enjoyment of the animal life and the vegetable life in Egypt; it is to bring them into a spacious land flowing with milk and honey. Do you have the assurance that in the church life today you are enjoying Christ as the good land? I can testify that I daily enjoy Christ as a spacious land flowing with milk and honey.

The land of Canaan is a type of Christ. However, this type has not yet been fulfilled in the experience of the saints....If we consider the good land and all its riches as being a full type of Christ, we shall realize that we are lacking in the experience of Christ.

The purpose of God's calling is not only to bring His people out of Egypt, into the wilderness, and to the mountain. Neither is it only to have the building of the tabernacle in the wilderness. His purpose is to bring His people into Christ as the good land. As God's called ones, we need to see that the purpose of God's calling is not just to save people out of the world. That is only the negative aspect. Ultimately, the purpose of His calling is to bring His people into the good land so that they may enjoy Christ in His all-inclusiveness. Then God will be able to establish His kingdom (Exo. 19:6; 2 Sam. 5:12; 7:12, 16; Rom. 14:17). Furthermore, by bringing His chosen people into the good land, God will be able to have a dwelling place built up on the earth (2 Sam. 7:13; Eph. 2:20-22; 4:12).

Both Moses and Paul were called for this purpose, and we are called for this purpose also. We need to bring people all the way from the world into the all-inclusive Christ for God's kingdom and God's building. Oh, may our apprehension of God's Word be uplifted in these days! What God desires is not merely the tabernacle with the initial enjoyment of Christ as the lamb, the manna, and the living water, but the temple with the rich enjoyment of Christ as the all-inclusive land. Day by day we need to experience Christ in a practical way as our life and as our person. He should be not only manna to us but also all the riches of the good land. What we need today for the accomplishment of God's purpose is the genuine experience of Christ as the good land of Canaan. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 122, 62-63, 130-132)

Further Reading: Life-study of Exodus, msg. 11

‹‹ WEEK 3 — DAY 3 ››

Morning Nourishment

Exo. 3:18 ...And you shall come, you and the elders of Israel, to the king of Egypt, and you shall say to him, Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to Jehovah our God.

19:2 And when they had journeyed...and had come to the wilderness of Sinai, they encamped in the wilderness; and there Israel encamped in front of the mountain.

In God's call the chosen people were directed to three different stations. Exodus 3:18 says that the children of Israel were to take a "three days' journey into the wilderness." In verse 12 the Lord said to Moses, "...When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will serve God upon this mountain." Finally, in verses 8 and 17 the Lord promised Moses that He would bring the children of Israel out of Egypt into a "land flowing with milk and honey." Therefore, the three stations spoken of in this chapter are the wilderness, the mountain, and the land. (Life-study of Exodus, p. 133)

Today's Reading

Many Christian teachers have emphasized the importance of the experience of the children of Israel in the wilderness. However, they interpret the wilderness as a place of test and trial. Although elsewhere in the Bible the wilderness has this significance, this is not the meaning of the wilderness in Exodus 3:18....According to 3:18, the children of Israel were to make a journey of three days into the wilderness so that they might sacrifice to the Lord their God. It was impossible for God's people to sacrifice to Him in Egypt.

In 3:18 [the term wilderness] is used in a positive sense, for here the wilderness is opposed to the world. It is the place of separation from the world. As soon as one is saved, he should be brought out of the world into the wilderness where there is no Egyptian element. When the children of Israel entered into the wilderness, they were set free from Egypt. In the same principle, if we would get out of the world, we must get into the wilderness. However, not many Christians have been brought into the wilderness. This means that some have been saved, but have not been delivered from the world and separated from it.

The divine revelation concerning God's purpose was given to Moses on the mountain....It was...on the mountain that he received the revelation concerning the design of the tabernacle. Although most of the children of Israel did not actually ascend to the top of the mountain, they were nonetheless camped close to the mountain. Moses, Aaron, and more than seventy others went up to the mountain to meet with God (24:1, 9).

When they were at the mountain, the Israelites received the revelation concerning what God is. Do not regard the law simply as some commandments. The law was a testimony, definition, description, and explanation of what God is. By the law we can know God Himself. God required His chosen people to live according to this revelation of Himself. Thus, on the mountain, Moses received a revelation both of what God is and of the kind of life the people of God should live. Because God is holy, righteous, and loving, His people should live a life characterized by holiness, righteousness, and love. Chapters twenty through twenty-four of Exodus reveal that God is detailed in His holiness, righteousness, and other divine attributes. His people must live a life that corresponds to the detailed attributes of God. Such a revelation can be seen only on the mountaintop.

It is a very great matter to hear God's speaking and to see His vision, especially the vision concerning His dwelling place. It is of vital importance that we go to the genuine mountain of God, to God's mountain on earth today....In our experience we need to come out of Egypt, cross the Red Sea, and journey through the wilderness until we arrive at the mountain of God. At this mountain we are brought into God's presence....Many of us can testify that whenever we gather together into the Lord's name, we enjoy His presence. We hear His speaking, and we see His vision at the mountain of God. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 133, 123-124, 137, 583)

Further Reading: Life-study of Exodus, msg. 13

‹‹ WEEK 3 — DAY 4 ››

Morning Nourishment

Exo. 3:17 …I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey.

Col. 2:6 As therefore you have received the Christ, Jesus the Lord, walk in Him.

9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

The mountain in Exodus 3:12 refers to an elevation in the wilderness. Not only do we need to be separated from the world, but in this realm of separation we need to ascend to an elevated place. Only when we are on such a high level can we receive the revelation regarding God's eternal purpose.

Here on the mountain, where the sky is clear (Exo. 24:10), we see the vision of God's economy. Here we come to know what is on God's heart, and we see what God desires to have on earth today. We realize that He desires to have a people who walk according to His statutes and who build Him a tabernacle that He may dwell among them. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 124-125)

Today's Reading

The purpose of God's calling is also to build a tabernacle to be God's dwelling place on earth (Exo. 25:8-9, 40). The vision and the building of the tabernacle occupy nearly half of this book. Moses received the vision on the mountain, and there the tabernacle was built. This was for the further journey of the children of Israel toward the final goal, which was to enter the good land and to build the temple there.

If we could bring people out of the tyranny of the world into the wilderness and take them to the mountain where they see the revelation of God's economy and eventually build a tabernacle for God, we would surely be satisfied. However, with the tabernacle we do not yet have the solid building, which is signified by the temple in the land of Canaan. Hence, if we would reach the ultimate goal of God's calling, we must journey onward and enter into the good land....Many Christians, however, have not yet reached the stage of the tabernacle, the temporary church life, much less that of the solid building.

We have seen the factors that brought the children of Israel into the wilderness and that brought them in the wilderness to the mountain. Now we must consider the factor that brought them into the good land. This factor is the Ark with the tabernacle (Josh. 3:3, 6, 8, 13-17; 4:10-19).

After the children of Israel entered into the good land by crossing the Jordan, they were circumcised; that is, their flesh was cut off (Josh. 5:2-4). Thus, the self was buried in the river, and the flesh was cut off by circumcision. The church life with Christ helps us both to bury the self and to cut off the flesh.

We need to help others experience Christ in all His unsearchable riches so that God may be able to establish His kingdom and have His dwelling place on earth today. This very point is covered by Paul in Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. These four books unveil Christ not merely as the lamb but as the all-inclusive One, that is, as the all-inclusive land. Colossians 3:11 even says that "Christ is all and in all." This word no doubt speaks of the all-inclusiveness of Christ. In 1 Corinthians we see the Passover and the crossing of the Red Sea, but in Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians we see the all-inclusive land.

God has called us with a purpose. This purpose is to use us to bring people out of the tyranny of today's world into the wilderness, a place of separation. It is also to bring them to the mountain where they may see the revelation concerning God's economy and the design of the tabernacle, so that the tabernacle may be built. Furthermore, it is to bring them into the rich and all-inclusive good land to defeat God's enemy and to enjoy the riches of Christ. Then God will be able to establish His kingdom in which He will have His dwelling place on earth. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 125, 138, 140-141, 131-132)

Further Reading: Life-study of Exodus, msg. 12

‹‹ WEEK 3 — DAY 5 ››

Morning Nourishment

1 Pet. 2:9 ...Tell out the virtues of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

1 Cor. 1:2 To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is theirs and ours.

God's calling is according to His predestination (Rom. 8:30). In eternity past He foreknew, chose, and predestinated us (1 Pet. 1:1-2; Eph. 1:4-5). Moreover, according to His predestination, in time He called us, justified us, and glorified us. This was foreordained in eternity by God, with whom is no variableness (James 1:17), according to His purpose and plan.

God's calling is not only according to His predestination but also according to His purpose (Rom. 8:28b; 2 Tim. 1:9a). His purpose is His plan according to His will to place us into Christ, making us one with Him to share His life and position that we may be His testimony. According to such a purpose, such a plan, God predestinated us in eternity past and called us in time.

God's calling is also according to His grace (2 Tim. 1:9-10). This grace was given to us in Christ by God before times eternal....This grace has been manifested through the first coming of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who nullified death and brought life and incorruption to us. (Truth Lessons—Level One, vol. 3, pp. 27-28)

Today's Reading

God's calling is in Christ (1 Pet. 5:10)....He called us in Christ as the sphere. "In Christ" also indicates that the God of all grace has gone through all the processes of incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension to accomplish the complete and full redemption, that He may bring His believers into an organic union with Himself. Thus they may participate in the riches of the Triune God as their enjoyment. Christ, who is the embodiment of the Triune God (Col. 2:9), has become the all-inclusive, life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17) as the bountiful life supply to us (Phil. 1:19b). It is in this Christ, through His all-inclusive redemption and based upon all His achievements, that God can be the God of all grace to call us into His eternal glory, and to perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground us in the Triune God as the solid foundation, thus enabling us to attain to His glorious goal.

God's calling is also through the gospel preached by the sent ones (2 Thes. 2:14). The gospel is the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:1-3; Acts 5:42b), with His person, with all that He has accomplished, attained, and obtained, and with all that He is accomplishing in this age and will accomplish in the coming age and in eternity as the contents. Such a Christ must be preached as the gospel, the glad tidings, by God's sent ones, that God's called ones may hear and receive Him (Rom. 10:14-15), thus fulfilling God's plan in eternity.

God's calling is that He may bring man out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Pet. 2:9b)....Darkness is a sign of sin and death; it is the expression and sphere of Satan in death. The fact that mankind is in darkness proves that mankind is under the authority of Satan and dead in offenses and sins (Eph. 2:1). When God comes to call man, He opens man's eyes and turns man from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to Himself. Light is a sign of righteousness and life; it is the expression and sphere of God in life. To be turned to God means to be turned to the authority of God, which is God's kingdom of light. God has called us that He may deliver us out of the death-realm of Satan's darkness into the life-realm of God's marvelous light.

God's calling is that His chosen ones may be separated and made holy unto God, to be the holy ones, the [called] saints [Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2]....The saints are produced through the calling of the sanctifying God, who called them out of the world unto Himself. Hence, God's calling is a separation and a sanctification. Therefore, not only Peter and Paul were saints, but all God's called ones are saints, holy ones. (Truth Lessons—Level One, vol. 3, pp. 29, 34)

Further Reading: Truth Lessons—Level One, vol. 3, lsn. 27; The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 117

‹‹ WEEK 3 — DAY 6 ››

Morning Nourishment

Col. 3:15 And let the peace of Christ arbitrate in your hearts, to which also you were called in one Body; and be thankful.

1 Thes. 2:12 So that you might walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

God has called us that we may also enter into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. 1:9), to partake of and enjoy His all-inclusive riches. This all-inclusive Christ is the embodiment of the processed Triune God (Col. 2:9)....We were called by God into the fellowship of such an all-inclusive Christ that we may enjoy Him as our God-given eternal portion. (Truth Lessons—Level One, vol. 3, pp. 34-35)

Today's Reading

The Lord Jesus has set His suffering life before us as an underwriting for us to copy by tracing that He may be reproduced in us [1 Pet. 2:20-21]. This is spiritual xeroxing: Christ Himself is the original copy, the Spirit is the light, the divine life is the ink, and we are the paper for Christ to be reproduced in us. While we are bearing sorrows, suffering unjustly, we experience the grace of God, enjoying the motivation of the divine life within us and its expression in our life, that in our behavior we may become a reproduction of Christ, suffering as He suffered and living as He lived. This is God's calling us to the suffering of Christ.

God has called us also for the purpose that we may obtain the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thes. 2:14). Man was created in the image of God and after the likeness of God that man might contain God and express God. After man sinned and fell, God's original purpose in creating man was lost; man could no longer contain or express God. God, however, accomplished redemption for man, and He called His chosen ones unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth that they might obtain the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thes. 2:13-14). The glory of the Lord Jesus Christ is that Christ is the Son of God the Father, possessing the Father's life and nature to express Him. To obtain the glory of Christ is to be in the same position as sons of God to express Him.

God has called the believers not only unto the obtaining of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ but also into the eternal glory of God (1 Pet. 5:10). For this, the God of all grace is ministering to us the riches of the bountiful supply of the divine life in many aspects and in many steps of the divine operation on and in us in God's economy. The initial step is to call us, and the consummate step is to glorify us. Between these two steps are His loving care while He is disciplining us and His perfecting, establishing, strengthening, and grounding work in us. In all these divine acts, the bountiful supply of the divine life is ministered to us as grace in varied experiences, that we may enter into His eternal glory and express the God of all grace.

God has called us also into His kingdom (1 Thes. 2:12). The kingdom of God is an organism constituted with God's divine life as the realm of life for His ruling, in which He reigns by His divine life and expresses Himself in the divine life. This kingdom began with the saints in the Old Testament and is realized in the church in this age, and it will be completed in the New Jerusalem in the millennium and ultimately consummated in the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth.

Before we were called we were outside the kingdom of God, having nothing to do with God. However, God called us to partake of His divine life and nature that we may enter into the kingdom of God. Today we, the called ones, must live in the church that we may grow and develop in the life of God unto full maturity. Thus, we shall be richly and bountifully supplied with the entrance into the millennial kingdom in the coming age and into the new heaven and new earth in eternity within the kingdom of God, in which we shall reign as kings (Rev. 22:5b). (Truth Lessons—Level One, vol. 3, pp. 35-38)

Further Reading: Truth Lessons—Level One, vol. 3, lsn. 28; The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 118

‹‹ WEEK 3 — HYMN

Hymns, #1298

1
Chosen by God in ages past,
Our God will never let us go;
Salvation is assured fore'er;
'Tis such security we know.
2
"I give to them eternal life,
They shall not perish," is His word;
"No one shall snatch them from Our hands,"
This is the promise of the Lord.
3
Yet there's a word for God's own sons,
Which is a warning from the Lord:
For those not ready when He comes,
"Worse punishment" and not "reward."
4
Reward is not eternal life,
It's based on how we run the race;
It all depends on what we build,
It's not a matter, here, of grace.
5
'Tis for God's kingdom we press on,
Like Moses, we are for the Lord;
We suffer with God's people here
And look away to the reward.
6
Richer by far, reproach of Christ,
Than Egypt's treasures, which are sin;
By faith we leave Egyptian land,
Avoiding next age discipline.
7
Our soul gained for the kingdom's age—
For this we lose our soul life here;
If we lay down our soul life now,
We'll save it for Christ's kingdom there.
8
We all must learn to pay the price,
Christ must be worked into our soul;
'Tis thus our soul is gained by Him,
This is our aim and this our goal.