

Crystallization-Study Outlines

**Job
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes**

Living Stream Ministry
2431 W. La Palma Ave., Anaheim, CA 92801 U.S.A.
P. O. Box 2121, Anaheim, CA 92814 U.S.A.

© 2020 Living Stream Ministry

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means—graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or information storage and retrieval systems—without written permission from the publisher.

First Edition, December 2020.

ISBN 978-1-5360-1102-9

Printed in the United States of America

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES
JOB, PROVERBS, ECCLESIASTES

KEY STATEMENTS

God's purpose in dealing with those who love Him
is that they may gain Him to the fullest extent,
surpassing the loss of all that they have other than Him,
so that He might be expressed through them
for the fulfillment of His purpose in creating man.

Job was a good man, expressing himself
in his perfection, uprightness, and integrity,
but God's intention was that Job would be reduced to nothing,
be maintained in his existence, have God imparted into him,
and become a God-man, expressing the divine attributes.

God's purpose in dealing with His holy people
is that they would be emptied of everything
and receive only God as their gain;
the desire of God's heart is that they would gain Him in full
as life, as the life supply, and as everything to their being.

When God's chosen and redeemed people experience Christ
as wisdom to them from God
and partake of and enjoy the riches of Christ,
these riches will constitute them the church,
through which the multifarious wisdom of God is made known
to the angelic rulers and authorities in the heavenlies.

Message One

**The Great Question in the Book of Job
and the Great Answer**

Scripture Reading: Job 1:1; 10:2b, 13; Eph. 3:9; Job 42:5-6

- I. The forty-two chapters in Job leave us with a great question of two parts: What is the purpose of God in His creating of man, and what is the purpose of God in His dealing with His chosen people?—1:1; 10:2b, 12-13; cf. 11:12; 13:4:**
 - A. Job said to God, “Make known to me why You contend with me” (10:2b); “You have hidden these things in Your heart; / I know that this is with You” (v. 13).
 - B. This indicates that Job could not find the reason for God’s treatment of him, but he believed that there had to be some reason hidden in God’s heart; what was hidden in God’s heart was the mystery of the ages—the eternal economy of God—Eph. 3:9.
- II. The great answer to this great question is the mystery hidden in God throughout the ages, the eternal economy of God, which is God’s eternal intention with His heart’s desire to dispense Himself in His Divine Trinity as the Father in the Son by the Spirit into His chosen people to be their life and nature so that they may become an organism, the Body of Christ as the new man, for God’s fullness, God’s expression, which will consummate in the New Jerusalem—1 Tim. 1:3-4; Eph. 1:22-23; 3:9, 19; Gen. 1:26; Isa. 43:7; Rom. 8:29; 1 John 3:2:**
 - A. Job and his friends thought that what he was suffering was a matter of God’s judgment; however, Job’s sufferings were not God’s judgment but God’s stripping and consuming that God might gain Job so that he might gain God more.
 - B. Although God was stripping Job, He surely was not angry with him; neither did God consider Job to be His adversary but His intimate friend—Job 19:11; cf. 10:13.
 - C. God knew that after Job had passed through a time of suffering, he would be rebuilt with the Divine Trinity so that he could become another person—a new man, a new creation (Gal. 6:15), to fulfill God’s eternal economy for God’s expression (2 Cor. 5:17); this is the great answer to the great question in the book of Job.
 - D. In our reading of the Bible, we need to focus our attention on God’s eternal economy for the divine dispensing; unless we know God’s economy, we will not understand the Bible; God’s intention with Job was to make Job a man of God, who was constituted with God according to His divine economy:

JOB

Message One (continuation)

1. The Bible of sixty-six books is for only one thing: for God in Christ by the Spirit to dispense Himself into us to be our life, our nature, and our everything so that we may live Christ and express Christ; this should be the principle that governs our life—John 10:10b; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rom. 8:2, 10, 6, 11; Phil. 1:19-21a; 2 Cor. 3:6.
2. God's dealing with Job was to bring him out of the sphere of ethics and into the sphere of God-gaining so that he would be turned from seeking perfection in ethics to seeking and gaining God instead of anything else; man's standing before God is based on how much of God he has gained—Psa. 27:8; 105:4; Phil. 3:8; Matt. 25:3-4, 9; Prov. 23:23; Rev. 3:18; 2 Cor. 3:18; 4:17; 1 Pet. 2:7; Dan. 5:27; 9:23; 10:11, 19.
3. God's purpose in dealing with His holy people is that they would be emptied of everything and receive only God as their gain; He wants His people to gain Him, to partake of Him, to possess Him, and to enjoy Him more and more, rather than all other things, until their enjoyment reaches the fullest extent for them to become the New Jerusalem—Matt. 5:3; Psa. 43:4; 73:25-26; Phil. 3:8-9; Rev. 21:2.
4. This is the intrinsic significance of the entire New Testament as the great answer to the great question in the book of Job concerning God's purpose in His creation of man and in His dealing with His chosen people.

III. Job's basic problem was that he was short of God; in all of God's dealings with Job, God's intention was to reduce Job to nothing, yet to maintain his existence (2:6) so that He might have time to impart Himself into Job; God cares for only one thing—for being worked into us (Eph. 3:16-19):

- A. Job was self-righteous (Job 6:30; 9:20; 27:5-6; 32:1), and he was contented with what he had become (13:3; 23:3-4; 31:6), yet he was unaware of his miserable situation before God (cf. Rev. 3:16-18).
- B. Job's glory was his perfection and uprightness, and his crown was his integrity; God had stripped his glory from him and had taken away the crown from his head (Job 19:9); Job's hope had been to build up the "tree" of his integrity, but God would not allow such a tree to grow within Job; rather, God had plucked up this tree, this hope (v. 10), so that Job would be brought into the sphere of gaining God.

Message One (continuation)

- C. God wanted Job to know that he was in the wrong realm of building up himself as a man in the old creation in his perfection, uprightness, and integrity; Job glorified himself in these things, but God considered them as frustrations to be stripped away so that Job might receive God in His nature, life, element, and essence and thus be metabolically transformed to be a God-man, a man in the new creation who expresses God and dispenses Him into others—2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Pet. 4:10; Eph. 3:2.
- D. God's intention with Job was to tear down the natural Job in his perfection and uprightness so that He might build up a renewed Job in God's nature and attributes; the discipline of the Holy Spirit tears down our natural being to constitute a renewed being—2 Cor. 4:16-18; Rom. 8:28-29.
- E. The work of the Spirit within us is to constitute a new being for us, whereas the work of the Spirit without is to tear down every aspect of our natural being through our environment; we should cooperate with the operating Spirit and accept the environment that God has arranged for us—Phil. 4:12; Eph. 3:1; 4:1; 6:20; 1 Cor. 7:24.
- F. The primary purpose of suffering in this universe, particularly as it relates to the children of God, is that through it the very nature of God may be wrought into the nature of man so that man may gain God to the fullest extent—2 Cor. 1:8-9; 4:16:
 - 1. While the living God can perform many acts on man's behalf, the life and nature of the living God are not wrought into man; when the God of resurrection works, His life and nature are wrought into man—v. 16.
 - 2. God is not working to make His might known in external acts but is working to impart and work Himself into man; God uses the environment in order to work His life and nature into us—Gal. 4:19; 2 Cor. 4:7-12; 1 Thes. 3:3; John 16:33.
 - 3. In order to live in resurrection and be constituted with the God of resurrection, we must be conformed to the image of Christ as the firstborn Son of God through "all things"—Rom. 8:28-29; Heb. 12:10; cf. Jer. 48:11.
 - 4. When we are in the midst of sufferings, we may complain to God, but our complaining may be the best prayer, the most pleasant prayer to God; while we are complaining, God is rejoicing because He is causing all things to work together for

Message One (continuation)

good that we may be conformed to the image of His firstborn Son—cf. Psa. 102, title.

IV. The move of the Triune God to deify man for the fulfillment of His economy to have His corporate expression is altogether in the mingled spirit, the divine Spirit mingled as one with our human spirit—1 Cor. 6:17; Rev. 1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10; cf. Job 12:10; 32:8:

- A. In our Christian life we should live by the Spirit and walk by the Spirit; we should do everything and be everything by the Spirit, with the Spirit, in the Spirit, and through the Spirit; thus, we need to take care of our spirit, doing everything by exercising our spirit in order to experience the divine Spirit living in us, making His home in us, and transforming us—Gal. 5:16, 25; Phil. 3:3; Rom. 8:4, 6; 2 Cor. 2:12-14; Mal. 2:15-16.
- B. We should not take any action apart from the all-inclusive Spirit; we should not face any situation or meet any need apart from the Spirit; we must learn to touch the divine Spirit in our spirit; this is the intrinsic significance of the Christian life and the Christian work for the fulfillment of God's economy—Zech. 4:6; 2 Cor. 3:3, 6; Rom. 1:9; 7:6; Phil. 3:3.
- C. To be a Christian and an overcomer is not merely difficult—it is impossible; only the processed and consummated Triune God living in us as the all-inclusive Spirit in our spirit can be a Christian and an overcomer—Luke 1:37-38a; 2 Cor. 4:13; Rom. 8:2.
- D. As long as we do everything according to the Spirit, we can experience Christ's incarnation, human living, death, resurrection, and ascension with the outpouring of the Spirit; this will cause us to be the church of God, the Body of Christ, the new man, and the vine and the branches as the organism of the Triune God, which will consummate in the New Jerusalem—Phil. 1:19; Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:16-21; Eph. 1:22-23; 2:15; 4:4, 23-24; John 15:1-11; Rev. 3:12; 19:7-9; 21:2, 10.

V. In God's appearing to him, Job saw God, gaining God in his personal experience and abhorring himself—Job 38:1-3; 42:1-6:

- A. Today our God is the all-inclusive Spirit as the consummation of the processed and consummated Triune God; the God whom we look at today is the consummated Spirit, and we can look at Him in our spirit—2 Cor. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:22:

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES

Message One (continuation)

1. We see God so that we may be constituted with God; seeing God transforms us, and seeing God equals gaining God—2 Cor. 3:16, 18; Matt. 5:8; Rev. 22:4.
 2. The more we see God and love God, the more we deny ourselves and hate ourselves—Job 42:5-6; Isa. 6:5; Luke 14:26.
 - B. In order to see God, we must exercise our spirit—Eph. 1:17-18; 3:16-17; 1 Cor. 2:9-16; 2 Cor. 4:13; 1 Tim. 4:7; 2 Tim. 1:6-7:
 1. The more we look at Him in our spirit, the more we receive all His ingredients into our being as our inner supply—2 Cor. 3:16-18.
 2. In the midst of our afflictions, we must take heed to our spirit, taking the Lord as our dwelling place, our secret of sufficiency—2:13; 7:5-6; Mal. 2:15-16; Psa. 91:1; Phil. 4:11-13; Psa. 90:1-12; 31:20; Isa. 32:2.
 - C. In order to see God, we must deal with our heart—2 Cor. 3:16, 18; Matt. 5:8; 13:18-23:
 1. We must be renewed in the spirit of our mind by being reconstituted with the holy word of God to be instructed, governed, ruled, and controlled by God's word—Eph. 4:23; Deut. 17:18-20; Phil. 2:2, 5.
 2. We must be on fire with the Lord's love, having an emotion filled with Him as our zeal for His house—1:8; 2 Cor. 5:14; 2 Tim. 1:6-7; John 2:17; Mark 12:30.
 3. We must have our will subdued by Christ and transformed with Christ through sufferings so that it is submitted to the headship of Christ (Phil. 2:13; cf. S. S. 4:1, 4; 7:4a, 5), and we must maintain a good and pure conscience by the priceless, cleansing, and purifying blood of Christ (Acts 24:16; 1 Tim. 3:9; Heb. 9:14; 10:22).
- VI. God's purpose in dealing with those who love Him is that they may gain Him to the fullest extent, surpassing the loss of all that they have other than Him (Phil. 3:7-8), that He might be expressed through them for the fulfillment of His purpose in creating man (Gen. 1:26).**

JOB

Message Two

God, Man, and Satan

Scripture Reading: Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7;
Matt. 12:26; Heb. 2:14; Rom. 16:20; Rev. 12:5, 7-11

I. The entire Bible is a record of the things concerning God, man, and Satan; therefore, in our reading of the Bible, we need to know not only the things concerning God and man but also the things concerning Satan—Gen. 1:1, 26-28; 3:1, 4, 15; Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:12-19:

- A. Satan was an angel and an anointed cherub created by God before God created the earth; he was the highest among the angels—vv. 12-15; Job 38:4-7:
 - 1. Satan was the “Daystar, son of the dawn” (Isa. 14:12), one of the first angels created by God at the “dawn” of the universe, appointed by God to be the head of all the angels (Ezek. 28:14; Jude 9).
 - 2. The anointed cherub was appointed by God to rule over the preadamic universe (Luke 4:6); the anointed cherub was the one closest to God, and having both the kingship and the priesthood, he held the highest position in God’s creation (Ezek. 28:13).
- B. Satan’s rebellion against God is revealed in Isaiah 14:13-14 and Ezekiel 28:15-18:
 - 1. Satan rebelled against God because of the pride in his heart; his heart was lifted up because of his beauty—Isa. 14:13-14; Ezek. 28:17.
 - 2. Satan’s intention was to overthrow God’s authority and to exalt himself to be equal with God; in his rebellion against God, Satan wanted to be on the same level as God—Isa. 14:13.
- C. Because of his rebellion, Satan became God’s adversary, God’s enemy—Zech. 3:1-2; Rev. 12:9a; 20:2a:
 - 1. *Satan* means “adversary”; as God’s adversary, Satan opposes God—Job 1:7, 12; 2:1, 6; Rev. 20:2.
 - 2. *Enemy* refers to the foe outside of God’s kingdom, whereas *adversary* refers to the foe from within God’s kingdom.
 - 3. Satan is not only God’s enemy outside of God’s kingdom but also God’s adversary from within God’s kingdom, rebelling against God.

II. The scene in Job 1 and 2 depicts two councils held in heaven concerning Job—1:6-12; 2:1-7:

Message Two (continuation)

- A. Because of His loving concern for Job, God held two councils in the heavens to talk about Job—1:6; 2:1.
 - B. The “sons of God,” the angels, came to present themselves before Jehovah, and Satan, the adversary, also came among them—1:6; 2:1; 38:7; cf. 1 Kings 22:19-23; Psa. 89:5-8:
 - 1. After he rebelled against God, Satan was condemned and even sentenced by God—Isa. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:12-19.
 - 2. Satan’s right to enter into the presence of God has not yet been taken away from him—cf. Rev. 12:10.
 - C. In His wisdom and sovereignty God did not execute His judgment on Satan but has given Satan a certain limited time to do something to meet some negative need in the fulfillment of His economy:
 - 1. God could not and would not ask any of His many excellent angels to do what was needed to damage Job in order to strip him of everything so that he might be full of God—Job 1:1, 8, 11-12; 2:3-7.
 - 2. Satan was the unique one in the universe who could and who would fulfill God’s intention of stripping Job of his possessions and ethical attainment—v. 3.
 - 3. The scene in chapters 1 and 2 of Job shows us that Satan remains free to be purposely used by God as an ugly tool to execute God’s severe dealing with His loving ones—cf. Luke 22:31-32.
- III. Satan has his kingdom, the authority of darkness—Matt. 12:26; Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13:**
- A. Satan has his authority (Acts 26:18) and his angels (Matt. 25:41), who are his subordinates as rulers, authorities, and world-rulers of the darkness of this world; hence, he has his kingdom, the authority of darkness (Col. 1:13).
 - B. Satan is the ruler of this world and the ruler of the authority of the air—John 12:31; Eph. 2:2:
 - 1. *The spirit* (v. 2), in apposition to *the authority of the air*, refers to the aggregate power, the aggregate of all the evil angelic authorities, over which Satan is the ruler.
 - 2. When we were dead in offenses and sins (v. 1), we walked according to “the age of this world” (v. 2), the modern appearance, the present course, of the world, the satanic system.

Message Two (continuation)

3. The rulers, the authorities, and the world-rulers of this darkness are the rebellious angels, who followed Satan in his rebellion against God and who now rule in the heavenlies over the nations of the world—Dan. 10:20.
4. This indicates that the devil, Satan, has his kingdom in which he occupies the highest position and in which the rebellious angels are under him.

IV. Through His ministry on earth and His death on the cross, the Lord Jesus was victorious over Satan—1 John 3:8; Matt. 27:51-53; Col. 2:14-15; Heb. 2:14:

- A. In His earthly ministry the victorious Christ defeated the devil and destroyed his works—Matt. 4:1-11; 1 John 3:8:
 1. For Him to accomplish His ministry for the kingdom of the heavens, the Lord Jesus had to defeat God’s enemy, the devil, Satan—Matt. 4:1, 11:
 - a. This He had to do as a man; hence, He stood as a man to confront the enemy of God—vv. 6-7.
 - b. The devil’s temptation of the first man, Adam, was a success; his temptation of the second man, Christ, was an absolute failure—v. 11.
 2. In His ministry on earth the Lord Jesus destroyed the works of the devil—1 John 3:8:
 - a. In 1 John 3:8 the Greek word translated “destroy” may also be translated “undo” or “dissolve.”
 - b. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might undo and destroy the sinful deeds of the devil, that is, condemn, through His death on the cross in the flesh, sin initiated by him, the evil one; destroy the power of sin, the sinful nature of the devil; and take away both sin and sins—Rom. 8:3; Heb. 2:14; John 1:29.
- B. In His crucifixion the victorious Christ cast out the ruler of this world, destroyed the devil, caused the rulers and authorities to be stripped off, and nullified death—12:31; Matt. 27:51; Heb. 2:14; Col. 2:15; 2 Tim. 1:10:
 1. In His work on the cross, Christ cast out the ruler of this world and judged the world—John 12:31:
 - a. The ruler of this world was cast out when Satan was cast out by Christ’s work in His death; simultaneously, the world system related to Satan was judged—1 John 5:19.

Message Two (continuation)

- b. The base of Satan’s rebellion was shaken, and the strongholds of Satan’s earthly kingdom were broken—Matt. 27:51.
 - 2. In His crucifixion Christ destroyed the devil—Heb. 2:14:
 - a. In verse 14 the Greek word translated “destroy” can also be rendered as “bring to nought, make of none effect, do away with, abolish, annul, discard.”
 - b. In His humanity and through His work on the cross, Christ has destroyed the devil—John 3:14.
 - 3. In His work on the cross, Christ caused the angelic rulers and authorities to be stripped off, to be made a display of openly, and to be triumphed over by God—Col. 2:15.
 - 4. In His work on the cross, Christ nullified death, making it of none effect, through His devil-destroying death (Heb. 2:14) and death-swallowing resurrection (1 Cor. 15:52-54)—2 Tim. 1:10.
 - C. Through the gospel of the kingdom, God brings people under the ruling of the heavenly authority so that they may become His kingdom, those who are ruled by His authority—Matt. 24:14; Rev. 1:5-6.
- V. As believers in Christ Jesus and children of God, we need to learn to be victorious in Christ over Satan—Eph. 6:12; 1 Pet. 5:8-9; 1 John 5:18:**
 - A. We should not be ignorant of Satan’s schemes—2 Cor. 2:11:
 - 1. The Greek word translated “schemes” means “plans, plots, designs, wiles, intentions, purposes.”
 - 2. The evil one, Satan, is behind the scenes in everything and works in everything, even in the church life.
 - B. We need to put on the whole armor of God so that we may be able to stand against the stratagems of the devil—Eph. 6:11:
 - 1. The devil has not only evil intentions but also deceptive stratagems to work out his intentions; these stratagems are his evil plots.
 - 2. Putting on the whole armor of God enables us to stand against the stratagems of the devil—v. 11.
 - 3. One of Satan’s stratagems against the saints of the Most High is to wear them out (Dan. 7:21, 25); when we see that Satan is wearing us out, we will have the power to withstand and oppose his wearing-out tactics.

Message Two (continuation)

- C. We need to be watchful against our adversary, the devil, who “as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking someone to devour”—1 Pet. 5:8:
 - 1. To be watchful is to be vigilant as in warfare, as with soldiers on the frontier.
 - 2. The word *watch* in 1 Peter 5:8 implies fighting; we are involved in a warfare, and we need to be vigilant.
 - 3. If we are vigilant, we will withstand our adversary, being firm in our faith—v. 9:
 - a. To withstand is not to resist nor to struggle against but to stand firmly, like a rock, on the ground of our faith before the roaring devil.
 - b. *Your faith* in 1 Peter 5:9 refers to the believers’ subjective faith, their faith in God’s protecting power and loving concern.
- D. The best way for us to be victorious over Satan is to live in the mingled spirit—1 Cor. 6:17; 1 John 5:18:
 - 1. There is only one place that Satan cannot invade—our spirit—2 Tim. 4:22.
 - 2. Whether or not we are under Satan’s authority is not determined by the things we do; rather, it is determined by whether we are in the spirit or in the flesh—Gal. 5:16-17.
 - 3. As long as we remain in the mingled spirit, we will be kept, and Satan will have no way with us—1 Cor. 6:17; 1 John 5:4-5, 18-21.

VI. “The God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly”—Rom. 16:20:

- A. The crushing of Satan is related to the church life—the strongest means by which God overcomes Satan—vv. 20, 1, 16b.
- B. The Greek word rendered “your” in Romans 16:20 is plural; this points to the Body—12:5:
 - 1. Romans 16 does not refer to the Body in a universal sense but to the local and practical expression of the Body.
 - 2. Dealing with Satan is a Body matter, not an individual matter.
 - 3. Satan can be crushed only under the feet of the practical expression of the Body in the local churches—12:5; 16:1, 4, 16b.
 - 4. It is only when we have a proper local church as the practical expression of the Body that Satan is crushed under our feet—v. 20.

Message Two (continuation)

- C. It is significant that the One who crushes Satan under our feet is the God of peace—v. 20:
 - 1. The God of peace is the Sanctifier; His sanctification brings in peace—1 Thes. 5:23.
 - 2. When we are wholly sanctified by Him from within, we have peace with Him and with man in every way—v. 13; Rom. 6:19, 22; Heb. 13:12.
 - 3. The peace of God guards, mounts guard over, our hearts and our thoughts because the God of peace patrols before our hearts and thoughts in Christ, keeping us calm and tranquil—Phil. 4:7.

VII. After the man-child is raptured to the throne of God, there is war in heaven, Satan and his angels are cast down to the earth, and the kingdom of God is manifested—Rev. 12:5, 7-11:

- A. The man-child consists of the overcomers, who stand on behalf of the church, take the position that the whole church should take, and do the work of the church—2:7b, 11b; 12:5:
 - 1. The man-child is always engaged in fighting against God's enemy, Satan, continually on earth.
 - 2. Heaven is waiting for the man-child, the overcomers, to arrive so that a war may be waged to cast Satan out of heaven:
 - a. The war waged by the overcoming believers against Satan is actually the executing of the Lord's judgment upon him—John 12:31.
 - b. Eventually, through their fighting, Satan is cast out of heaven—Rev. 12:8-9.
- B. The devil, the accuser, is now accusing the believers before God day and night, but the overcoming believers who constitute the man-child and who have been opposed and slandered by God's enemy, Satan, overcome him—vv. 10-11:
 - 1. They overcome him "because of the blood of the Lamb"—v. 11a:
 - a. The blood of the Lamb, which is for our redemption, answers before God all the accusations of the devil against us and gives us the victory over him.
 - b. We need to apply this blood whenever we sense the accusation of the devil—Rom. 3:25; 1 John 1:7.
 - 2. They overcome him "because of the word of their testimony"—Rev. 12:11b:

JOB

Message Two (continuation)

- a. The word of their testimony is their word that testifies that the devil has been judged by the Lord—John 12:31; Heb. 2:14.
- b. Whenever we sense the devil's accusation, we should declare with the uttered word the Lord's victory over him.
3. The overcomers do not love their soul-life—Rev. 12:11c:
 - a. Not loving our soul-life is the basis for overcoming Satan, for our victory over Satan.
 - b. Not loving our soul-life means that we are willing to give up our own soul-life and that we do not care for our own soul-life—Mark 8:34-35.
 - c. Satan is afraid of only one kind of people—those who do not love their own soul-life—Rev. 12:11c.
- C. The man-child is related to God's most important dispensational move—Matt. 6:9-10; Rev. 11:15; 12:10:
 1. God wants to end this age and bring in the age of the kingdom, and for this He must have the man-child as His dispensational instrument—v. 5.
 2. The rapture of the man-child brings an end to the church age and introduces the age of the kingdom—vv. 5, 10.
 3. The rapture of the man-child to the throne of God, the casting of Satan to the earth, and the declaration in heaven signify that the man-child will bring the kingdom to the earth; this is God's greatest dispensational move—vv. 5, 9-10; 11:15.

Message Three

**Job's Experience of God's Consuming and Stripping
in the Old Testament
Being Far Behind That of Paul in the New Testament**

Scripture Reading: Job 3:1;

2 Cor. 4:10-12, 16-18; Phil. 1:19-25; 4:4

- I. Job was disturbed, perplexed, and entangled to the uttermost by his suffering of the disasters that befell his possessions and his children and the plague on his body, in spite of his perfection, uprightness, and integrity:**
- A. When Job cursed the day of his birth, equivalent to cursing his mother, he surely was not perfect and upright, nor did he hold his integrity; rather, he became bankrupt in integrity—Job 3:1.
 - B. God's intention was to tear down the natural Job in his perfection and uprightness that He might build up a renewed Job in God's nature and attributes in order to make Job a man of God, constituted with God according to His economy; such a man (like Paul) would never be entangled by any troubles and problems so that he would curse his birth and prefer to die rather than to live—Phil. 1:19-25; 4:5-9.
 - C. Job was dwelling on his excellent past and sighing over his miserable present (Job 29:1—30:31); he held fast insistently to, and even boasted of, his uprightness, righteousness, integrity, and perfection (27:1-7; 31:1-40):
 - 1. Paul, however, exercised to forget the things that were behind in the past in order to gain the present “today Christ” to the fullest extent—Phil. 3:8, 13-14.
 - 2. Furthermore, Paul was not a person of yesterday but a person of today (Heb. 3:7-8, 15; Psa. 95:7-8); we should not look ahead to the future and not look back to the past; we are people of today (Matt. 6:11, 33-34; Luke 19:9-10; 23:43).
 - 3. The Christ whom we love 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, sustaining us to live a heavenly life on earth—Matt. 28:20; 1 Pet. 1:8; Heb. 8:2; 4:14-15; 7:26; 2 Cor. 6:2; Rom. 5:10.
 - 4. When we fully become the New Jerusalem, we will have today since every day in eternity is today; the only day we have is today, not tomorrow.

JOB

Message Three (continuation)

- D. Through his eight times of speaking to his three friends, Job exposed himself as a person with the following characteristics:
1. Job was self-righteous (Job 6:30; 9:20; 27:5-6; 32:1); he was darkened by the success and attainments of his natural being, contented with what he had become, yet he was unaware of his miserable situation before God (cf. Phil. 3:9; Rev. 3:17-18).
 2. Job acknowledged God in name but not in reality; he was not saturated by God, filled with God, and mingled with God to become one with God—Psa. 92:10; Lev. 2:4-5; Rom. 8:16; 2 Tim. 4:22; 1 Cor. 6:17; Eph. 3:19; 5:18, 26; Heb. 2:10-11.
 3. Job did not possess any element that indicated some aspect and some feature of the New Jerusalem as God's organism to live God and to express God for eternity; in contrast to this, the name of God, the name of the New Jerusalem, and the name of the Lord are written upon the overcomer, indicating that what God is, the nature of the New Jerusalem, and the person of the Lord have all been wrought into the overcomer—Rev. 3:12.
- E. Neither Job nor his friends knew the purpose of God's dealing with him, as the apostle Paul did in declaring to the New Testament believers that the affliction the believers are suffering works out for them an eternal weight of glory, which is the God of glory to be their glorious portion for them to gain and enjoy unto eternity—2 Cor. 4:17.
- F. If Job and his friends had taken the time to seek God in a spirit of humility and by exercising their spirit in prayer (Isa. 57:15; 66:2; Col. 4:2), God could have shown them that a regenerated, transformed, and glorified saint in Christ has nothing to do with the natural man and does not need to build up himself with the natural virtues.
- G. This heavenly vision would have saved them from the time-wasting, pain-increasing, and vain debates in thirty-five chapters as a record of a group of blind persons groping in darkness; they talked about God and also referred to their spirit (Job 32:8), but they exercised their mind in three rounds of long debates instead of exercising their spirit to pray for Job and to fellowship with one another so that all of them could touch God and receive God as their life, light, and spiritual supply:

Message Three (continuation)

1. If we are going to have vital groups, we must be warned by these talks in the book of Job; the group we see in the book of Job affords us a negative example; it is the kind of group meeting we should not have in the church life today; the first thing that we must do when we come together is to exercise our spirit to pray; the vital groups are groups of vital prayer—cf. Acts 12:5, 11-12; Heb. 10:24-25; 3:13.
2. The groups are vital in these two spirits—vital in our human spirit and vital in God's divine Spirit; the Christian life is a life of the consummated Spirit as the consummation of the Triune God dwelling in and mingled with our regenerated spirit to be one spirit—John 4:24; Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17; Gal. 3:14; 6:18.
3. We need to learn to touch the divine Spirit in our spirit; this is the intrinsic significance of the Christian life and work; this is the move of God in man and the move of man in God to fulfill His economy, His plan, to dispense Himself in Christ as the Spirit into man in order to build up His Body and prepare His bride to consummate the New Jerusalem—2 Cor. 2:13; Phil. 3:3; Rom. 1:9.
4. Paul stresses in the book of Romans that whatever we are (2:29; 8:5-6, 9), whatever we have (vv. 10, 16), and whatever we do toward God (1:9; 7:6; 8:4; 12:11) must be in our spirit; we must be perfected and built up to be persons in the spirit; there is no other way to be a lover of God, to be a seeker of Christ, or to be an overcomer than to be in the spirit (Rev. 1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10).

II. Job's experience of God's consuming and stripping in the Old Testament was far behind that of Paul in the New Testament—1 Tim. 1:16:

- A. God's consuming is to exhaust us, and God's stripping is to tear down and take away the totality of our natural integrity—our natural perfection and uprightness in our character—that replaces our living out Christ to express Christ—Phil. 1:19-20; 3:4-9a.
- B. Day by day and hour by hour, Job was unhappily being consumed, but in the New Testament, God's consuming and stripping become pleasant things; since the day he was converted, Paul was a person under God's consuming and stripping as a prisoner in

Message Three (continuation)

the Lord, but he was filled with joy and rejoicing—Acts 9:15-16; 2 Cor. 4:16; Phil. 1:19-21a; Eph. 3:1; 4:1; Phil. 1:4, 18, 25; 2:2, 17-18, 28-29; 3:1; 4:1, 4.

- C. Paul was crucified with Christ; to be reborn through termination and germination is to be regenerated crucified (John 3:5; Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12); we, like Paul, were reborn crucified for the purpose that from that time it would be no longer we who live but Christ who lives in us (Gal. 2:20).
- D. Now in our Christian life we are dying to live (v. 20; 1 Cor. 15:31, 36; John 12:24; 2 Cor. 4:11); dying to live is the proper meaning of bearing the cross (Matt. 16:24-26; *Hymns*, #622).
- E. In his experience of God's consuming and stripping, Paul was not constricted under the pressures on every side and did not perish despite his being cast down; Paul did not curse the day of his birth, and he did not say that he preferred to die rather than to live; on the contrary, after much consideration Paul said that he still preferred to live for the saints' progress (their growth in life) and for their joy of the faith (their enjoyment of Christ)—2 Cor. 1:8-9; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21-25.
- F. When Paul was suffering distresses for the sake of Christ (2 Cor. 12:10), he was well pleased, he was happy, and he was even rejoicing in the Lord for his experiences (Col. 1:24; Phil. 2:17-18).
- G. Paul wanted to know Christ, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings in order to be conformed to Christ's death (3:10); he took Christ's death as a mold for his life, and it was his great pleasure to be molded in the death of Christ.
- H. Paul magnified Christ by living Him, whether through life or through death, by the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ; when God created man, this was the kind of life He wanted man to live—1:19-21a; Gen. 1:26.
- I. Paul said that he was always bearing about in the body the putting to death, the killing, of Jesus and being delivered unto death for Jesus' sake that the life of Jesus might be manifested in his mortal flesh; when we are under the killing of the Lord's death, His resurrection life is imparted through us into others—2 Cor. 4:10-12:
 - 1. The putting to death of Jesus in our environment cooperates with the indwelling Spirit to kill our natural man (our outer man), comprising our body and our soul; as our outer man is

Message Three (continuation)

being consumed by the killing work of death, our inner man is being renewed day by day with the fresh supply of the resurrection life—v. 16.

2. Paul said that he died daily (1 Cor. 15:31); daily he risked death, faced death, and died to self (2 Cor. 11:23; 4:11; 1:8-9; Rom. 8:36).
 3. The application of Christ's death and its effectiveness is in the compounded Spirit, who dwells in our spirit to dispense Christ's death and its effectiveness from our spirit to our soul and even to our mortal body—Exo. 30:22-25; Rom. 8:6, 9-11.
 4. This dispensing is the anointing (1 John 2:20, 27), and the anointing is the moving of the indwelling Spirit; our prayer activates the moving of the indwelling Spirit, and within this moving, there is the killing power.
- J. In his experience of God's consuming and stripping, Paul said that our momentary lightness of affliction works out for us, more and more surpassingly, an eternal weight of glory; *eternal* is in contrast to *momentary*, *weight* is in contrast to *lightness*, and *glory* is in contrast to *affliction*—2 Cor. 4:16-17; Rom. 8:28-29.
- K. Job considered his suffering of affliction something very heavy, but Paul considered his affliction to be momentary and light; instead of caring about our affliction, we need to care for the increase of God as the weight of glory within us by our being transformed from one degree of glory to another; as long as we have more of God in us, this is what really matters—Acts 7:2; 2 Cor. 3:18; Col. 2:19:
1. Like Paul, we are in an environment of suffering and pressure that works with the Spirit to kill our natural man; we should cooperate with the indwelling Spirit and accept the outward environment in our spirit, soul, and body, because we do not regard the things of temporary affliction which are seen but the things of the eternal glory which are not seen—Phil. 1:19-20; 2 Cor. 4:18; Heb. 11:1, 27; 2 Cor. 5:7.
 2. We need to exercise our spirit to rejoice in the midst of our killing environment (Phil. 4:4); the Lord's sovereignty is operating to put us under the killing of Christ's death so that His life may be manifested in our body in the renewing of our inner man to make us as new as the New Jerusalem (2 Cor. 4:10-12, 16; 5:17; Gal. 6:15; Rev. 21:2, 5, 10).

Message Four

Job and the Two Trees

Scripture Reading: Gen. 2:9, 17; Rev. 22:1-2, 14;
Job 1:1; 2:3; 4:7-8; 42:1-6; Rom. 8:5-6

I. According to the divine revelation in the Scriptures, there are two trees, two sources, two ways, two principles, and two consummations:

- A. The tree of life signifies the Triune God as life to man in man's relationship with Him; the tree of the knowledge of good and evil signifies Satan, the devil, the evil one, as death to man in man's fall before God—Gen. 2:9, 17; Psa. 36:9a.
- B. The tree of life is the source of men who seek God as life for their supply and enjoyment; the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is the source of men who follow Satan as their poison unto death and eternal perdition—John 1:4; 15:1; 8:44.
- C. The first way is the way of life, the constricted way, for men to seek God, to gain God, and to enjoy God in His eternal life as the supply; the second way is the way of death and of good and evil, the broad way, for men to follow Satan to be his children—Matt. 7:13-14; Acts 9:2; 1 John 3:10a.
- D. The first principle is the principle of life—the principle of dependence on God; the second principle is the principle of death and of good and evil—the principle of independence from God—Gen. 4:3-4; Jer. 17:5-8; John 15:5.
- E. The two consummations are the final outcome of the two trees, the two sources, the two ways, and the two principles:
 - 1. The consummation of God's way of life is a city of water of life, the New Jerusalem—Rev. 21:2, 9-11; 22:1-2.
 - 2. The consummation of the way of death and of good and evil is a lake of fire—19:20; 20:10, 14-15.

II. God's intention was not to have a Job in the line of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil but a Job in the line of the tree of life:

- A. The logic of Job and his friends was according to the line of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; they were devoid of the divine revelation and of the experience of the divine life—Job 2:11—32:1.
- B. Job, like his friends, was halted in the knowledge of right and wrong, not knowing God's economy—4:7-8:
 - 1. Neither Job nor his friends were in the line of the tree of life as God ordained man to be—Gen. 2:9.

Message Four (continuation)

2. Their concept concerning man's relationship with God was built on good and evil, right and wrong, absolutely according to the principle of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and absolutely according to the human, ethical concept of fallen man—Job 8:1-20.
- C. Job and his friends were in the realm of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; God was trying to rescue them from that realm and put them into the realm of the tree of life—1:1; 2:3; 19:10.
- D. God's purpose in dealing with Job was to turn him from the way of good and evil to the way of life so that he might gain God to the fullest extent—42:1-6.

III. We need a vision of the tree of life—Gen. 2:9; Rev. 22:1-2, 14:

- A. The tree of life signifies the Triune God in Christ to dispense Himself into His chosen people as life in the form of food—Gen. 2:9.
- B. The tree of life is the center of the universe:
 1. According to the purpose of God, the earth is the center of the universe, the garden of Eden is the center of the earth, and the tree of life is the center of the garden of Eden; hence, the universe is centered on the tree of life.
 2. Nothing is more central and crucial to both God and man than the tree of life—3:22; Rev. 22:14.
- C. The New Testament reveals that Christ is the fulfillment of the figure of the tree of life—John 1:4; 15:5.
- D. All the aspects of the all-inclusive Christ revealed in the Gospel of John are the outcome of the tree of life—6:48; 8:12; 10:11; 11:25; 14:6.
- E. The enjoyment of the tree of life will be the eternal portion of all of God's redeemed—Rev. 22:1-2, 14:
 1. The tree of life fulfills for eternity what God intended for man from the beginning—Gen. 1:26; 2:9.
 2. The fruits of the tree of life will be the food for God's redeemed in eternity; these fruits will be continually fresh, being produced every month—Rev. 22:2.

IV. The two trees in Genesis 2:9—the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—represent two principles of living:

Message Four (continuation)

- A. The two trees show that a Christian can live according to two different principles—the principle of right and wrong or the principle of life—1 Cor. 8:1.
 - B. Job and his friends pursued something in the realm of ethics, but we, the believers in Christ, should pursue something in the realm of God—15:28; Eph. 3:16-21.
 - C. Being a Christian is not a matter of the principle of right and wrong, the principle of good and evil, but is a matter of life—1 John 5:11-13, 20:
 - 1. When we received the Lord Jesus and gained a new life, we obtained another principle of living—the principle of life; if we do not know this principle, we will set the principle of life aside and follow the principle of right and wrong.
 - 2. In our practical living we may not be in the line of the tree of life but in the line of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—Prov. 16:25; 21:2.
 - 3. In our daily living we should not be in the realm of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil but in the realm of the life-giving Spirit—1 Cor. 15:45b; Rom. 8:2.
 - 4. In order to live according to the principle of the tree of life, we need to follow the inner sense of life—v. 6; Eph. 4:18-19; Isa. 40:31:
 - a. The sense of life on the negative side is the feeling of death—Rom. 8:6a.
 - b. The sense of life on the positive side is the feeling of life and peace, with a consciousness of strength, satisfaction, rest, brightness, and comfort—v. 6b.
 - 5. When we live according to the principle of the tree of life, we will care not for good and evil but for life, and we will discern matters not according to right and wrong but according to life and death—Gen. 2:9, 16-17; 2 Cor. 11:3.
- V. Every genuine believer in Christ is a miniature garden of Eden, with God as the tree of life in his spirit and Satan as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in his flesh—Gen. 2:9; Rom. 8:2, 5-6:**
- A. We are a miniature garden of Eden because the triangular situation involving God, man, and Satan is now within us—Gen. 1:27-29; 2:9, 16-17:

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES

Message Four (continuation)

1. Before man fell, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life were outside of man—vv. 9, 16-17.
 2. Through the fall the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is in us, and through regeneration the tree of life is now in us.
 3. Our spirit is mingled with the Triune God, and our body, which has become the flesh, is mixed with the sinful element of Satan (1 Cor. 6:17; Rom. 5:12; 6:6, 12); this makes the Christian a miniature garden of Eden.
- B. As those who were represented by Adam in Genesis 2, we have the tree of life in our spirit and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in our flesh—v. 9; Rev. 2:7b; 22:14:
1. Whenever we contact the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, we become dead; whenever we contact the tree of life, we gain life—Rom. 8:5-6, 10.
 2. If we stand on the side of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and contact Satan, we will live out the life of Satan, the devil, and the result will be death—2 Cor. 11:3; Rom. 3:23; 1 John 3:4.
 3. If we stand on the side of the tree of life and contact God, we will live out God, and the result will be life—John 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 4-5.
- C. Romans 8:5-6 shows a miniature garden of Eden, with the flesh and death on one side, the spirit and life on the other side, and the mind in the middle:
1. We learn from Romans 8 that we need to turn our being to the living One who dwells in our spirit and stay one with Him—v. 6b; 1 Cor. 6:17.
 2. When we set our mind on the spirit, we have life, peace, light, comfort, and strength; our thirst is quenched, and our hunger is satisfied—Rom. 8:5, 6b; John 4:14; 7:37-38; Matt. 5:6.
 3. When we set our mind on the spirit, our mind is full of life and peace—Rom. 8:6b:
 - a. We have peace because there is no discord between our outward behavior and our inner being—v. 6b; Isa. 9:6-7; 26:3.
 - b. When we speak with our mind set on the spirit, life is embodied in our words because we are one spirit with the Lord—Prov. 18:21; John 6:63; Eph. 4:29.

Message Five

**God's Intention with Job—
a Good Man Becoming a God-man**

Scripture Reading: Job 1:1, 8; 2:3, 9; 27:5; 31:6; 42:5-6;
John 1:14; Rom. 1:3-4; 8:29

I. Job was a good man, expressing himself in his perfection, uprightness, and integrity—Job 27:5; 31:6; 32:1:

- A. Being perfect is related to the inner man, and being upright is related to the outer man—1:1.
- B. Job was a man of integrity; integrity is the totality of being perfect and upright—2:3, 9; 27:5; 31:6:
 - 1. With respect to Job, integrity is the total expression of what he was.
 - 2. In character Job was perfect and upright, and in his ethics he had a high standard of integrity.
- C. Job feared God positively and turned away from evil negatively—1:1:
 - 1. God did not create man merely to fear Him and not do anything wrong; rather, God created man in His own image and according to His likeness that man may express God—Gen. 1:26.
 - 2. To express God is higher than fearing God and turning away from evil.
 - 3. What Job had attained in his perfection, uprightness, and integrity was altogether vanity; it neither fulfilled God's purpose nor satisfied His desire, and thus, He was lovingly concerned for Job—Job 1:6-8; 2:1-3.
- D. Only God knew that Job had a need—he did not have God within him; therefore, God wanted Job to gain Him in order to express Him for the fulfillment of His purpose—42:5-6.

II. God's intention was that Job would become a God-man, expressing God in His attributes—22:24-25; 38:1-3:

- A. God ushered Job into another realm, the realm of God, so that Job might gain God instead of his attainments in his perfection, righteousness, and integrity—42:5-6.
- B. God's intention was to make Job a man of God, filled with Christ, the embodiment of God, to be the fullness of God for the expression of God in Christ—1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 3:17.
- C. God's stripping and consuming were exercised over Job to tear him down that God might have a base and a way to rebuild him

Message Five (continuation)

with God Himself so that he might become a God-man, the same as God in His life and nature but not in His Godhead, in order to express God—Eph. 3:16-21.

- D. God does not want us, the believers in Christ, to be a good man; He wants us to be a God-man—John 1:12-13; Rom. 8:16:
 - 1. God created us in His own image for the purpose of expressing God and with His dominion to represent Him—Gen. 1:26-28.
 - 2. If we are merely a good man, we cannot express God or represent Him.
 - 3. It is not a good man but a God-man who expresses God and represents God—2 Cor. 3:18.
 - 4. God-men who express God are God's representative and have God's authority over all things—Gen. 1:27-28.

III. The incarnation of Christ, the embodiment and expression of the Triune God, produced a God-man—Luke 1:31-32a; John 1:1, 14, 18, 51:

- A. The Gospel of Luke is a revelation of the God-man who lived a human life filled with the divine life as the content—1:35; 2:7-16, 34-35, 40, 49, 52.
- B. In Christ, God and man have become one entity, the God-man—1:35; John 1:14; Matt. 1:18, 20-23:
 - 1. Because the Lord Jesus was conceived of the divine essence and born of the human essence, He was born a God-man; hence, for His being as the God-man, He had two essences—the divine essence and the human essence—v. 18.
 - 2. The conception of the Holy Spirit in a human virgin constituted a mingling of the divine nature with the human nature, producing the God-man, the One who is both the complete God and the perfect man—Luke 1:35.
 - 3. As a perfect man and the complete God, the God-man has the human nature with its virtues to contain God and express Him with the divine attributes.
- C. As the God-man, the Lord Jesus lived on earth not by His human life but by the divine life—John 5:18-19, 30; 6:57a:
 - 1. When the Lord Jesus was on earth, although He was a man, He lived by God—v. 57a; 5:19, 30; 6:38; 8:28; 7:16-18:
 - a. The Lord Jesus lived God and expressed God in everything; whatever He did was God's doing from within Him and through Him—14:10.

Message Five (continuation)

- b. The Lord Jesus lived as a God-man by the life of God, not by the life of man—6:57a.
- c. His human living was not lived out by the human life but by the divine life—1:4; 11:25; 14:6.
- 2. Because the Lord Jesus always lived by rejecting His human life—by always putting Himself under the cross—His human living did not express humanity but divinity in the divine attributes becoming human virtues—Matt. 16:21, 24.
- 3. All His days on the earth, He denied Himself and took up the cross so that He might live God to express God in His divine attributes becoming human virtues; this was the life of the first God-man as a prototype—Luke 1:31-32a; 7:11-16; 10:25-37; 13:10-16; Rom. 8:3, 29.

IV. Initially, the Bible speaks of the God-man; through His resurrection this God-man was reproduced as the many God-men—Rom. 1:3-4; 8:29; Heb. 2:10:

- A. The Lord Jesus, the first God-man, is the prototype for the producing of the many God-men, His reproduction—1 Pet. 2:21.
- B. God became man to have a mass reproduction of Himself and thereby to produce a new kind; this new kind is God-man kind—Rom. 8:3, 29; Heb. 2:10.
- C. The Lord Jesus, the God-man, was a grain of wheat falling into the ground in order to produce many grains as His reproduction—John 12:24:
 - 1. The first grain—the first God-man—was the prototype, and the many grains—the many God-men—produced by this one grain through death and resurrection are the reproduction of the first God-man.
 - 2. The many grains, as the many God-men, are the reproduction of God; such a reproduction makes God happy because His reproduction looks like Him, speaks like Him, and lives like Him—1 John 2:6; 3:2; 4:17b.
- D. The first step of the reproduction of the God-man is that we must be reborn of the pneumatic Christ in our spirit with His divine life and nature—John 3:3, 6.
- E. For the reproduction of the God-man, we need to be transformed by the pneumatic Christ in our soul with His divine attributes to uplift, strengthen, enrich, and fill our human virtues for His expression in our humanity—2 Cor. 3:17-18; Rom. 12:2.

Message Five (continuation)

- F. We need to see that we are God-men, born of God, possessing the life and nature of God, and belonging to the species of God—John 1:12-13:
1. As children of God, born of God with the divine life, we are God-men, divine persons; we are the same as the One of whom we are born—1 John 3:1; 5:1.
 2. Since we have been born of God, we may say that we are God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead—John 1:12-13; Rom. 8:16; 2 Pet. 1:4.
 3. To think of ourselves as God-men and to know and realize who we are revolutionizes us in our daily experience—1 John 2:20; 3:1-2; 5:13, 20.
 4. We are not merely Christians or believers in Christ; we are God-men, God-man kind, the reproduction of God—John 12:24; Rom. 8:16, 29; Heb. 2:10-11.
- V. **Christ's God-man living constituted Him to be a prototype so that He might be reproduced in us and live again in us, the God-men—John 14:19; Gal. 2:20:**
- A. As the reproduction of the God-man, we need to live the life of a God-man—Phil. 1:19-21a; 3:10.
 - B. Christ's human living was man living God to express the attributes of God in the human virtues; His human virtues were filled, mingled, and saturated with the divine attributes—Luke 1:26-35; 7:11-17; 10:25-37; 19:1-10.
 - C. As the expansion, increase, reproduction, and continuation of the first God-man, we should live the same kind of life that He lived—1 John 2:6:
 1. The Lord's God-man living set up a model for our God-man living—being crucified to live so that God might be expressed in humanity—Gal. 2:20.
 2. We need to deny ourselves, be conformed to Christ's death, and magnify Him by the bountiful supply of His Spirit—Matt. 16:24; Phil. 3:10; 1:19-21a.
 3. We must reject self-cultivation and condemn the building up of the natural man; we need to realize that the Christian virtues are related essentially to the divine life, to the divine nature, and to God Himself—Gal. 5:22-23.

Message Five (continuation)

4. The One who lived the life of a God-man is now the Spirit living in us and through us; we should not allow anything other than this One to fill us and occupy us—2 Cor. 3:17; 13:5; Eph. 3:16-19.
- D. The Christ in Philippians 1:21a is the God-man in Philippians 2:5-8; therefore, to live Christ is to live the God-man by the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ—1:19.
- E. When we open ourselves to the Lord, love Him, and desire to be joined to Him as one, we are filled and possessed by Him and live out the glory of divinity and the virtues of humanity—1 Cor. 2:9; 6:17; Phil. 4:4-9.

Message Six

**Gaining God to Be Transformed by God
for the Purpose of God**

Scripture Reading: Job 42:1-6; 2 Cor. 3:8-9; 4:10-12, 16-18; 5:18-20

I. God's intention with Job was for him to become a person who lived in the heavenly vision and the reality of God's economy:

- A. Job's experience was a step taken by God in His divine economy to carry out the consuming and stripping of the contented Job in order to tear Job down that God might have a way to rebuild him with God Himself and to usher him into a deeper seeking after God so that he might gain God instead of His blessings and his attainments in his perfection and integrity—Phil. 3:10-14; 1 Cor. 2:9; 8:3; Exo. 20:6; 1 Chron. 16:10-11; 22:19a; 2 Chron. 12:14; 26:3-5; 34:1-3a; Psa. 24:6; 27:4, 8; 105:4; 119:2, 10; Heb. 11:6.
- B. The one who does not care for God may gain many things and may seem to prosper (Psa. 73:1-15); however, the one who cares for God will be restricted by God and even stripped by God of many things; God's intention with His seekers is that they may find everything in Him and not be distracted from the absolute enjoyment of Himself (vv. 16-28).
- C. God's purpose in dealing with His holy people is that they would be emptied of everything and receive only God as their gain (Phil. 3:8; cf. Psa. 73:25-26); the desire of God's heart is that we would gain Him in full as life, as the life supply, and as everything to our being (Rom. 8:10, 6, 11; cf. Col. 1:17b, 18b).
- D. In order to live in the reality of God's economy with His divine dispensing, we need God to build Himself into our intrinsic constitution so that our entire being will be reconstituted with Christ:
 - 1. As unveiled in Paul's Epistles, God's purpose in dealing with us is to strip us of all things and to consume us so that we may gain God more and more—2 Cor. 4:16-18.
 - 2. The building up of the church is by Christ's making His home in our hearts, that is, by His building Himself into us, making our heart, our intrinsic constitution, His home—Eph. 3:16-21.
- E. In Christ God was constituted into man, man was constituted into God, and God and man were mingled together to be one entity, the God-man; this implies that God's intention in His economy is to make Himself man in order to make man God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead—2 Sam. 7:12-14a; Rom. 1:3-4;

Message Six (continuation)

Matt. 22:41-45; John 14:6a; 10:10b; 1 Cor. 15:45b; John 6:63; 2 Cor. 3:6; 1 John 5:16a.

II. God's economy is God becoming a man in the flesh through incarnation that man might become God in the Spirit through transformation for the building of God into man and man into God to gain a corporate God-man:

- A. The most marvelous, excellent, mysterious, and all-inclusive transformations of the eternal and Triune God in His becoming a man are God's move in man for the accomplishment of His eternal economy—Micah 5:2; John 1:14, 29; 3:14; 12:24; Acts 13:33; 1 Pet. 1:3; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Acts 2:36; 5:31; Heb. 4:14; 9:15; 7:22; 8:2:
1. These transformations are the processes through which the Triune God passed in His becoming a God-man, bringing divinity into humanity and mingling divinity with humanity as a prototype for the mass reproduction of many God-men; He became the embodiment of the Triune God, bringing God to man and making God contactable, touchable, receivable, experienceable, enterable, and enjoyable—John 1:14; Col. 2:9; Rom. 8:28-29.
 2. God speaks of these transformations in Hosea 11:4 by saying, "I drew them with cords of a man, / With bands of love"; the phrase *with cords of a man, with bands of love* indicates that God loves us with His divine love not on the level of divinity but on the level of humanity; God's love is divine, but it reaches us in the cords of a man, that is, through Christ's humanity:
 - a. The cords (the transformations, the processes) through which God draws us include Christ's incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension; it is by all these steps of Christ in His humanity that God's love in His salvation reaches us—Jer. 31:3; John 3:14, 16; 6:44; 12:32; Rom. 5:5, 8; 1 John 4:8-10, 16, 19.
 - b. Apart from Christ, God's everlasting love, His unchanging, subduing love, could not be prevailing in relation to us; God's unchanging love is prevailing because it is a love in Christ, with Christ, by Christ, and for Christ.
 - c. God's everlasting love is always victorious; eventually, in spite of our failures and mistakes, God's love will gain the victory—Rom. 8:35-39.

Message Six (continuation)

- B. The transformation of the tripartite man is God's move to deify man, to constitute man with the processed and consummated Triune God; in God's appearing to him, Job saw God in order to gain God to be transformed by God for the purpose of God—Job 38:1-3; 42:1-6; 2 Cor. 3:16-18; Heb. 12:1-2a:
1. Seeing God issues in the transformation of our being into God's image; hence, the more we look at Him as the consummated Spirit in our spirit, the more we receive all His ingredients into our being as the divine element to discharge our old element so that our whole being becomes new; our Christian life is not a matter of changing outwardly but of being transformed from within—2 Cor. 3:18; Psa. 27:4; Gal. 6:15-16.
 2. We can remain in the daily process of transformation by turning our heart to the Lord so that we can behold and reflect Him with an unveiled face; an unveiled face is a heart that turns to the Lord—2 Cor. 3:16, 18:
 - a. To turn our heart to the Lord is to love the Lord; the more we love the Lord, the more our heart will be open to the Lord, and He will have a way to spread out from our spirit into all the parts of our heart.
 - b. To turn our heart to the Lord, to open our heart to the Lord, is the key to our growing in life; we can open our heart to the Lord simply by telling the Lord, "O Lord, I love You; I want to please You."
 - c. As we behold the Lord day after day in all our situations (Psa. 27:4), we will reflect the Lord's glory and be transformed into His image from glory to glory.
 - d. Many Christians are not joyful because the Spirit within them is not joyful (Eph. 4:30; cf. Psa. 16:11; 43:4; Acts 3:19-20; Exo. 33:11, 14-17; Heb. 1:9; Jer. 15:16; John 15:9-11; 1 John 1:3-4; 2 John 12; Phil. 4:4); if we do not turn our heart to the Lord to let the Spirit of the Lord spread out of our spirit into our heart, we will feel restrained and depressed.
 - e. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom (2 Cor. 3:17); if someone says that a meeting is boring, we must realize that it is he himself who is bored within; but when we turn our heart to the Lord, we enjoy the Spirit as our freedom.

Message Six (continuation)

- f. Once the liberating Spirit has the way to spread into all the parts of our heart, we are released, transcendent, and free; this freedom is glory, which is the presence of God and the expression of God; we feel noble, honorable, and glorious because we are being transformed into His image—v. 18; Gen. 1:26.
- C. Transformation transfers us from one form, the form of the old man, to another form, the form of the new man; the Lord accomplishes this transformation work by the killing of Christ's death—2 Cor. 4:10-12, 16-18:
 - 1. In 2 Corinthians 4:10 Paul says that we are always bearing about in our body the putting to death of Jesus; *putting to death* means killing; the death of Christ kills us—1 Cor. 15:31, 36; John 12:24-26; 2 Cor. 1:8-9.
 - 2. The death of Christ is in the compound Spirit; the Spirit is the application of the death of Christ and its effectiveness—Exo. 30:22-25; Rom. 8:13.
 - 3. The Christian life is a life that is all the time under the killing by the compound Spirit; this daily killing is carried out by the indwelling Spirit with the environment as the killing weapon.
 - 4. Under God's divine and sovereign arrangement, everything works for our good, for our transformation, through the killing of Christ's death; the "good" in Romans 8:28 is not related to physical persons, matters, or things; only One is good—God—Luke 18:19:
 - a. All persons, all matters, and all things related to us are the means of the Holy Spirit to work good for us so that we can be loaded with good (Psa. 68:19a), with the Triune God Himself (cf. Gen. 45:5; 50:20).
 - b. All persons and all situations related to us are arranged by the Spirit of God to match His work within us so that we may be transformed and conformed to the image of the firstborn Son of God—cf. Matt. 10:29-31.
- D. Transformation is carried out in us as we experience the discipline of the Holy Spirit—Rom. 8:2, 28-29; Heb. 12:5-14:
 - 1. The work of the Spirit within us is to constitute a new being for us, but the work of the Spirit without is to tear down every aspect of our natural being through our environment—cf. Jer. 48:11.

Message Six (continuation)

2. We should cooperate with the inner operating Spirit and accept the environment that God has arranged for us—Phil. 4:12; Eph. 3:1; 4:1; 6:20; 1 Cor. 7:24.

III. Ministry is the issue of revelation plus suffering—what we see is wrought into us through suffering; hence, what we minister is what we are:

- A. Although the ministers are many, they have only one ministry—the ministry of the new covenant for the accomplishing of God’s New Testament economy; our working together with Christ is to carry out this unique ministry, the ministering of Christ to people for the building up of His Body—Acts 1:17; Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Tim. 1:12; 2 Cor. 4:1; 6:1a.
- B. As a whole, the Body has one, unique corporate ministry, but because this ministry is the service of the Body of Christ and because the Body has many members, all the members have their own ministry for the carrying out of the unique ministry—Acts 20:24; 21:19; 2 Tim. 4:5; Col. 4:17.
- C. The ministry is for ministering the Christ whom we have experienced, and it is constituted with, and produced and formed by, the experiences of the riches of Christ gained through sufferings, consuming pressures, and the killing work of the cross—Acts 9:15-16; Col. 1:24; Phil. 3:10; 1 Tim. 4:6; 2 Cor. 1:4-6, 8-9, 12; 3:3, 6:
 1. The ministry of the Spirit is for us to arrive at the high peak of the divine revelation by our ministering Christ as the Spirit, who gives life—vv. 8-9, 6, 3; Rev. 22:17a.
 2. The ministry of righteousness is for us to enter into the God-man living by our ministering Christ not only as our objective righteousness but also as our subjective and lived-out righteousness for the genuine expression of Christ—Rom. 5:17; Phil. 3:9; Rev. 19:8.
 3. The ministry of reconciliation is for us to shepherd people according to God (in oneness with Christ in His heavenly ministry of shepherding) by our ministering Christ as the word of reconciliation so that we can bring God’s people into their spirit as the Holy of Holies for them to become persons in the spirit—2 Cor. 5:18-20; John 21:15-17; 1 Pet. 5:2-4; 2:25; Rev. 1:12-13; Heb. 10:19, 22; 1 Cor. 2:15.

JOB

Message Six (continuation)

4. By our fully entering into such a wonderful ministry in its three aspects, the Lord will have a way to bring the churches into a new revival.
- D. Tribulation is the sweet visitation and incarnation of grace with all the riches of Christ; grace visits us mainly in the form of tribulation—2 Cor. 12:7-10:
1. Through tribulations the killing effect of the cross of Christ on our natural being is applied to us by the Holy Spirit, making the way for the God of resurrection to add Himself into us—1:8-9; 4:16-18.
 2. Tribulation produces endurance, which brings forth the quality of approvedness—an approved quality or attribute resulting from the enduring and experiencing of tribulation and testing—Rom. 5:3-4.
- E. God poured out Himself as love in our hearts with the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us, as the motivating power within us, that we may more than conquer in all our tribulations; therefore, when we endure any kind of tribulation, we are not put to shame but live Christ for His magnification—v. 5; 8:31-39; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Phil. 1:19-21a.

Message Seven

**The Intrinsic Divine Revelation
concerning the Move of God with and among Men
in the Old Testament
and concerning the Move of God in Man
in the New Testament
to Accomplish God's Heart's Desire
and to Meet Man's Need before God**

Scripture Reading: Job 10:13; 42:1-6; Eph. 3:9; John 1:1, 14;
Matt. 1:23; 2 Cor. 3:18; 4:16-17; Rom. 8:29-30;
Col. 1:12, 15-19; 3:4a, 10-11; Acts 26:16-18; Eph. 3:16-19

- I. The move of God with men and among men is in the Old Testament; God's move with men and among men was not the direct move to carry out His eternal economy for Christ and the church but the indirect move in His old creation for the preparation of His direct move in His new creation for His eternal economy—2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15:**
- A. As the man created by God in His image, man needed to take God (symbolized by the tree of life) as his life that he might live, express, and represent God; and as such a one, he needed to be transformed into precious materials and to be built up as a counterpart to God—Gen. 1:26-27; 2:9-12, 18-24.
 - B. As a fallen man, man needed to receive Christ for his redemption (typified by the sacrifice with its shed blood) that he might be justified by God in Christ (typified by the coats of the sacrifice's skins); fallen man also needed to receive Christ as the seed of the woman that he might be delivered from Satan the "serpent's" death-power—3:8-9, 15, 21; Heb. 2:14.
 - C. God regarded man and was pleased with man in the burnt offering; as the reality of the burnt offering, Christ lived a life that was absolutely for God and for God's satisfaction as a satisfying fragrance to God for His delight and pleasure—Gen. 4:4; 8:20-22; Lev. 1:9; Isa. 42:1; Matt. 3:17; 17:5; 12:18; John 5:30; 6:38; 7:18; 8:29; 14:24; cf. 2 Cor. 2:15; S. S. 4:10-16.
 - D. God promised Abraham that in his seed (Christ) all the nations of the earth would be blessed—Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3:8, 14, 16-17.
 - E. As a person chosen by God, man needed to receive and answer God's call (Gen. 12:1-4), to live before God through Christ as his burnt offering (v. 7; 13:18; 22:13), to be exposed by the law that he might know that he was sinful and did not have the capacity

JOB

Message Seven (continuation)

to keep the law (Exo. 19:8, 21—20:21), and to live with God by taking Christ as the tabernacle, the Priest, and the offerings so that he might enter into God and enjoy all that God is with Christ and in Christ (Exo. 25—Lev. 27).

- F. According to the way of Job's nomadic living (Job 1:3) and the way he offered the burnt offering for his children (v. 5), it seems that Job and his friends probably lived in the age of Abraham (Gen. 22:13); at that time the Pentateuch of Moses with the law was not yet written:
1. Surely, Job and his friends had received some revelation from their forefathers verbally; however, what they had received of their forefathers could reach, at most, only the level of the revelation in the age of Abraham.
 2. Hence, in their debates concerning God's relationship with man, there is no hint that indicates that they had received divine revelation beyond God's judgment and God's regard for man in his burnt offering.
 3. Job and his friends did not speak any word that implies anything concerning Christ and the Spirit of God; they were in the primitive stage of the divine revelation.
 4. In His appearing to Job, God seemed to be saying, "Job, you actually do not know who I am; you do not realize that I am unlimited; also, you cannot imagine what I intend to give you; Job, I intend to give you Myself, making Myself your enjoyment so that you can become a part of Me; I am not satisfied that you have your own integrity, perfection, and uprightness; I want you to have Me; My intention is to impart Myself into you and to give you nothing other than Myself."
 5. Thus, God's chosen and redeemed people do not need to build up themselves in human virtues, such as perfection, uprightness, and integrity, as Job did, but they need to seek after God as a panting hart and to enjoy God with God's people in God's feasts (Psa. 42:1-5; 43:3-5) so that God can be everything to them to replace all that they have attained and obtained; this should be the answer to Job's three friends and even to Elihu and Job (Job 10:13; cf. Eph. 3:9).
 6. At the end of the book of Job, God came in, indicating that what Job was short of in his human life was God Himself; for this reason, the book of Job does not actually have a completed

Message Seven (continuation)

ending, which should be God fully gained in Christ by Job to make him one with God so that he might enjoy God as his portion in Christ; such a revelation can be fully found only in the New Testament—40:10-14; 42:1-6; 10:13; cf. Eph. 3:9.

II. The move of God in man is in the New Testament to meet man's need before God; the move of God in man is from the first coming of Christ to the manifestation of the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth; this move is unprecedented in human history—John 1:1, 14; Eph. 3:16-19; Rev. 21:2, 9-10:

- A. As a person who has been chosen and called by God, man needs to believe into Jesus Christ, who is the incarnated God, who lived a human life, died, resurrected, and ascended for them and with them, and who became the life-giving Spirit as the pneumatic Christ to them, that He may be their salvation, life, and everything (which is revealed in Matthew through Romans):
1. God came to be conceived in a human virgin and to be born of her to be a man, thus bringing divinity into humanity and causing God and man to be mingled as one entity but not as a third substance—Lev. 2:4-5; John 1:1, 14; Matt. 1:20, 23; 1 Tim. 3:16.
 2. 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 His human living He has set His suffering life before us as a model so that we can copy it by tracing and following His steps; this does not refer to a mere imitation of Him and His life but to a reproduction of Him that comes from enjoying Him as grace in our sufferings, so that He Himself as the indwelling Spirit, with all the riches of His life, reproduces Himself in us—Eph. 4:20-21; 1 Pet. 2:21.
 3. Jesus Christ, as the incarnated Triune God and as the embodiment of the Triune God (Col. 2:9), died in His humanity a vicarious and all-inclusive death to terminate all the negative things and to release the divine life from within Him for us (Luke 12:49-51; John 12:24).
 4. He overcame death, entered into the all-producing resurrection, was begotten to be God's firstborn Son (bringing humanity into divinity), and became the life-giving Spirit for the producing and constituting of the Body of Christ—Acts 2:23-24, 32; 13:33; Rom. 1:3-4; 8:28-29; John 20:22; 1 Cor. 15:45; 12:13.

Message Seven (continuation)

5. He accomplished the all-transcending ascension to the heavens and was made Lord, Christ, Leader, and Savior (Acts 2:36; 5:31) for His propagation and for the building up of the church as His kingdom (1:8; 26:16-18).
 6. In His death, resurrection, and ascension He made all His believers one with Him; thus, His death, resurrection, and ascension all became theirs, and His experience became their history—Rom. 6:5-6; Eph. 2:5-6; *Hymns*, #949, stanza 4.
- B. As a believer in Christ, man needs to grow in the divine life of Christ that he may be transformed into what Christ is through the life-dispensing Spirit, that he may be built up with the saints to be the Body of Christ, the organism to express the Triune God in Christ, and to be the new man as God's new creation to carry out God's eternal economy in the consummation of the New Jerusalem as a mingling of the processed Triune God with the glorified tripartite man, to be the corporate God-man's manifestation in eternity (which is revealed in 1 Corinthians through Revelation):
1. God redeemed us in Christ, forgave our sins, washed us, justified us, and reconciled us to Him; God has put us into Christ and made Him our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption—Eph. 1:7; 1 Cor. 6:11; Rom. 3:22; 5:10; 1 Cor. 1:30.
 2. God has regenerated us through the resurrection of Christ (1 Pet. 1:3), and now He renews us, transforms us, and conforms us to His image of glory (Titus 3:5; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:23; 2 Cor. 4:16; 3:18; Rom. 8:28-30; Phil. 3:21).
 3. In His renewing and transforming, He consumes us, putting us into His death for our fellowship of His sufferings, which work out for us an eternal weight of glory, that we may experience Him in His resurrection and gain Him in His unsearchable riches—2 Cor. 4:16-18, 10; Phil. 3:10, 8; Eph. 3:8.
 4. God the Father is embodied in God the Son (Col. 2:9), God the Son is realized as God the Spirit, and God the Spirit comes to indwell us to be the reality of the Triune God (John 14:16-20); the Father, the Lord, and the Spirit as the Triune God have become the source, the element, and the essence of the church as the Body of Christ (Eph. 4:4-6).
 5. Concerning the mystery of the Triune God being the reality in the believers, Christ had many things to tell His disciples, but they could not bear them until the Spirit of reality came

Message Seven (continuation)

to reveal these things to them (John 16:12-15); this was done by the Spirit of reality mainly with the apostle Paul, who completed the word of God, that is, the divine revelation (Col. 1:25-27) regarding Christ as the mystery of God (2:2b) and the church as the mystery of Christ (Eph. 3:4).

6. Christ, as the divine portion allotted to the saints by God and as life in the believers, has become all the members of the new man and is in all the members of the new man, which is His organic Body; God wants to make Christ, the embodiment of God, everything to us, the believers of Christ—Col. 1:12, 15-19; 3:4a, 10-11; 1 Cor. 12:12-13.
7. As the life-giving Spirit, He dwells in us to make Himself and all that He has accomplished, obtained, and attained real to us so that we may be one with Him and be transformed into the same image as the Lord from glory to glory; by turning our heart to the Lord, we can behold the glory of the Lord to see the Lord ourselves and reflect the glory of the Lord to enable others to see Him through us—2 Cor. 3:16-18.
8. God in Christ will carry out His transforming work in us until His transformation consummates in the New Jerusalem, first with the overcomers in the millennial kingdom (Rev. 2:7) and consummately with all the saints in the new heaven and new earth, making all His chosen and redeemed people His corporate expression, manifesting Himself, not any kind of merely human virtues (as Job did), to the fullest extent in eternity (21:1—22:5).

PROVERBS

Message Eight

The Multifarious Wisdom of God

Scripture Reading: Prov. 1:2; 8:1-31; 9:10; Rom. 11:33;
1 Cor. 1:24, 30; Col. 2:2-3; Eph. 3:10

I. The book of Proverbs stresses wisdom that we receive from God through contacting God—1:2; 2:10; 4:5; 9:10; 11:2b; 14:33a:

- A. The subject of Proverbs is living a godly life by God's wisdom—3:13-18; 8:11.
- B. The central thought of Proverbs is that we should seek after wisdom so that we may live a godly life on earth that is acceptable to God—2:1-9.
- C. Wisdom comes from God: "Jehovah gives wisdom; / From His mouth come knowledge and understanding"—v. 6.
- D. Wisdom is more valuable and better than gold, silver, and corals, and is more desirable than anything else—3:14-15; 8:11, 19.
- E. In certain portions of Proverbs the wisdom of God is personified—1:20; 3:19; 4:5-9; 8:1-36:
 - 1. This personification of God's wisdom is a reference to the second of the Divine Trinity, who became wisdom from God to all the New Testament believers—Matt. 11:19; Col. 2:3; 1 Cor. 1:24, 30.
 - 2. "Jehovah by wisdom founded the earth"—Prov. 3:19a:
 - a. This One by whom Jehovah founded the earth and established the heavens is Christ, who is the wisdom of God—1 Cor. 1:24.
 - b. Wisdom, as the master workman of God's creation of all things, is God's delight—Prov. 8:30.
 - c. God's creation of all things is through Christ, who is wisdom and God's delight—3:19; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 1:2.

II. Romans 11:33a speaks of God's wisdom: "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!":

- A. It is important to see the difference between wisdom and knowledge—v. 33:
 - 1. Wisdom is for planning and purposing—Eph. 1:9; 3:11.
 - 2. Wisdom is seen in the initiation of something, as indicated by Romans 11:36: "Out from Him and through Him and to Him are all things."
 - 3. God is the unique Initiator: "One God, the Father, out from whom are all things"—1 Cor. 8:6a:

Message Eight (continuation)

- a. God has initiated many things, not by His knowledge but by His wisdom—Prov. 3:19; 8:12, 22-31.
- b. When God comes in to apply what He has initiated, He displays His knowledge.
- B. The wisdom of God is “God’s wisdom in a mystery, the wisdom which has been hidden, which God predestined before the ages for our glory”—1 Cor. 2:7:
 1. As God’s center and as our portion for our enjoyment, Christ is God’s wisdom in a mystery that is deep and profound—Rom. 11:33.
 2. Within God there is wisdom in a mystery; this wisdom has been hidden and predestined before the ages for our glory—1 Cor. 2:7.
- C. “To the only wise God through Jesus Christ, to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen”—Rom. 16:27:
 1. In the local churches throughout the earth, we all give glory to the only wise God.
 2. The wise God has given Jesus Christ to us according to the revelation of the mystery, which has been kept in silence in the times of the ages, who also is the One who has saved us, regenerated us, and through His divine dispensing is continually renewing and transforming us, and who will eventually glorify us and conform us to the image of God’s firstborn Son, bringing us into glory—v. 25; 3:24-25; 5:10; 8:16, 23, 29; 12:1-2.

III. Christ is the wisdom of God—1 Cor. 1:24:

- A. In the New Testament the personified wisdom of God is Christ as its reality— Prov. 8:1, 12; 9:1; Luke 2:40, 52; 7:35; Matt. 11:19:
 1. The wisdom of Christ’s deity was revealed in proportion to the measure of His bodily growth—Col. 2:2-3; Luke 2:40, 52.
 2. Matthew 11:19b indicates that wisdom is Christ:
 - a. Whatever Christ did was done by the wisdom of God, which is Christ Himself—1 Cor. 1:24.
 - b. This wisdom was justified, vindicated, by His wise works, His wise deeds.
 3. In Luke 7:35 the Lord Jesus said, “Wisdom is justified by all her children”:
 - a. Those who believe in Christ are the children of wisdom, those who justify Christ and His deeds and who follow Him as their wisdom.

PROVERBS

Message Eight (continuation)

- b. Christ's work is to produce us as the children of wisdom caring for the life of wisdom.
 - B. In Christ "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden"—Col. 2:3:
 - 1. God is the unique source of wisdom and knowledge:
 - a. We need to trace wisdom and knowledge to their true source in God—1 Cor. 8:6.
 - b. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ, who is the mystery of God—Col. 2:2-3.
 - 2. The fact that wisdom and knowledge are embodied in Christ is proved by His spoken words, especially those recorded in the Gospels of Matthew and John:
 - a. The Lord's words recorded in these two books contain the highest philosophy.
 - b. The concept in the Lord's words is deep and profound.
 - 3. Since wisdom and knowledge are stored up in Christ as a treasure, we cannot have wisdom and knowledge unless we have Christ—Col. 1:27; 3:4, 10-11.
 - 4. If we exercise our being to contact the Lord, Christ as the life-giving Spirit will saturate our spirit and our mind, and we will have in our experience the wisdom and knowledge that are hidden in Christ—2:3.
- IV. As believers, we are in Christ, and Christ has become the wisdom from God to us—1 Cor. 1:30:**
 - A. What we believers, as the new creation, are and have is of God, not of ourselves—Rom. 11:36.
 - B. As our wisdom, Christ is all-inclusive, becoming wisdom to us from God in righteousness, sanctification, and redemption—1 Cor. 1:30:
 - 1. By Christ as our righteousness, we have been justified by God so that we might be reborn in our spirit to receive the divine life—Rom. 5:18.
 - 2. By Christ as our sanctification, we are being sanctified in our soul, that is, transformed in our mind, emotion, and will with His divine life—6:19, 22; 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18.
 - 3. Christ as our redemption is for the redemption of our body, by which we will be transfigured in our body with His divine life to have His glorious likeness—Rom. 8:23; Phil. 3:21.

Message Eight (continuation)

- C. *To us from God* in 1 Corinthians 1:30 refers to something present, practical, and experiential in the way of transmission:
 - 1. For Christ to become wisdom to us from God indicates that there is a transmission of Christ as wisdom from God to us for our daily experience—v. 30.
 - 2. Christ as wisdom should unceasingly flow from God to us to be our present and practical wisdom in our experience.
 - 3. If we remain with the Lord to receive His dispensing (John 15:4-5), He will be transmitted into us as the wisdom to handle various problems and matters.
 - 4. If we are one with the Lord and receive His dispensing, we will experience and enjoy Him as our wisdom day by day and hour by hour—1 Cor. 6:17; 1:30.
- V. **Through the church the multifarious wisdom of God will be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenies—Eph. 3:10:**
 - A. The rulers and authorities are the angelic rulers and authorities, both good and evil.
 - B. Ephesians 3:10 especially refers to the evil ones—Satan and his angels:
 - 1. Satan has his kingdom, his angels, and his sphere of rule—Matt. 12:26; 25:41; Eph. 6:12:
 - a. Satan's sphere of rule is in the air and on the earth—2:2; 1 John 5:19.
 - b. The book of Daniel indicates that all nations on earth are under the rule of Satan in the air—10:13.
 - 2. Through the church God will make His wisdom known not mainly to human beings but to those rebellious angels who are the followers of God's enemy—Rev. 12:7.
 - C. Even the rebellion of Satan is within the realm of God's wisdom—Isa. 14:12-14:
 - 1. If it were not for Satan's rebellion, God's wisdom could not be made known in a full way.
 - 2. Satan has created many opportunities for God's wisdom to be manifested in a multifarious way, that is, in various ways and aspects and from many angles—Eph. 3:10.
 - 3. Eventually, Satan, God's enemy, will be subdued and will come to know God's multifarious wisdom—v. 10.

PROVERBS

Message Eight (continuation)

- D. When God's chosen and redeemed people partake of and enjoy the riches of Christ, these riches constitute them the church, through which God's multifarious wisdom is made known to the angelic rulers and authorities in the heavenlies—vv. 8-10:
 - 1. The day is coming when, through the church, Satan and his angels will be put to shame.
 - 2. They will realize that everything they have done has given God the opportunity to manifest His wisdom.

VI. The New Jerusalem, as the ultimate consummation of the church, will be full of wisdom—Rev. 1:11; 21:2, 9-11; 22:16:

- A. The New Jerusalem is designed and constructed by God, the Architect and Builder of “the city which has the foundations”—Heb. 11:10:
 - 1. This indicates that God is a skilled Designer and top Craftsman.
 - 2. As such an Architect and Builder, God certainly has not designed and built a physical city—Rev. 21:9-11.
 - 3. To say that the New Jerusalem is a physical city depreciates God's wisdom and belittles Him as the eternal, wise Architect—Heb. 11:10.
 - 4. God has designed and built a spiritual entity for His corporate expression—Rev. 21:9-11.
 - 5. In His wisdom God constructs the New Jerusalem by dispensing Himself as the Architect and Builder into our being—Heb. 11:10; 2 Cor. 13:14; Rev. 21:2; 22:1-2.
- B. If we realize that the New Jerusalem is a sign that signifies spiritual and divine things, we will begin to see the wisdom of God in this city—1:1; 21:9-11.
- C. God is a wise Architect and Builder who designs and builds such a city to be the full manifestation of His multifarious wisdom—Eph. 3:10; Rev. 21:2, 9-11.

Message Nine

**Reading the Book of Proverbs with a Praying Spirit
So That It Will Render Us Nuggets and Gems
to Strengthen Our Life of Pursuing Christ
for the Fulfillment of God's Economy**

Scripture Reading: Prov. 1:1-7; Eph. 4:22-24; 6:17-18

- I. Proverbs is a collection of the words of the wise (1:1-7); it stresses the wisdom that man receives of God through his contacting of God (cf. 2 Chron. 1:10-12; Col. 2:2-3; 1:28-29), and it teaches man how to behave and build up his character in his human life (cf. Phil. 1:20; Gal. 6:7-8; 5:22-26):**
- A. Since the proverbs were collected mainly by two kings (Solomon and Hezekiah) in the age of the law, the book of Proverbs may be considered a subsidiary to the law.
 - B. The law is the portrait of God; as such, it demands that God's people keep it so that they may be made copies of God for His expression and glorification—cf. Rom. 8:4.
 - C. Proverbs, as a subsidiary to the law, instructs people how to behave and how to build themselves up according to God's attributes, that is, according to what God is.
- II. Proverbs has a particular character; that is, it presents to us the words of wisdom by many ancient wise men, which is unanimously considered good by all the people who read it; but we have to realize that what the book of Proverbs is to us depends upon what kind of persons we are and by what way we take it:**
- A. If we are ethical persons with a strong mind and have a desire to be perfect as genuine moral persons, surely this book would help us to make a success in our pursuit of perfection; however, it would not help us to be persons who live in our spirit according to the Spirit of God (2 Tim. 4:22; Rom. 1:9; 2:29; 7:6; 8:4-6, 9-11, 16; 1 Cor. 16:18; 2 Cor. 2:13-14; Phil. 3:3; Gal. 5:15-17, 22-25; 6:18; Eph. 5:18; 6:18):
 - 1. In the Old Testament Job was satisfied with his integrity, with his pursuit of human perfection, but that was not what God wanted of him; rather, it replaced what God wanted of him, and it became an enemy of God, frustrating Job as a man created by God to fulfill God's purpose.
 - 2. God's purpose was for Job to gain Him for the glorification of God, the expression of God; the highest service that we can

PROVERBS

Message Nine (continuation)

render to God is for us to gain God to the uttermost, to be filled with God, in order to express God for His glory—Phil. 3:7-8, 12; Isa. 43:7; 1 Cor. 6:20; 10:31; cf. John 17:1.

3. God's purpose in creating man is to have man gain Him and be filled with Him to be His expression, not an expression of human perfection; therefore, the success of Job in human perfection was torn down by God; then God came in to reveal Himself to Job, indicating that He Himself is what Job should pursue, gain, and express—Job 42:1-6; 10:13; Eph. 3:9; Phil. 3:14; 2 Cor. 3:18; 4:16-18.
- B. When we come to the book of Proverbs, we need to turn ourselves from the mind to the spirit by praying in our spirit (Eph. 6:18; Luke 18:1; Col. 4:2); if we come to Proverbs in this way, we will be touching the Word by the new man, and we will live a life not by our natural man, by our old man, and by our self but by the Lord Jesus, who is our life and person living in our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22; John 6:57, 63; Jer. 15:16).
- C. We must reject self-cultivation, condemn the building up of the natural man in the old creation (cf. Matt. 16:24; Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20), and come to Proverbs as a regenerated man in the new creation (Eph. 4:22-24; 2 Cor. 4:16) by exercising our spirit with the Spirit to contact the word in the spirit of prayer so that the word in Proverbs will become spirit and life to us (John 6:63; Matt. 4:4; Eph. 6:17-18).
- D. As New Testament believers, we should believe that Proverbs is a part of the holy word in God's Holy Scriptures; the psalmist says, "I will lift up my hand to Your commandments, which I love" (Psa. 119:48); to lift up our hand unto the word of God is to indicate that we receive it warmly and gladly and that we say Amen to it (Neh. 8:5-6).
- E. Proverbs is the breath of God for us to breathe in that we may receive the life supply from God; the Bible is God's exhaling; when we read any verse by means of all prayer, this pray-reading becomes our inhaling of God's breath—2 Tim. 3:16; Eph. 6:17-18:
 1. All the words in Proverbs are God's breathing, which is altogether embodied in Christ; as we read Proverbs, we need to inhale all that God has exhaled, all that He has breathed out; by inhaling the divine breath in Proverbs, the more we receive the breath of the speaking God, the more we will enjoy Christ—2 Tim. 3:16; John 20:22.

Message Nine (continuation)

2. Whereas the children of Israel were charged to keep the commandments, statutes, and ordinances, we today need to keep Christ; by taking Christ, keeping Christ, and holding fast to Him, we will gain Him, enjoy Him, and live Him; we need to love Christ, keep Christ, teach Christ, wear Christ, and write Christ—Deut. 6:1, 5-9; Phil. 3:9; 1:19-21a.
 3. Because the Scriptures are the breathing out of God, the exhaling of God (2 Tim. 3:16), we should inhale the Scriptures by receiving the word of God, including the book of Proverbs, by means of all prayer (Eph. 6:17-18); as we are teaching the Bible, we should be exhaling God into people.
- F. We should read Proverbs by being filled with the fullness of God in our spirit (Eph. 5:18-19; 3:19); furthermore, we should read Proverbs in the New Testament Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2), with our regenerated spirit (v. 16), and by mingling prayer with our reading (Eph. 6:17-18) in order to mingle the words with spirit and life (cf. John 6:63).

III. According to God's economy, the big proverbs, like nuggets, and the small ones, like gems, are not for us to build up our old man; rather, they are for us to build up our new man to strengthen our life of pursuing Christ for the fulfillment of God's economy in producing and building up the Body of Christ, which consummates the New Jerusalem as God's heart's desire and ultimate goal:

- A. We need to receive the living and operative word of God with a praying spirit so that we can build up our new man and so that we may be able to discern our spirit from our soul—Heb. 4:12:
1. The enemy's strategy is always to mix our spirit up with our soul; our greatest problem is our mixture; the more we know God by being filled with His light, His presence, the more we will treasure purity over power—Matt. 5:8; Luke 11:34-36; Psa. 119:105, 130.
 2. The way to purge such mixture is through the revelation of the Holy Spirit; the dividing of the soul and the spirit occurs when God's word illuminates us, shining within us to reveal the thoughts and intentions of our heart—36:9; 1 Pet. 2:9.
 3. Whatever we see under the shining of God from the word of God is killed by the light; the greatest thing in the Christian

PROVERBS

Message Nine (continuation)

experience is the killing that comes from light; the dividing of the soul and the spirit comes from the shining—Isa. 6:1-8; Acts 9:1-4; 13:9-10.

4. Revelation is seeing what God sees; it is God opening our eyes to see our intentions and the deepest thoughts in our being as God sees them; as soon as God exposes our thoughts and shows us the intentions of our heart, our soul will be separated, divided, from our spirit.
 5. Apart from pray-reading, the book of Proverbs is merely a collection of proverbs, but when we read Proverbs prayerfully, that is, when we pray-read Proverbs, our pray-reading causes all the proverbs to become words of spirit and life to us.
- B. We should not come to Proverbs as a letter-keeper but as a God-seeker; we should be those who seek God with all our heart, who seek God's favor by entreating His countenance, who ask God to cause His face to shine upon us, and who walk in God's presence—Psa. 27:8; 105:4; 119:2, 10, 58, 135, 168; 2 Cor. 3:6.

IV. Ephesians 4:22-24 tells us clearly that a believer in Christ has two men—the old man and the new man; the old man is of Adam through our natural birth, and the new man is of Christ by a new birth, regeneration; we need to live a life of putting off the old man and putting on the new man; according to God's economy, Proverbs should not be used to cultivate and build up our old man but to cultivate and build up our regenerated new man:

- A. In order to enter into the intrinsic significance of the book of Proverbs according to God's economy, we need to be those who are living according to the new creation (Gal. 6:15); the old creation is our old man in Adam (Eph. 4:22), our natural being by birth, without God's life and the divine nature; the new creation is the new man in Christ (v. 24), our being that is regenerated by the Spirit (John 3:6), having God's life and the divine nature wrought into it (v. 36; 2 Pet. 1:4), having Christ as its constituent (Col. 3:10-11), and having become a new constitution.
- B. In our spirit there is the marvelous, wonderful, processed, all-inclusive, sevenfold intensified, life-giving Spirit (Phil. 1:19; Rev. 4:5; 5:6; 1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:6; Rom. 8:16); when we exercise our spirit to contact Christ as the living Word of God (John 1:1;

Message Nine (continuation)

5:39-40) in the written word of God (10:35), He becomes the applied word of God as the Spirit to us (Eph. 6:17-18); then our reading of any word in the Bible will become spirit and life to us to revive us (John 6:63).

- C. We need to turn the Bible from a book that apparently teaches us to cultivate the self and to build up the natural man into a book that actually is full of light, life, spirit, and spiritual nourishment by receiving it in a spirit and atmosphere of prayer; this will tear down our self, break our natural man, and supply us with the consummated Spirit of the Triune God.
- V. **We must be persons who love the Lord and pursue Christ, not self-perfection (cf. Phil. 3:3-14), and who love the Lord's word in the entire Bible and read it with a praying spirit, not to seek the doctrine of letters but to seek the Spirit and word of life (cf. John 5:39-40; 2 Cor. 3:6); we should read Proverbs not to gain any help for self-cultivation but to nourish our spirit so that we may live a Christian life that is perfect in the divine virtues, which are the expressions of the divine attributes (Gal. 5:22-23; Matt. 5:5-9).**

PROVERBS

Message Ten

Living a Godly Life

Scripture Reading: Prov. 29:18a; 23:23; 20:27; 4:23; 10:12b; 17:9

**I. “Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint”—
Prov. 29:18a:**

- A. In the Bible *vision* denotes an extraordinary scene; it refers to a special kind of seeing—a glorious, inward seeing—and to the spiritual scenery that we see from God—Ezek. 1:1, 4-28; Dan. 7:1, 9-10, 13-14.
- B. In order to have a vision, we need revelation, light, and sight—Eph. 1:17-18a.
- C. The heavenly vision governs us, restricts us, controls us, directs us, preserves us, revolutionizes us, keeps us in the genuine oneness, and gives us the boldness to go on—Prov. 29:18a.
- D. When we see this vision, our entire inner being has an inward turn, and we are changed in thought, concept, and attitude.
- E. The heavenly vision motivates us, energizes us, holds us, gives us endurance, brings us into the Lord’s up-to-date move, and causes our life to be full of meaning and purpose—Heb. 1:8; 12:1-2; Eph. 3:11; 2 Tim. 1:9; 3:10; Rev. 1:9; 3:10.
- F. Everyone who serves the Lord must be a person with a vision; the inner vision will revolutionize the way we serve the Lord—Acts 26:13-19; Rom. 1:9.
- G. Under the heavenly vision we are directed toward God’s destination, and our life is controlled according to God’s economy—Phil. 3:13-14; 1 Tim. 1:4.
- H. The governing vision of the Bible is the Triune God working Himself into His chosen and redeemed people in order to saturate their entire being with the Divine Trinity for the producing and building up of the Body of Christ consummating in the New Jerusalem—Eph. 4:4-6; Rev. 21:2, 9-10.

II. “Buy truth, and do not sell it”—Prov. 23:23a:

- A. Truth is something that we have to buy, something that has a price—v. 23a:
 - 1. Buying requires the paying of a price.
 - 2. If we want to please the Lord and stand for the truth, we must pay the price—cf. Rev. 3:18.
 - 3. If our hearts are ready to receive the love of the truth and buy the truth at any price, we will be blessed—2 Thes. 2:10-11; Prov. 23:23.

Message Ten (continuation)

- B. The divine truth is absolute, and we must be absolute for the truth and uphold the absoluteness of the truth—John 14:6; 18:37; 3 John 3-4, 8:
 - 1. To be absolute for the truth means to set aside feelings, to ignore personal relationships, and to not stand for the self—Matt. 16:24-25; 1 Pet. 1:22.
 - 2. The truth is the unique standard, and we must stand on the side of the truth to oppose ourselves; upholding the absoluteness of the truth is possible only when we are delivered from ourselves—John 8:32; 2 John 2; 3 John 3-4.
 - 3. We should honor God’s truth, take the way of the truth, and not compromise the truth in any way—2 Pet. 2:2.
- C. For the consummation of the divine economy, we need to be absolute for the present truth—1:12:
 - 1. The present truth is the truth that is present with the believers, which they have already received and now possess—v. 12.
 - 2. The present truth includes the revelation concerning the eternal economy of God (Eph. 1:10; 3:9), the Divine Trinity (2 Cor. 13:14; Rev. 1:4-5), the person and work of the all-inclusive Christ (Col. 2:9, 16-17; 3:11), the consummated life-giving Spirit (John 7:39; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rev. 22:17), the eternal life of God (John 3:15-16), the church as the Body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23), and the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2, 10-11).
 - 3. The present truth includes the high peak of the divine revelation—the revelation that God became man so that man may become God in life and nature but not in the Godhead—to produce and build up the organic Body of Christ for the fulfillment of God’s economy to close this age and bring Christ back to set up His kingdom—John 1:12-14; 1 John 3:1-2; Rom. 8:3; 1:3-4; 12:4-5; Rev. 11:15.

III. “The spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah, / Searching all the innermost parts of the inner being”—Prov. 20:27:

- A. Man’s spirit is God’s lamp within man—Matt. 25:1:
 - 1. The light shining within man’s regenerated spirit is God Himself—1 John 1:5.
 - 2. Just as a lamp contains light and expresses it, man’s spirit was created to contain God and express Him.

PROVERBS

Message Ten (continuation)

3. In order for the divine light to shine into man's inward parts, God's Spirit as the oil must soak (mingle with) man's spirit as the wick and "burn" together with man's spirit—Rom. 8:16; 12:11.
4. If we respond to the spirit's shining, we will walk according to the spirit—8:4.
- B. The Spirit of God is also a lamp, with a sevenfold intensity to His shining—Rev. 4:5:
 1. Our regenerated spirit is a lamp indwelt by the Spirit of God, who is also a lamp.
 2. Man's spirit and God's Spirit are both lamps, together enlightening the inward parts—Prov. 20:27; Rev. 4:5.
 3. The spirit wants to enlighten every part of our soul.
- C. When we exercise our spirit to pray properly, there is a lamp shining—Eph. 6:18; 1:17-18; 5:8-9:
 1. As we pray, our spirit functions as a shining lamp, searching all the parts of our soul—Prov. 20:27.
 2. The more we exercise our spirit in prayer, the more we are enlightened—2 Cor. 4:6:
 - a. The lamp may shine on our thoughts, emotions, and will.
 - b. Our inward parts will be thoroughly searched by the Lord—Psa. 139:23-24.
 3. After such a time of prayer, we will feel bright and transparent, filled with God—Eph. 5:8-9.

IV. "Keep your heart with all vigilance, / For from it are the issues of life"—Prov. 4:23:

- A. The soul is the person himself, but the heart is the person in action—Luke 1:66; 2:19, 51; Acts 11:23; Eph. 3:17; 1 Thes. 3:13:
 1. We have something in our inner being that represents us, and this representative is our heart—Luke 6:45; John 16:22; 2 Cor. 3:16.
 2. The relationship that we have with God first depends on our heart, because the heart is the organ by which we express ourselves and by which we make decisions to receive or reject things—Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10.
 3. Although our spirit is pure, what is expressed from our spirit depends on our heart—2 Thes. 2:17; 3:5.

Message Ten (continuation)

- B. The heart is the entrance and exit to our whole being—Matt. 13:19; 15:18-19:
 - 1. It is through our heart that our real being comes out because the traffic of our being is through our heart—Luke 6:45.
 - 2. Our spirit is the source of our being, but our heart is the passage, the entrance and the exit, through which the traffic in our being passes—Matt. 12:34-35.
 - 3. In order to be a proper Christian, we need to exercise our spirit and guard our heart by keeping it with all vigilance—Prov. 4:23.
 - C. The Hebrew word rendered “keep” in Proverbs 4:23 means “guard”:
 - 1. We should guard our heart above all because out of it are the issues of life.
 - 2. *Issues* in Proverbs 4:23 implies sources and springs as well as issues:
 - a. The issues of life are the flowing out of life—cf. John 4:14.
 - b. The heart is related to the sources of life, the springs of life, and the issues of life—cf. Isa. 12:3.
 - c. The fountain, the source, of what we are, of our real being, flows out from our heart—cf. John 7:37-38.
 - D. We guard our heart by caring for our heart and having a thorough dealing with our heart before the Lord in the way of life; the more we deal with our heart, the more we guard our heart—Psa. 26:2; 139:23-24; Prov. 4:23; Rom. 8:27; Rev. 2:23; Matt. 13:18-23; 5:8.
 - E. In order to grow in life for God’s building, we need to love the Lord, take heed to our spirit, and guard our heart with all vigilance to stay on the pathway of life—1 Pet. 1:8; 2:2, 5; 3:4, 15; Prov. 21:2; 4:18-23; Deut. 10:12; Mark 12:30.
- V. “Love covers all transgressions”—Prov. 10:12b:**
- A. “He who covers a transgression seeks love, / But he who repeats a matter separates close friends”—17:9.
 - B. To cover is love; to uncover is not love—James 5:20.
 - C. Covering brings in blessing, but uncovering brings in a curse—Gen. 9:22-27:
 - 1. Those who uncover others suffer the curse.
 - 2. Those who cover others’ sins, defects, and shortcomings enjoy gain and receive blessing.

PROVERBS

Message Ten (continuation)

- D. “Love covers all things” (1 Cor. 13:7a), not only the good things but also the bad things:
 - 1. “The elders need to realize that in their shepherding, they have to cover others’ sins, to not take account of others’ evils”—*The Vital Groups*, p. 72:
 - a. “Whoever uncovers the defects, shortcomings, and sins of the members of the church is disqualified from the eldership”—p. 72.
 - b. “Our uncovering of the members under our eldership, our shepherding, annuls our qualification”—p. 72.
 - 2. We need to shepherd others according to God, with a love that covers all transgressions—1 Pet. 5:2; Prov. 10:12b.
- E. “Above all, have fervent love among yourselves, because love covers a multitude of sins”—1 Pet. 4:8.

Message Eleven

**The Intrinsic Significance of Fearing the Lord
in the Economy of God**

Scripture Reading: Prov. 1:1, 7; 2:4-5; 3:5-10; 8:13;
9:10; 10:27; 14:2, 26-27; 15:16, 33a; 16:6; 19:23

- I. The first principle for man to live a proper human life is for him to fear the Lord, to revere the Lord; to fear the Lord is to be in fear of offending Him, of losing His presence, and of not receiving Him as our reward in the next age; we should be in fear of missing the Lord's smile in this age and His reward in the next—Prov. 1:1, 7; Eph. 4:30; 2 Cor. 5:9-10:**
- A. To fear the Lord is to consider and regard Him in everything, never forgetting that He is the wonderful God who has created us (Isa. 43:7); fearing the Lord stops us from doing evil; it also causes us to be touched by the sufferings of others and to show mercy and compassion to them.
 - B. To fear the Lord is not only fleeing from sins but also, and even more, rejecting the self; fearing the Lord is not merely to fear that we have sinned or that we are worldly but to fear that what we are doing is out of ourselves, not out of the Lord—Matt. 16:24; 2 Cor. 4:5.
 - C. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding; knowledge, wisdom, and understanding come from God; if we fear Him, revere Him, these will be our possessions—Prov. 1:1, 7; 2:4-5; 3:5-10; 8:13; 9:10; 10:27; 14:2, 26-27; 15:16, 33a; 16:6; 19:23.
- II. Isaiah prophesied that the Spirit of Jehovah—the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of understanding, the Spirit of counsel, the Spirit of might, the Spirit of knowledge, and the Spirit of the fear of Jehovah—would rest upon Christ—Isa. 11:1-2:**
- A. The Spirit was with the Lord Jesus all the time and was one with Him; He walked by the Spirit and lived a life in, with, by, and through the Spirit; Isaiah 11:2 shows that in the Lord's human living the Spirit was manifested with all the above attributes—Luke 4:1, 14; 10:21; John 1:32; Matt. 12:28.
 - B. In His human living, Jesus was filled with the Spirit of the reverential, obedient fear of the Lord; He also delighted in the fear of the Lord; in His resurrection He is now the all-inclusive, bountifully supplying Spirit of Jesus Christ as the Spirit of the fear of Jehovah, who includes the indescribable human living and ministry of the Lord Jesus—Isa. 11:2-3; Phil. 1:19:

PROVERBS

Message Eleven (continuation)

1. No human being ever feared God as much as Jesus did; in carrying out God's New Testament ministry, the Lord Jesus told us that He never did anything out of Himself (John 5:19), He did not have His own work (4:34; 17:4), He did not speak His own word (14:10, 24), He did everything not by His own will (5:30), and He did not seek His own glory (7:18).
2. 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; this is the reality in Jesus (Eph. 4:20-21); we need to ask the Lord as the Spirit of reality to guide us into the reality of experiencing His life of submission and His life of obedience to the Father (John 16:13; Phil. 2:5-11).
3. Day by day we need to completely and absolutely open to the Father and ask Him to fill us with the resurrected Christ as the all-inclusive Spirit, which is also the Spirit of the fear of the Lord that includes the human living and ministry of the Lord Jesus—Luke 11:5-13.

III. To fear God is to trust in Him—Prov. 3:5-8, 26; 16:1, 9, 20, 33; 19:21; 30:5-6:

- A. Proverbs 3:5-8 charges us to trust in the Lord with all our heart and not rely on our own understanding; in all our ways we should acknowledge Him, and He will make our paths straight; we should not be wise in our own eyes; we should fear the Lord and depart from evil; this will be healing to our body and refreshment to our bones.
- B. "Blessed is the man who trusts in Jehovah / And whose trust Jehovah is. / And he will be like a tree transplanted beside water, / Which sends out its roots by a stream, / And will not be afraid when heat comes; / For its leaves remain flourishing, / And it will not be anxious in the year of drought / And will not cease to bear fruit"—Jer. 17:7-8:
 1. According to God's economy, the one who trusts in God is like a tree planted by water, signifying God as the fountain of living waters—2:13.
 2. A tree grows beside a river by absorbing all the riches of the water; this is a picture of God's economy, which is carried out by His dispensing; in order to receive the divine dispensing, we as the trees must absorb God as the water—cf. 1 Cor. 3:6.

Message Eleven (continuation)

3. The riches of the supplying God dispensed into us as the trees constitute us with God's divinity and cause us to grow into God's measure (Col. 2:19); in this way we and God become one, having the same element, essence, constitution, and appearance (Rev. 4:3; 21:11).
- C. He who gives heed to the word will find good, and blessed is he who trusts in the Lord (Prov. 16:20); the Lord will be our confidence, and He will keep our foot from being caught (3:26).
- D. Those who love God learn the fear of God by coming to the Lord in the Scriptures (2:3-5; John 5:39-40); we are commanded to cleave to and obey the Word of God as the evidence of our fear of God (Deut. 6:2).

IV. To fear the Lord means that we also honor Him:

- A. Proverbs 3:9-10 says that we must honor the Lord with our substance and with the firstfruits of all our produce; then our barns will be filled with plenty, and our vats will burst open with new wine.
- B. We should not be those who make more money to lay up treasure for our future; at least one-tenth, the firstfruits, of our produce must be given to God; we should always be generous in giving of the things that God has given us; this honors God—Mal. 3:7-12; 2 Cor. 9:6-8.
- C. We should beseech the Lord to make our heart single in fearing His name; "Teach me, O Jehovah, Your way; / I will walk in Your truth. / Make my heart single in fearing Your name"—Psa. 86:11.
- D. We need to "cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and of spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God"; the fear of God here is not daring to touch things that do not belong to God or are not related to Him—2 Cor. 7:1; 6:17.
- E. To be in the fear of Christ is to fear offending Him as the Head; this involves our being subject to one another; we need to serve the Lord with fear; then we will love the Lord in order to rejoice in and enjoy the Lord—Eph. 5:18-21; Psa. 2:11-12; Heb. 12:28.
- F. We all should have a proper fear of God because we believers in Christ will all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; at that time Christ will judge His believers at His coming back, not concerning their eternal salvation but concerning their dispensational reward—2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 4:4-5; 3:13-15; Rom. 14:10.

PROVERBS

Message Eleven (continuation)

- G. Fearing the Lord is a way to lengthen life (Prov. 10:27); God loves, saves, protects, blesses, and provides for those who fear Him (Psa. 103:11, 13, 17; 85:9; 60:4; Prov. 14:26-27; Psa. 115:12-13; 34:9; 111:5).
 - H. Examples of those who feared the Lord are Noah (Heb. 11:7), Abraham (Gen. 22:12), Joseph (42:18), David (Psa. 2:11-12; 5:7), Nehemiah (Neh. 1:11; 5:9, 15), and the early church (Acts 9:31).
- V. The holy fear of the Lord is actually a source of joy (Psa. 2:11) as a fountain of life (Prov. 14:27) and as a tree of life (11:30) to dispense God into us for the carrying out of His economy:**
- A. The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, that one may turn aside from the snares of death; to fear the Lord, to trust in the Lord, and to take refuge in the name of the Lord are to walk on the paths of life (2:19; 5:6; 10:17; 14:27; 19:23; Psa. 16:11); the paths of life are the paths of the tree of life, the source of which is God Himself (Prov. 3:13, 18; 11:30; 13:12; 15:4).
 - B. The fear of the Lord leads to life; it is the constricted way (the way of the few, not of the many) that leads to life; the paths of life are for us to live in God and thus to touch and obtain life; these paths are the highways that God has put in our heart for us to enter into Him—19:23; Matt. 7:13-14; Psa. 84:5.
 - C. The ways of death are the ways of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the source of which is Satan and which is manifested in our self; to live in the self is to be without God's presence, to walk in the ways of darkness, and to be void of life—Prov. 2:13; 3:5-7; 14:12; 16:25; Eph. 5:2, 8-9.
- VI. God promised to give us, His people, one heart and one way, to fear Him all the days, for our own good and for the good of our children after us, and He puts His fear into our hearts, so that we will not turn away from Him—Jer. 32:39-40:**
- A. We, the chosen people of God, should all have one heart—to love God, to seek God, to live God, and to be constituted with God that we may be His expression—and one way—the Triune God Himself as the inner law of life with its divine capacity—v. 39; 31:33-34; John 14:6a; Rom. 8:2.
 - B. This one heart and one way are the one accord (Acts 1:14; 2:46; 4:24; Rom. 15:6); divisions result from having a heart for something other than Christ and taking a way other than Christ.
 - C. God made an eternal covenant, the new covenant; it is by this

Message Eleven (continuation)

covenant that God will not turn away from us, and He puts His fear into our hearts, so that we will not turn away from Him—Jer. 32:40.

- D. When we fear God, we are instructed by God concerning the way that we should choose, and we are able to know God's intimate counsel and His covenant; only those who fear God can have God's revelation of His covenant, and He gives His intimate counsel only to those who fear Him—Psa. 25:12, 14.

VII. The fear of the Lord and the love of the Lord are two wonderful results of the forgiveness of our sins:

- A. God's forgiveness does not cause man to become audacious and reckless; the grace of God's forgiveness brings man into the fear of the Lord; "With You there is forgiveness, / That You would be feared"—130:4.
- B. The grace of God's forgiveness also causes us to love God; the reason the sinful woman in Luke loved the Lord much is that she was forgiven much by the Lord—7:39-50.
- C. The more the Lord forgives us, the more we fear Him; and the more we fear Him, the more we love Him; on the negative side, because we fear Him, we refrain from doing things that are displeasing to Him; on the positive side, because we love Him, we do things that are pleasing to Him.

VIII. Proverbs 31 presents to us two models of those who fear the Lord; on the one hand, we should be like a king, a royal man like the Lord, having the authority to rule; on the other hand, we should be a worthy woman, knowing how to arrange, manage, take care of, and provide for the needs of the saints in the house of God:

- A. Proverbs 31:3 through 9 speaks of a reigning king—one who does not drink wine but who speaks for the rights of others and ministers justice (typifying Christ and His overcomers); only this kind of person can reign:
 - 1. Our Lord was fully under God's restriction; hence, He could reign for God; if we can be restricted by God and thus deal with ourselves, we will be able to reign for God.
 - 2. In ruling over the people, the king first had to be instructed, governed, ruled, and controlled by the word of God; the principle should be the same with the elders in the churches—Deut. 17:14-20:

PROVERBS

Message Eleven (continuation)

- a. In order to administrate, to manage, the church, the elders must be reconstituted with the holy word of God; as a result, they will be under God's government, under God's rule and control.
 - b. Then spontaneously, God will be in their decisions, and the elders will represent God to manage the affairs of the church; this kind of management is theocracy.
- B. Proverbs 31:10 through 31 describes a worthy woman (12:4; 19:14; Ruth 3:11)—one who is wise, kind, diligent, and capable and who can arrange, manage, and provide for her household; “Her price is far above corals” (Prov. 31:10); her glory surpasses all her peers (v. 29); this worthy woman typifies the church and the saints who love the Lord:
1. The main characteristic of a worthy woman is that she fears the Lord (reverently worshipping, obeying, serving, and trusting the Lord with awe-filled respect); “Grace is deceitful, and beauty is vain; / But a woman who fears Jehovah, she will be praised”—v. 30.
 2. The heart of the husband of a worthy woman trusts in her; “She does him good and not evil / All the days of her life” (v. 12); “Her husband is known in the gates, / When he sits among the elders of the land” (v. 23).
 3. Such a worthy and prudent woman is from the Lord as the crown of her husband (12:4); her children and husband rise up and call her blessed (31:28); her husband also praises her by saying that she surpasses all others (v. 29).
 4. A husband should be able to see with his own eyes his wife's “pure manner of life in fear”; her adorning should not be the outward plaiting of hair and putting on of gold or clothing with garments, “but the hidden man of the heart in the incorruptible adornment of a meek and quiet spirit, which is very costly in the sight of God”—1 Pet. 3:1-4.
 5. In the proper church life the sisters should “adorn themselves in proper clothing with modesty and sobriety [self-restraint], not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, what befits women professing godly reverence, by good works”; godly reverence is a godly fear toward God, a revering and honoring of God, as is fitting for one who worships God—1 Tim. 2:9-10.

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES

Message Eleven (continuation)

6. Older women should be reverent in their behavior, their deportment, so that “they may train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be of a sober mind, pure, workers at home, good, subject to their own husbands, that the word of God would not be blasphemed”—Titus 2:3-5.
- C. In the aspect of overcoming, we should be like a king; in the aspect of loving the Lord, we should be like a worthy woman; being like this will cause us to have value and glory before the Lord.

Message Twelve

**Vanity of Vanities, the Reality in Jesus,
and the Revelation of the Sons of God**

Scripture Reading: Eccl. 1:2-11, 14; 2:17, 22; 3:11; 12:8;
Psa. 39:4-6; Eph. 4:17-21, 24; 1 John 5:20; Rom. 8:19-22

I. “Vanity of vanities; all is vanity”—Eccl. 1:2b:

- A. In Ecclesiastes 1:2-11 we see that the theme of this book is vanity of vanities:
 - 1. The central thought of Ecclesiastes is the vanity of vanities of human life under the sun in its falling away from God—v. 2.
 - 2. The contents of Ecclesiastes are a description of the human life of fallen mankind under the sun, a life in the corrupted world—Eph. 2:12.
 - 3. The teachings of Solomon in Ecclesiastes show that the human life in the corrupted world is a vanity, a chasing after wind—1:14.
 - 4. According to Ecclesiastes, human history, from its beginning to the present, is vanity—12:8.
 - 5. No matter how good, excellent, marvelous, and wonderful a thing may be, as long as it is of the old creation, it is part of the vanity of vanities under the sun—1:9; 2:11, 17, 22.
 - 6. Only the new creation, which is in the heavens and not “under the sun” (1:9), is not vanity but is reality—2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15; Eph. 4:24.
- B. In Psalm 39:4-6 David realized the nothingness and vanity of his life:
 - 1. In this psalm David was brought by God to realize that he was nothing and vanity; he learned that every man at his best is altogether vanity—v. 5.
 - 2. Our realizing that our condition is sinful (Psa. 38) and that our situation is one of vanity opens the way for Christ to crucify us and enter into us to replace us by living Himself through us and causing us to live together with Him in an organic union, as expressed by Paul in Galatians 2:20.
- C. Man was created by God with the highest and most noble purpose, that is, to express God in His image with His divine life and nature—Gen. 1:26:
 - 1. God’s enemy, Satan, the devil, came in to inject himself as sin into the man created by God for His purpose—3:1-6; Rom. 5:18; 3:23; 1 John 3:4.

Message Twelve (continuation)

2. Through this fall of man, man and all the created things that had been committed by God to his dominion were made subject to vanity (Rom. 8:20-21); thus, human life in the corrupted world also became vanity.
 3. The way for us to escape this vanity is to come back to God and take God in Christ as redemption, life, wealth, enjoyment, pleasure, and satisfaction so that we may still be used by God to fulfill His original purpose in creating man for the fulfillment of His eternal economy—Eccl. 12:13-14.
- D. Although the human life in the corrupted world is a vanity, a chasing after wind, we need to realize that God has put eternity in man's heart—3:11:
1. "Eternity" in Ecclesiastes 3:11 is "a divinely implanted sense of a purpose working through the ages which nothing under the sun but God alone can satisfy" (The Amplified Bible).
 2. God created man in His image and formed in him a spirit so that man may receive and contain Him and have a heart that seeks God Himself so that God can be man's satisfaction—Gen. 1:26; 2:7; Zech. 12:1.
 3. Although man fell away from God, and sin through Satan came in to frustrate man from receiving God for his satisfaction, the desire for God, the seeking for God, still remains in man's heart—Eccl. 3:11.
 4. Temporal things can never satisfy man; only the eternal God, who is Christ, can satisfy the deep sense of purpose in man's heart—cf. 2 Cor. 4:18.

II. In Ephesians 4:17-21 and 24 Paul presents the reality in Jesus for a walk that is no longer in the vanity of the mind:

- A. In Ephesians 4:17 Paul exhorts the believers to "no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk in the vanity of their mind":
1. The basic element in the daily life of fallen mankind is the vanity of the mind.
 2. The Gentiles, the nations, are the fallen people, who have become vain in their reasonings—Rom. 1:21:
 - a. They walk without God in the vanity of their mind and are controlled and directed by their vain thoughts.
 - b. In the eyes of God and of the apostle Paul, whatever the people in the world think, say, and do is nothing but vanity.

Message Twelve (continuation)

3. The nations who walk in the vanity of the mind are darkened in their understanding because of the hardness of their heart—Eph. 4:18:
 - a. When the mind of fallen people is filled with vanity, their understanding is darkened in the things of God—Psa. 94:11.
 - b. The hardness of fallen man’s heart is the source of the darkness in his understanding and the vanity of his mind—Eph. 4:17-18.
- B. In Ephesians 4:17 and 21 there is a contrast between the reality in Jesus and the vanity of the fallen human mind:
 1. In the godless walk of fallen man there is vanity, but in the godly life of Jesus there is reality.
 2. The reality in Jesus is “the reality” of the new man mentioned in verse 24:
 - a. The deceit (v. 22) is the personification of Satan, and the reality (v. 24) is the personification of God; the deceit is the devil, and the reality is God.
 - b. God as the reality was exhibited in the life of Jesus—v. 21.
 3. The reality in Jesus is the actual condition of the life of Jesus recorded in the four Gospels:
 - a. The human living of Jesus was according to the reality, that is, according to God Himself—Eph. 4:24.
 - b. The essence of the life of Jesus was reality; He always walked in reality.
 - c. Everything the Lord did in His human life was God expressed and therefore was reality.
 4. The life of Jesus according to reality is the pattern for the believers’ life—2 John 1-2, 4; 3 John 3-4:
 - a. We need to learn Christ and be taught in Him to live a life of reality—Eph. 4:20-21; 2 John 1; John 4:23-24.
 - b. As members of the Body of Christ, we should live a life of reality, as the reality is in Jesus—a life of expressing God.
- C. We can live in the reality that is in Jesus because “we are in Him who is true”—1 John 5:20:
 1. *Him who is true* refers to God becoming subjective to us, to the God who is objective becoming the true One in our life and experience.

Message Twelve (continuation)

2. To be in the One who is true—the true One—is to be in His Son Jesus Christ, for the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, is the true God—v. 20.
3. The true One is the divine reality; to know the true One means to know the divine reality by experiencing, enjoying, and possessing this reality.

III. Because creation has been made subject to vanity, the creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God “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”—Rom. 8:19-22:

- A. As a result of Satan’s injecting himself as sin into man, man and all created things were brought into the slavery of corruption and made subject to vanity—5:12; 8:20:
 1. Because creation has been made subject to vanity and to the slavery of corruption, everything under the sun is vanity—Eccl. 1:2; 12:8.
 2. At present the creation is enslaved under the law of decay and corruption; its only hope is to be freed from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God when the sons of God are revealed—Rom. 8:20-21.
- B. The anxious watching—watching with full concentration—of the creation “eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God”—v. 19:
 1. Revelation is an unveiling or an appearing of something previously covered or hidden—Eph. 1:17; 3:5; Gal. 1:15-16; Rev. 1:1.
 2. At the Lord’s second coming, when we will be glorified and our bodies will be fully redeemed, the veil will be lifted—Rom. 8:18.
 3. The creation, which “groans together and travails in pain together until now” (v. 22), is awaiting the revelation of the sons of God (v. 19).
 4. This revelation will be the consummation of the process of designation that we are now passing through—cf. 1:4, footnote 1.
- C. Although the entire creation is presently held in a condition of vanity and corruption, God will bring in His kingdom to deal with the present condition—Rev. 11:15:

ECCLESIASTES

Message Twelve (continuation)

1. The coming kingdom will be a kingdom of the glory of God, a kingdom composed primarily of the revealed sons of God—Matt. 6:10, 13; Rom. 8:19.
2. God's glory goes with His kingdom and is expressed in the realm of His kingdom—Matt. 6:10, 13b; Psa. 145:11-13.
3. God has called us to enter into His kingdom and glory—1 Thes. 2:12:
 - a. The kingdom of God is the sphere for us to worship God and enjoy God under the divine ruling with the view of entering into God's glory—Matt. 6:13b.
 - b. The kingdom is the realm for God to exercise His power so that He may express His glory—Rev. 5:10, 13.
 - c. The shining of the kingdom is for the glorification of the Father—Matt. 5:16.
4. The kingdom of God is God's manifestation in His glory with His authority for His divine administration; hence, to enter into the kingdom of God and to enter into the expressed glory of God take place as one thing simultaneously—Heb. 2:10; Matt. 5:20; 1 Thes. 2:12; 2 Thes. 1:10; Rev. 21:9-11; 22:1, 5.
5. The creation is eagerly expecting and anxiously watching for God's kingdom to come; at the time of the revelation of the kingdom, the whole creation will be liberated, and the manifested sons of God will be delivered from vanity and "will shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father"—Matt. 13:43.