

Training Outlines

Experiencing, Enjoying, and Expressing Christ

(4)

Living Stream Ministry

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**EXPERIENCING, ENJOYING,
AND EXPRESSING CHRIST
(4)**

KEY STATEMENTS

Christ as Jehovah and also as man is the King
who is supplying, caring for, and covering God's people;
He is the King for ruling and a man
who is like a refuge from the wind and a covering from the tempest,
like streams of water in a dry place,
and like the shadow of a massive rock in a wasted land.

In order for us to eat Christ as the tree of life,
we must give Him the first place in all things,
which is to love Him with the first love, being constrained by His love
to regard and take Him as everything in our life.

They overcame the accuser
because of the blood of the Lamb
and because of the word of their testimony,
and they did not love their soul-life even unto death.

In the kingdom
the Lord will appear publicly to the people as the sun,
but before the great tribulation
He will appear privately to the overcomers
as the morning star to rapture them.

Message One

The Faithful Witness of God for the Testimony of Jesus

Scripture Reading: Rev. 1:1-2, 5, 9-12; 7:9-17; 19:10

I. Christ is the faithful Witness of God, the testimony and expression of God; His expressing God is His witnessing—Rev. 1:5; 3:14:

- A. Christ is the Witness of God, the testimony and expression of God; the church is the testimony and expression of Christ; as such, the church is the reproduction of the testimony and expression of God in Christ—1:5.
- B. Revelation presents to us the revealed Christ and the testifying church, which is the testimony of Jesus; Christ is the testimony of God, and the church is the testimony of Jesus, the enlarged Christ as the corporate expression of the Triune God—John 1:18; 5:31-37; 8:14; Rev. 1:2, 5, 9; 19:10; cf. Gen. 1:26.

II. The testimony of Jesus is the seven golden lampstands—golden (divine) in nature, shining in darkness, and identical with one another—Rev. 1:1-2, 9-12:

- A. The golden lampstand symbolizes the Triune God; the Father as the substance is embodied in the Son, the Son as the embodiment is expressed through the Spirit, the Spirit is fully realized and expressed as the churches, and the churches are the testimony of Jesus—Exo. 25:31-40; Zech. 4:2-10; Rev. 1:10-12.
- B. To experience the golden lampstands as the testimony of Jesus, the corporate expression of Jesus (Acts 9:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12), we must be filled with the Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:7) by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus continually (1 Cor. 12:3, 13; Rom. 10:12-13; Lam. 3:55-56) to bear the brands of Jesus (Gal. 6:17) as brothers and fellow partakers in the tribulation, kingdom, and endurance in Jesus (Rev. 1:9-10).
- C. The beating of the gold to form a stand signifies the believers' participation in Christ's sufferings; everything that goes on in our environment is for the producing of the beaten lampstand—Exo. 25:31; Col. 1:24:
 - 1. If we set our mind on knowing God—submitting to the inward working of the Spirit and to the outward environment—every circumstance will become an opportunity for us to know Him—Hosea 6:1-3; Phil. 3:10a; Eph. 6:20; cf. Gen. 41:42.
 - 2. If a man does not know God in his lifetime, he has wasted his whole life; may the Lord make us willing to accept His dealings in our circumstances so that we may know Him more—2 Cor. 4:16-18; 12:7-9; cf. Isa. 7:14-15; 2 Cor. 5:14-15.

Message One (continuation)

3. The crux of the matter is whether or not one encounters the Lord as the great light in the midst of difficulties and trials; suffering can make us understand what we otherwise could not understand—1:8-9; cf. Eph. 1:17; Luke 1:78-79.
- D. The shining of the golden lampstands is so that people may see the vision of the glorious Christ as the Son of Man walking in their midst; by knowing the Lord in the midst of the churches as the One who is living forever and ever, we can be assured of His presence in our spirit all the time; He lives always to intercede for us, He appears now before the face of God for us, and He will never fail us nor forsake us—Rev. 1:12-18; 2:1; 2 Tim. 4:22; Heb. 7:25; 9:24; Num. 6:22-27; Deut. 31:6.
- E. The shining of the seven lamps of the golden lampstands, the Lord Jesus walking in their midst with His seven eyes like a flame of fire, His feet like shining bronze, and the shining of His face as the sun indicate that we need more and more of the Lord's shining day by day in our daily life and church life for more and more of His shepherding—saving, restoring, reviving, and deifying—Rev. 1:14b-15a, 16b; 4:5; 5:6; Luke 1:78-79; 2 Cor. 4:6-7; Mal. 4:2; Prov. 4:18; Psa. 22, title; 80:1-3, 7, 15-19.
- F. Enlightening rests with the mercy of God; whenever God comes and bestows His mercy, the light of His countenance is our light, His appearing is our vision, and His presence is our gain—Rom. 9:15; Acts 9:3-4; Isa. 50:10-11; Num. 6:25-26:
 1. In order to be enlightened, we must want and accept the Lord's shining, setting our heart to be single in seeking the Lord alone with all our desire—Psa. 139:23-24; Phil. 2:12-16; 2 Chron. 12:14; 16:12; 34:1-3; Psa. 27:8; 73:25; Luke 11:33-36.
 2. In order to be enlightened, we must open ourselves to the Lord, turn our heart to Him, and place ourselves before Him without any reservation or holding back; those who close themselves to the Lord are experts in judging and criticizing others—2 Cor. 3:16; Prov. 20:27; Matt. 7:1-5; Luke 6:36-37, 41-42.
 3. In order to be enlightened, we must put a stop to ourselves; this means to put a stop to our views, our ways of looking at things, our feelings, our ideas, and our opinions; when a person who is completely stopped comes before the Lord, he can be exceedingly single and simple in receiving the word of the Lord—10:38-42; John 11:21-28; Isa. 40:31; Matt. 5:3; Luke 18:15-17; Isa. 66:1-2.

Message One (continuation)

4. In order to be enlightened, we must not dispute with the light of the Spirit who speaks within us, and we should not dispute with the ministers of the Spirit who speak without—Acts 22:10; S. S. 5:4-6; 2 Cor. 10:3-5; 11:2-3; Num. 16:1-7, 31-39; 17:1-8; cf. Exo. 33:11-14.
5. In order to be enlightened, we must continuously live in the light—Isa. 2:5; 1 John 1:7; Heb. 9:14; 10:22; Matt. 5:3, 8, 14; Psa. 119:105; Rev. 1:20; Psa. 36:8-9.

III. The testimony of Jesus is the great multitude serving God in the temple, the whole Body of God's redeemed, who have been raptured to the heavens to enjoy God's care and the Lamb's shepherding with all the spiritual blessings in the heavenlies and in Christ that can be enjoyed today—Rev. 7:9-17; Eph. 1:3; Gal. 3:14; Gen. 12:2; cf. Rev. 21:3-4; 22:3-5; Isa. 49:10:

- A. The great multitude consists of those who have been purchased with the blood of the Lamb from every nation, tribe, people, and tongue to be the constituents of the church—Rev. 7:9a; 5:9; Rom. 11:25; Acts 15:14, 19; 1 Cor. 6:19-20.
- B. “These are those who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb”—Rev. 7:14:
 1. The great tribulation in verse 14 refers to the tribulations, sufferings, persecutions, and afflictions experienced by God's redeemed people throughout the ages—John 16:33.
 2. The blood of the Lamb answers before God all the accusations of the devil against us and gives us the victory over him (Rev. 12:11); because of the redeeming Christ as the opened fountain of blood for all our sin and impurity (Zech. 13:1; John 19:34), we can plunge beneath that blood, lose all our guilty stains (*Hymns*, #1006, stanza 1), and “rise to walk in God's own light / Above the world and sin, / With heart renewed and garments white / And Christ enthroned within” (*Hymns*, #1010, stanza 3).
 3. To wash our robes is to keep our conduct clean through the washing of the blood of the Lamb; this gives us the right to enjoy the tree of life and to enter into the city of life as the realm of God's eternal blessings—1 John 1:7; Rev. 22:14.
- C. Those of the great multitude are standing before the throne and before the Lamb with palm branches in their hands—7:9b:

Message One (continuation)

1. Palm branches signify our victory over tribulation, which we have undergone for the Lord's sake; palm trees are also a sign of satisfaction gained through being watered—v. 14; cf. John 12:13; Exo. 15:27.
 2. In the Triune God as the temple of God, we will serve Him day and night to enjoy Him as the eternal Feast of Tabernacles and to flourish in life like the palm tree—Rev. 7:15a; 3:12; Lev. 23:40; Neh. 8:15; Psa. 92:12-13; John 7:2, 37-39; Rom. 1:9; Col. 2:19.
 3. Our service in time today is a preparation for our service in eternity; God's only goal in time is to dispense Himself into us day by day; when God comes into us and comes out of us, that is service—Matt. 25:19-23; John 7:37-39.
- D. We will not hunger or thirst anymore—Rev. 7:16a:
1. To hunger and thirst is to have a hope that is not yet satisfied; Christ promises that everyone who believes into Him will be satisfied and receive Him as their satisfying life—John 6:35.
 2. To contact God the Spirit in our spirit is to drink of the living water, and to drink of the living water is to render real worship to God—4:13-14, 23-24.
- E. The beating sun and the scorching heat will not strike us—Rev. 7:16b:
1. The Lamb-God sitting upon the throne will tabernacle over us, overshadowing us with Himself—v. 15b; 2 Cor. 12:9.
 2. There is one kind of life that is under God's overshadowing—it is a life that is hidden in God—Psa. 36:7-9; Eph. 6:17; Psa. 91:1; 17:8; 57:1; Ruth 2:12.
 3. Christ as Jehovah and also as man is the King who is supplying, caring for, and covering God's people; He is the King for ruling and a man who is like a refuge from the wind and a covering from the tempest, like streams of water in a dry place, and like the shadow of a massive rock in a wasted land—Isa. 32:1-2.
- F. The Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd us and guide us to springs of waters of life—Rev. 7:17a:
1. Shepherding includes feeding; under the shepherding of Christ, "I will lack nothing"—Psa. 23:1.
 2. We can never improve ourselves, and we need a shepherd to feed us all the time; He feeds the lambs with His experience as the Lamb of God, who is on the throne of God in and for the house of God—vv. 2-6; Rev. 22:1.

Message One (continuation)

- G. He will wipe away every tear from our eyes—7:17b:
1. Tears are unavoidable in this age, but our tears are put into God's bottle and recorded in His book—Heb. 5:7; Acts 20:19, 31; Psa. 56:8; cf. Mal. 3:16.
 2. Because the Lamb supplies us with waters of life for our satisfaction, the water of tears is wiped away—Jer. 9:1; 2:13; cf. 15:16; Lam. 3:21-25, 55-56.
 3. Thank God that the days of sorrow and the things of sorrow will not last; the world is passing away, and we are blessed to drink of the flowing Triune God until we become the totality of eternal life, the New Jerusalem—John 4:14b.

Message Two

Christ Having the Keys of Death and Hades

Scripture Reading: Rev. 1:17-18; 10:7; 12:11; 15:1, 8;
Acts 2:24; Phil. 3:10-11

I. “I am the First and the Last and the living One”—Rev. 1:17b-18a:

- A. Christ’s being the First and the Last implies that He will accomplish what He has begun.
- B. The Lord Jesus is not only the First but also the Beginning, and not only the Last but also the End—21:6; 22:13:
 - 1. *The First* indicates that none is before Him, and *the Last* that none is after Him.
 - 2. *The Beginning* indicates that He is the origination of all things, and *the End* that He is the consummation of all things.
 - 3. The indication here is not only that there is nothing before or after the Lord Jesus but also that there is no origination or consummation without Him.
- C. Christ is not only the First and the Last but also the Beginning and the End; this assures us that having started the church life, He will surely accomplish it—cf. 2 Tim. 4:5:
 - 1. The Lord Jesus will never leave His work unfinished—Rev. 10:7; 15:1, 8.
 - 2. All the local churches must believe that the Lord Jesus is the Beginning and the End.
 - 3. He will accomplish what He has begun in His recovery.
- D. The Christ who walks in the midst of the churches, who is the Head of the churches and to whom the churches belong, is the living One; hence, the churches also, as the expression of the Body, should be living, fresh, and strong—2:1.

II. “I became dead, and behold, I am living forever and ever”—1:18a:

- A. The Lord suffered death and lived again—2:8.
- B. Christ entered into death, but death could not hold Him (Acts 2:24), because He is the resurrection (John 11:25).
- C. Resurrection is the lengthening of the Lord’s days; He will exist forever and ever in His resurrection:
 - 1. Jesus Christ today is the living One, the One who is in resurrection.
 - 2. For Christ to dispense life, He must be the living One.
- D. The importance of Christ’s being the living One is that He is living forever and is living in us:

Message Two (continuation)

1. He wants us to leave every kind of death and rise up to be the living church.
2. The more living we are, the more we are the testimony of the living Jesus—Rev. 12:11.

III. “In which also He [Christ] went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison”—1 Pet. 3:19:

- A. *The spirits* here refers not to the disembodied spirits of dead human beings held in Hades but to the angels (angels are spirits—Heb. 1:14) who fell through disobedience at Noah’s time and are imprisoned in pits of gloom, awaiting the judgment of the great day—2 Pet. 2:4-5; Jude 6.
- B. After His death in the flesh, Christ in His living Spirit as His divinity went to the abyss to these rebellious angels to proclaim God’s victory, accomplished through His incarnation in Christ and Christ’s death in the flesh, over Satan’s scheme to derange the divine plan.
- C. *Prison* (1 Pet. 3:19) refers to Tartarus, the deep and gloomy pits, where the fallen angels are kept.

IV. “I saw a star out of heaven fallen to the earth, and to him was given the key of the pit of the abyss”—Rev. 9:1-2; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3:

- A. The star in Revelation 9:1 refers to Satan, who will be cast down from heaven to earth:
 1. The angels are likened to stars—Job 38:7; Rev. 12:4.
 2. Satan, as the archangel, was the Daystar—Isa. 14:12.
- B. “Who will descend into the abyss?” that is, to bring Christ up from the dead”—Rom. 10:7:
 1. In Greek the word rendered as “abyss” is *abyssos*.
 2. This word is used in Luke 8:31 in reference to the dwelling place of the demons—vv. 27, 33, 35, 38.
 3. It also occurs in Revelation 9:1-2 and 11 to denote the place out of which the “locusts,” whose king is Apollyon, will come.
 4. In Revelation 11:7 and 17:8 it signifies the place out of which the beast, which is the Antichrist, will ascend.
 5. In Revelation 20:1 and 3 it specifies the place into which Satan will be cast and imprisoned during the millennium.
 6. In Romans 10:7 *abyss* points to the place Christ visited after His death and before His resurrection, which place, according

Message Two (continuation)

to Acts 2:24 and 27, is Hades, for Acts 2:24 and 27 reveal that Christ went into Hades after He died and rose from that place in His resurrection.

7. According to biblical usage, the word *abyss* always refers to the region of death and of Satan's power of darkness into which Christ after His death descended as into the lower parts of the earth (Eph. 4:9), which He conquered, and from which He ascended in His resurrection.

V. In Revelation 1:18b the Lord Jesus says, "I have the keys of death and of Hades":

- A. Due to the fall and the sin of man, death has come in and is now operating on earth to collect all sinful people and to bring them to Hades, the place where the dead are kept.
- B. In the church life, however, we are no longer subject to death and Hades—Phil. 3:10-11.
- C. Christ abolished death on the cross, and He overcame Hades in His resurrection:
 1. Although death tried its best to hold Christ, it was powerless to do so—Acts 2:24.
 2. Christ is both God and resurrection (John 1:1; 11:25), possessing the indestructible life (Heb. 7:16).
 3. Because He is such an ever-living One, death is not able to hold Him.
 4. Christ delivered Himself to death, but death had no way to detain Him; instead, death was defeated by Him, and He rose up from it.
 5. With Christ, therefore, death has no sting, and Hades has no power.
- D. Because Christ is the One in the church who is the Holder of the keys of death and Hades, death and Hades should not have any power over us.
- E. In the church life the keys of death and Hades are in the Lord's hand.
- F. It is impossible for us to deal with death:
 1. We simply do not have the ability to handle it.
 2. Whenever death enters, many will be overcome by it.
- G. If we give the Lord Jesus the ground, the opportunity, and the free way to move and act among us, both death and Hades will be under His control—Matt. 16:18; Rev. 20:14:

Message Two (continuation)

1. When the Lord Jesus does not have the ground in the church, death immediately becomes prevailing, and Hades becomes powerful to hold the dead ones.
 2. It is crucial for us to see that Christ has the keys, the authority, of death and Hades—John 5:27; 17:2; Rev. 12:10.
 3. Death is subject to Him, and Hades is under His control.
- H. We should praise the Lord that Christ has the keys of death and of Hades—1:18; Heb. 13:15; 1 Pet. 1:7; Rev. 19:5-6.

Message Three

**Christ as the Son of Man Walking
in the Midst of the Golden Lampstands**

Scripture Reading: Rev. 1:9—2:1

- I. In order to see the vision of Christ as the Son of Man walking in the midst of the golden lampstands, we must be the Lord's overcoming messengers, those who are in our spirit on the ground of the church as fellow partakers in the tribulation, kingdom, and endurance in Jesus—Rev. 1:9-13, 20:**
- A. The practice of the church life in the early days was the practice of having one church for one city, one city with only one church; in no city was there more than one church—Acts 8:1; 13:1; Rev. 1:11.
 - B. There are four characteristics of our meeting on the genuine ground of oneness, the place God has chosen—cf. Deut. 12:5:
 - 1. First, the people of God should always be one; there should be no divisions among them—Psa. 133; John 17:11, 21-23; 1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:3.
 - 2. Second, the unique name into which God's people should gather is the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the reality of which name is the Spirit; to be designated by any other name is to be denominated, divided; this is spiritual fornication—Matt. 18:20; 1 Cor. 1:12-13; 12:3b.
 - 3. Third, in the New Testament God's habitation, His dwelling place, is particularly located in our spirit, that is, in our mingled spirit, our human spirit regenerated and indwelt by the divine Spirit; in our meeting for the worship of God, we must exercise our spirit and do everything in the spirit—John 3:6b; Rom. 8:16; 2 Tim. 4:22; Eph. 2:22; John 4:24; Rev. 1:10; 1 Cor. 14:15.
 - 4. Fourth, in our worship of God we must have the genuine application of the cross of Christ, signified by the altar (Deut. 12:5-6, 27), by rejecting the flesh, the self, and the natural life and worshipping God with Christ and Christ alone (Matt. 16:24; Gal. 2:20).
 - C. We are fellow partakers in the tribulation in Jesus:
 - 1. *In Jesus* means that we are suffering and being persecuted as we follow Jesus the Nazarene by the indwelling Spirit of Jesus, the Spirit of a man with abundant strength for suffering—Acts 16:6-7.

Message Three (continuation)

2. As we are suffering today, the Lord Jesus is suffering in us and with us—9:4-5; Heb. 13:13.
 3. We enter into the kingdom through many tribulations—Acts 14:22.
 4. By the power of His resurrection, we are enabled to participate in His sufferings and to live a crucified life in conformity to His death—Phil. 3:10; Col. 1:24; S. S. 2:8-9, 14.
 5. We should not love our soul-life even unto death and should lay down our lives on behalf of the brothers—Rev. 12:11; 1 John 3:16.
- D. We are fellow partakers in the kingdom in Jesus:
1. The kingdom is the church life, in which the faithful believers live for their growth in life and transformation in life—Matt. 16:18-19; Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 3:7; 2 Cor. 3:18.
 2. To practice the kingdom life, we need to pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart—2 Tim. 2:22.
 3. To practice the kingdom life, we need to care for the sinning brothers in order to recover them—Matt. 18:15-22.
- E. We are fellow partakers in the endurance in Jesus:
1. We must resist the wearing-out tactics of Satan—Dan. 7:25.
 2. When we abide in Christ, we keep the word of His endurance and have the endurance to bear suffering and opposition—Rev. 3:10.
 3. We can endure with the endurance of Christ that we have enjoyed and experienced—2 Thes. 3:5.
- II. Christ as the Son of Man is the High Priest, “clothed with a garment reaching to the feet, and girded about at the breasts with a golden girdle” (Rev. 1:13), to cherish the churches in His humanity and nourish them in His divinity:**
- A. The Son of Man is in His humanity, the golden girdle signifies His divinity, and breasts are a sign of love:
1. Christ was girded at the loins, strengthened for the divine work (Exo. 28:4; Dan. 10:5) to produce the churches, but now He is girded about at the breasts, caring for the churches that He has produced by His love.
 2. The golden girdle signifies Christ’s divinity as His divine energy, and the breasts signify that this golden energy is exercised and motivated by and with His love to nourish the churches.

Message Three (continuation)

- B. Christ takes care of the churches in His humanity as the Son of Man to cherish them—Rev. 1:13a:
 - 1. He dresses the lamps of the lampstands to make them proper, cherishing us so that we may be happy, pleasant, and comfortable—Exo. 30:7; cf. Psa. 42:5, 11:
 - a. The Lord’s presence provides an atmosphere of tenderness and warmth to cherish our being, giving us rest, comfort, healing, cleansing, and encouragement.
 - b. We can enjoy the cherishing atmosphere of the Lord’s presence in the church to receive the nourishing supply of life—Eph. 5:29; cf. 1 Tim. 4:6; Eph. 4:11.
 - 2. He trims the wicks of the lamps of the lampstand, cutting off all the negative things that frustrate our shining—Exo. 25:38:
 - a. The charred part of the wick, the snuff, signifies things that are not according to God’s purpose and need to be cut off, such as our flesh, our natural man, our self, and our old creation.
 - b. He trims away all the differences among the churches (the wrongdoings, shortages, failures, and defects) so that they may be the same in essence, appearance, and expression—cf. 1 Cor. 1:10; 2 Cor. 12:18; Phil. 2:2.
- C. Christ takes care of the churches in His divinity with His divine love, signified by the golden girdle on His breasts, to nourish the churches—Rev. 1:13b:
 - 1. He nourishes us with Himself as the all-inclusive Christ in His full ministry of three stages so that we may grow and mature in the divine life to be His overcomers to accomplish His eternal economy.
 - 2. As the walking Christ, He gets to know the condition of each church, and as the speaking Spirit, He trims and fills the lampstands with fresh oil, the supply of the Spirit—2:1, 7.
 - 3. To participate in His love and enjoy His care, we must be in the churches.

III. The heavenly ancientness of the Lord is depicted by His head and hair being as white as white wool, as snow—1:14a; Dan. 7:9; Job 15:10; cf. S. S. 5:11.

Message Three (continuation)

- IV. The Lord's seven eyes are like a flame of fire for watching, observing, searching, judging by enlightening, and infusing— Rev. 1:14b; 5:6; Dan. 10:6:**
- A. Christ's eyes are for God's move and operation on earth, since seven is the number for completion in God's move.
 - B. The Lord's eyes being like a flame of fire is mainly for His judgment—7:9-10; Rev. 2:18; 19:11-12.
- V. The Lord's feet are like shining bronze, as having been fired in a furnace, signifying that His perfect and bright walk qualifies Him to exercise divine judgment—1:15a; Ezek. 1:7; Dan. 10:6.**
- VI. The Lord's voice is like the sound of many waters (Rev. 1:15b; cf. 14:2), which is a tumultuous sound, the sound of the voice of the almighty God (Ezek. 1:24; 43:2) in its seriousness and solemnity (cf. Rev. 10:3).**
- VII. Christ is the Holder of the bright messengers of the churches— 1:16a, 20:**
- A. The messengers are the spiritual ones in the churches, the ones who bear the responsibility of the testimony of Jesus.
 - B. The messengers, who are of the heavenly nature and in a heavenly position like stars, are those who have a fresh message from the Lord to His people—2:1a.
 - C. Because the leading ones are in His right hand, there is no need for them to shrink back; Christ truly takes the responsibility for His testimony.
- VIII. Out of Christ's mouth proceeds a sharp two-edged sword, which is His discerning, judging, and slaying word for dealing with negative persons and things—1:16b; Heb. 4:12; Eph. 6:17.**
- IX. Christ's face shines as the sun shines in its power (Dan. 10:6) for judging enlightenment to bring in the kingdom (Rev. 1:16c; 10:1; Matt. 17:2; cf. Mal. 4:2; Judg. 5:31; Matt. 13:43).**
- X. Christ is the First and the Last, assuring us that He will never leave His work unfinished, and the living One for the churches as the expression of His Body to be living, fresh, and strong— Rev. 1:17-18a.**

Message Three (continuation)

XI. Christ has the keys of death and of Hades—v. 18b:

- A. Death is a collector, and Hades is a keeper, but Christ nullified death on the cross and overcame Hades in His resurrection—2 Tim. 1:10; Acts 2:24.
- B. As long as we give the Lord the ground, the opportunity, and the way to move and act among us by exercising to deny the self, take up the cross, and lose our soul-life, death and Hades will be under His control—Matt. 16:18, 21-26.

Message Four

The Lion-Lamb

Scripture Reading: Rev. 5:5-10

- I. **The book of Revelation is a picture of Jesus Christ; the twenty-two chapters of this book are a single portrait portraying and depicting Jesus—1:1-2, 5.**
- II. **“Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome”— 5:5a:**
 - A. The lion is a symbol of Christ, portraying Him as a strong fighter against the enemy, as revealed in Genesis 49:8-9.
 - B. Christ’s overcoming qualifies Him to open the scroll and its seven seals—Rev. 5:5-10.
 - C. The title *Root of David* signifies that Christ is the source of David; therefore, David, His forefather, called Him “Lord”—Matt. 22:42-45.
 - D. As the Lion of the tribe of Judah, Christ overcame and defeated the rebellious Satan, the enemy of God, and as the redeeming Lamb, He took away the sin of fallen man:
 1. By so doing, He removed the hindrances to the fulfillment of God’s purpose.
 2. The result is that He is worthy to open the scroll concerning God’s economy.
- III. **“I saw in the midst of the throne...a Lamb standing as having just been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth”—Rev. 5:6; 1:4; 3:1:**
 - A. In chapter 5 is the scene in the heavens after Christ ascended there:
 1. He was recommended to the apostle John as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, but He appeared to John as the Lamb.
 2. As the Lion, He is the Fighter against the enemy; as the Lamb, He is the Redeemer for us.
 3. He fought to redeem us, and He won the battle over the enemy and accomplished redemption for us.
 4. To the enemy He is a Lion, and to us He is a Lamb; hence, He is the Lion-Lamb.
 - B. As far as redemption is concerned, Christ sat down at the right hand of God in the heavens after His ascension (Heb. 1:3; 10:12), whereas regarding the carrying out of God’s administration, He is still standing in His ascension.

THE LION-LAMB

Message Four (continuation)

- C. *Having just been slain* indicates that the Lamb had just been slain and also that the scene in the heavens that is depicted in Revelation 5 took place immediately after Christ's ascension into the heavens.
- D. The Lord has seven horns—v. 6b:
 - 1. Horns signify strength in fighting—Deut. 33:17.
 - 2. Christ is the redeeming Lamb, yet He has horns for fighting.
 - 3. He is the fighting Redeemer; His fighting is complete in God's move, as signified by the number seven.
- E. Eyes are for observing and searching:
 - 1. Christ as the redeeming Lamb has seven observing and searching eyes for executing God's judgment upon the universe to fulfill God's eternal purpose, which will consummate in the building up of the New Jerusalem.
 - 2. In Zechariah 3:9 Christ is prophesied as the stone, the topstone (4:7) with seven eyes for God's building.
 - 3. These seven eyes are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth, and they run to and fro through the whole earth—v. 10.
 - 4. According to Greek grammar, the antecedent of *which* is *seven eyes*—Rev. 5:6.
 - 5. The seven Spirits of God refer only to the seven eyes of the Lamb, and not to His seven horns.

IV. "The seven Spirits of God"—1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6b:

- A. Revelation 1:4 speaks of "the seven Spirits who are before His throne":
 - 1. The seven Spirits are undoubtedly the Spirit of God because They are ranked among the Triune God in Revelation 1:4-5.
 - 2. As seven is the number for completion in God's operation, so the seven Spirits must be for God's move on the earth.
 - 3. In essence and existence God's Spirit is one; in the intensified function and work of God's operation, God's Spirit is seven-fold:
 - a. This is similar to the lampstand in Zechariah 4:2.
 - b. In its existence it is one lampstand, but in its function it is seven lamps.
 - 4. At the time that the book of Revelation was written, the church had become degraded:

Message Four (continuation)

- a. The age was dark.
- b. The sevenfold intensified Spirit of God was needed for God's move and work on the earth.
- B. In Matthew 28:19 the sequence of the Triune God is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; in Revelation 1:4-5 the sequence is changed:
 - 1. The seven Spirits of God are listed in the second place instead of the third.
 - 2. This reveals the importance of the intensified function of the sevenfold Spirit of God.
 - 3. This point is confirmed by the repeated emphasis on the Spirit's speaking in 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; 14:13; and 22:17.
- C. At the opening of the other Epistles, only the Father and the Son are mentioned:
 - 1. From the Father and the Son grace and peace are given to the receivers.
 - 2. In Revelation 1:4-5 the Spirit is included; from Him grace and peace are imparted to the churches.
 - 3. This indicates the crucial need of the Spirit to counteract the degradation of the church for God's move.
- D. The seven Spirits are working in the churches, so the churches will surely go forward.
- E. Today we need to see and experience the sevenfold Spirit, the intensified Spirit, the Spirit of recovery—vv. 4-5.
- V. **“They sing a new song, saying: You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for You were slain and have purchased for God by Your blood men out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation”—5:9:**
 - A. The song here is new because the Lamb whom it praises had just been slain.
 - B. In the whole universe no one is worthy to open the mystery of God's economy but Christ, the overcoming Lion and the redeeming Lamb:
 - 1. As the overcoming Lion, He defeated Satan for God.
 - 2. As the redeeming Lamb, He put sin away for us.
 - 3. Christ is the only One qualified to unveil and carry out the mystery of God's economy.

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Message Four (continuation)

4. We need to realize that Christ is worthy to open the seals of the secret of the divine economy; this aspect of the Lord's worthiness is universal and immeasurable.
5. Christ is worthy of our praises; He is worthy even of our lives.

Message Five

The Tree of Life

Scripture Reading: Gen. 2:7-9; Rev. 2:4-5, 7; 22:2, 14;
2 Cor. 4:5; 5:14-15

I. Christ as life is the reality of the tree of life, which is the center of the universe; life is the goal of God's creation (Gen. 1:26-28, 31; 2:7-9) and the goal of God's complete salvation (John 19:34; Rom. 5:10; Rev. 22:1-2, 14, 19):

- A. In the Bible the tree of life always signifies Christ as the embodiment of all the riches of God for our food; God's placing man in front of the tree of life indicates that God wanted man to receive Him as man's life by eating Him organically and by assimilating Him metabolically, that God might become the very constituent of man's being—Col. 2:9; Gen. 2:9; John 1:4; 10:10; 14:6; 15:1; 6:35, 57, 63; 1 Cor. 15:45b.
- B. In Revelation 2:7 the tree of life signifies the crucified (implied in the tree as a piece of wood—1 Pet. 2:24) and resurrected (implied in the life of God—John 11:25) Christ, who today is in the church, the consummation of which is the New Jerusalem, in which the crucified and resurrected Christ will be the tree of life for the nourishment of all God's redeemed people for eternity (Rev. 22:2, 14).

II. We need to see the obstacles that God's life encounters in man:

- A. The first problem that God's life encounters in us is that we do not realize the darkness of our human concepts:
 - 1. We need to see that the only thing that matters in the Christian life is how we take care of the living Christ in us—Gal. 1:16; 2:20; 4:19; Phil. 1:19-21; Eph. 4:13; 2 Cor. 3:18.
 - 2. Being a Christian means not taking anything other than Christ as our aim; many people have difficulty in their spiritual life after they are saved because they do not know the pathway of life, and they do not take Christ as their life.
- B. The second problem that life encounters in us is hypocrisy—Matt. 6:2, 5; 7:5; 23:13-29:
 - 1. A person's spirituality is not determined by outward appearance but by how he takes care of the indwelling Christ.
 - 2. Our natural goodness is false spirituality and is actually a great hindrance to life; the expression of life involves the rejection of our natural disposition and preference, and simply allowing Christ to operate in us and break us.

THE TREE OF LIFE

Message Five (continuation)

3. If we always do things according to our disposition and natural being, the outcome will always be hypocrisy.
- C. The third problem that life encounters in us is rebellion:
 1. Christ operates and moves in us in order to make us clear about His will and requirements for us and about His leading and dealing with us.
 2. However, if we do not obey but go against the feeling within, not accepting His leading or paying the price, this unwillingness and opposition are rebellion.
 3. The sin that we commit the most frequently and most severely is not outward and visible; rather, it is the sin of disobeying the sense of Christ in us; Christ is living in us, and He is constantly giving us an inward sense of life—Rom. 8:6; 1 John 2:27.
- D. The fourth problem that life encounters in us is our natural capability:
 1. Many brothers and sisters truly love the Lord, are zealous for the Lord, and are very godly; nevertheless, their greatest problem is the strength and greatness of their capabilities and abilities; consequently, Christ has no ground or way in them.
 2. We may be capable and talented, but we do not consider these things as sin or filthiness; instead of despising our natural capabilities, we treasure them; if they remain unbroken in us, they will become a problem to Christ's life.
- E. There is one solution to all these obstacles in us—we must pass through the cross and let the cross break us; if we want Christ's life to be unhindered in us, we must experience the breaking of the cross and allow these obstacles to be dealt with and removed—Matt. 16:24-25.

III. In order for us to eat Christ as the tree of life, we must give Him the first place in all things, which is to love Him with the first love, being constrained by His love to regard and take Him as everything in our life—Rev. 2:4-5; Col. 1:18b; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Mark 12:30; Psa. 73:25-26; 80:17-19:

- A. To love the Lord with the first love, to give Him the first place in all things, is to eat Him as the tree of life; eating Christ as the tree of life, that is, enjoying Christ as our life supply, should be the primary matter in the church life—Rev. 2:7; John 6:57, 63.

Message Five (continuation)

- B. The content of the church life depends on the enjoyment of Christ; the more we enjoy Him, the richer the content will be; but to eat Christ as the tree of life, to enjoy Him as our life supply, requires us to love Him with the first love—Rev. 2:4-5.
- C. On the one hand, strictly speaking, to eat of the tree of life in the Paradise of God in Revelation 2:7 refers to the particular enjoyment of Christ as our life supply in the New Jerusalem in the coming millennial kingdom.
- D. On the other hand, we are enjoying the crucified and resurrected Christ as the tree of life, the food supply in our spirit, as a foretaste today in the church; every local church is a paradise of God, where Christ is the tree of life for us to enjoy.
- E. When we give the Lord the first place in everything and maintain our eating of the crucified and resurrected Christ as the tree of life throughout the day, the church, no matter what its condition may be, becomes paradise to us; thus, our feeling and our attitude toward the church depend upon our situation.
- F. “If we do not enjoy Christ as the tree of life in the church life today, surely we will not participate in the tree of life in the kingdom age. According to my experience, today the church in Anaheim is a paradise to me”—*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1994–1997*, vol. 5, “The Vital Groups,” p. 157.
- G. The intrinsic reason for the desolation and degradation of the church is that Christ is not exalted by God’s people; they do not give Him the preeminence, the first place, in everything; whenever God’s people exalt Christ, giving Him the preeminence in every aspect of their living, there is restoration and revival—Psa. 80:17-19.
- H. Christ must have the first place not only in our living but also in all our messages; “we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus’ sake”—2 Cor. 4:5; cf. Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 12:2; Psa. 80:1, 17-19; 110:1-7:
 - 1. In our work we should continually draw people back to the center and let them see that “Christ is Lord”; we must give the Lord Jesus His place on the throne—cf. S. S. 1:1-4; Isa. 6:1, 3; John 12:41.
 - 2. In order to give such a message, we ourselves must be broken by God and allow Christ to have the first place in us; our message is just our person—2 Cor. 4:10-13; John 12:24-26; cf. Luke 12:49-50.

THE TREE OF LIFE

Message Five (continuation)

3. The Lord's "well done" surpasses all the praises of the world; the smiling face of heaven surpasses all the angry faces of the earth; the comfort of heaven surpasses all the tears of the earth—Matt. 25:21, 23; Jer. 1:7-9, 18-19; Dan. 4:26.
- I. In order to give Christ the first place in all things, we must have an affectionate love for Him as our King; then our tongue will be the pen of a ready writer, ready to write our love for Him and our praise to Him with our experience and enjoyment of Him according to all that He is—Psa. 45:1-2; 2 Cor. 3:3, 6.
- J. To love the Lord with the first love, to give Him the first place in all things, is to take Him as our centrality—our holding center—and our universality—our everything; we need to take Him as the center, content, and circumference of our personal universe—Col. 1:17b, 18b.
- K. To love the Lord with the first love, to give Him the first place in all things, is to behold His beauty and to ask for the counsel of Jehovah in every detail of our Christian life and work—Psa. 27:4; Josh. 9:14; Phil. 4:6-7.
- L. To love the Lord with the first love, to give Him the first place in all things, is to be dominated, governed, directed, led, and moved by our mingled spirit, caring for the rest in our spirit by being His captives and by praying, "Lord, conquer me. Make me Your captive. Never let me win. Defeat me all the time"—2 Cor. 2:13-14.
- M. To love the Lord with the first love, to give Him the first place in all things, is to have a clear sky like awesome crystal with God's sapphire throne above it; this means that there is nothing between us and the Lord and that we are filled with the heavenly atmosphere, condition, and situation of His ruling presence—taking Him as our King and allowing Him to rule and reign within us—Ezek. 1:22, 26.
- N. Only Christ the King reigning on the earth with the overcomers as His helpers in the kingship can solve the problems of today's world (Isa. 42:1-4); Christ's name will be remembered in all generations and praised by the nations through His overcoming and co-reigning saints (Psa. 45:16-17; Rev. 2:26).
- O. The overcomers, who are typified by Zion, are the beachhead through which the Lord will return to possess the whole earth—Psa. 48:2; Dan. 2:34-35.

Message Five (continuation)

- P. “Lift up your heads, O gates; / And be lifted up, O long enduring doors; / And the King of glory will come in. / Who is the King of glory? / Jehovah strong and mighty! / Jehovah mighty in battle!... / Who is this King of glory? / Jehovah of hosts— / He is the King of glory!”—Psa. 24:7-8, 10:
1. The gates are of the cities of the nations; the doors are of the houses of the people, and Christ is the Desire of all the nations (Hag. 2:7); all the nations, in a general way, are expecting Christ to come, but Christ will not come quickly according to our human concept (2 Pet. 3:8-9); thus, we need to lift up our heads and await and expect His coming with long endurance.
 2. The King of glory is Jehovah of hosts (that is, of armies), the consummated Triune God embodied in the victorious and overcoming Christ (Luke 21:27; Matt. 25:31); Jehovah is Jesus, and Jesus is the incarnated, crucified, and resurrected Triune God, who is strong in fighting and is victorious (1:21; Rev. 5:5).
 3. He is the One who will come back in resurrection with His overcomers to possess the entire earth as His kingdom—Dan. 2:34-35; 7:13-14; Joel 3:11; Rev. 11:15; 19:13-14.
- Q. Christ as the One on the throne of God has the appearance of sardius (its red color signifying redemption) and jasper (its dark green color signifying life in its richness); thus, when we submit ourselves to Christ’s headship and are under His throne, we are the beneficiaries of all that He is in His judicial redemption and His organic salvation so that we may bear the same appearance of the God of glory in His rich life—4:3; 21:10-11a; Rom. 5:10.
- R. Those who wash their robes in the redeeming blood of Christ have the right to enjoy the tree of life as their eternal portion in the holy city, the Paradise of God, in eternity—Rev. 22:14; 2:7.

Message Six

**Christ, the Eternal King,
Coming to Possess the Earth
and
the Finishing of the Mystery of God**

Scripture Reading: Rev. 10:1-7; 11:15-18

I. Revelation 11:15-18 and 12:10 indicate that we may experience and enjoy Christ as the eternal King:

- A. “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever”—11:15b:
 - 1. At the sounding of the seventh trumpet, not only will the great tribulation end, but also this age will close, the mystery of God will be finished (10:7), and another age, the age of the kingdom, the millennium, will begin.
 - 2. The kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of Christ at His coming back after He executes His judgment upon the nations—Dan. 7:13-14; 2:44-45.
 - 3. Here the Lord’s reigning forever and ever is the Lord’s reigning in the millennial kingdom and in the new heaven and new earth for eternity—Rev. 22:5.
- B. “You, O Jehovah, abide forever; / Your throne is from generation to generation”—Lam. 5:19:
 - 1. God’s eternal being and His throne are higher than His lovingkindness, compassions, and faithfulness—3:22-23.
 - 2. God’s lovingkindness and compassions can fluctuate, but God’s person and His government remain unchanging forever.
 - 3. In the New Jerusalem, God will be fully unveiled in His person as the eternal King and in His government as His eternal, unshakable kingdom (Heb. 12:28; Rev. 22:3), both of which are the unshakable foundation of His dealing with His people.

II. In Revelation 10:1-7 we have a clear vision of Christ coming to take possession of the earth:

- A. In this chapter Christ is “another strong Angel” (v. 1), like the One in 7:2; 8:3; and 18:1.
- B. John saw another Angel “coming down out of heaven”—10:1a:
 - 1. Christ is now coming down out of heaven.
 - 2. This vision is a hint that Christ is still on His way to the earth.
- C. Christ is “clothed with a cloud”—v. 1b:
 - 1. He is not yet “on the cloud,” as in 14:14 and Matthew 24:30; 26:64.

Message Six (continuation)

2. To be “on the cloud” is to come openly, whereas to be “clothed with a cloud” is to come secretly.
 3. Christ will be coming secretly, not openly, until He is seen by all the tribes of the earth, as mentioned in Revelation 1:7 and in Matthew 24:30.
 4. Even at the time of Revelation 10, Christ’s coming is still secret.
 5. He will be wrapped in the cloud until chapter 14, when He will sit on the cloud and His coming will be public.
 6. By this we can see that the general teaching that Christ will come before the great tribulation is inaccurate.
- D. “The rainbow was upon His head”—10:1c:
1. Here the rainbow indicates that Christ in His judgment upon the earth and in His coming to take possession of it will keep the covenant that God made with Noah concerning the earth—Gen. 9:8-17.
 2. It indicates also that Christ is the One who will execute judgment according to the God who sits on the throne with the rainbow around it—Rev. 4:2-3.
 3. The book of Revelation reveals that God will judge the earth and all the inhabitants.
 4. The rainbow around His throne signifies that God is the covenanting God, the faithful God, who will keep His covenant while executing His judgment upon the earth.
 5. He will not judge mankind again with a flood nor destroy all mankind, but will keep a part of mankind to be the nations of the new earth for His glory—21:24, 26.
- E. “His face was like the sun, and His feet like pillars of fire”—10:1d:
1. Near the time of His coming to the people on the earth openly, Christ will be like the sun, not like the morning star, which appears before the darkest time, prior to dawn, to those who love Him and wait for Him.
 2. Fire in verse 1 signifies the holiness of God (Exo. 19:18; Heb. 12:29), according to which Christ will execute His judgment upon the earth.
- F. “He placed His right foot on the sea and the left on the land”—Rev. 10:2b:

Message Six (continuation)

1. Christ's placing His feet on the sea and on the land is His treading on them, and to tread on them is to take possession of them—Deut. 11:24; Josh. 1:3; Psa. 8:6-8.
 2. This indicates that Christ is coming down to take possession of the earth.
 3. Only He is worthy to open the scroll of God's economy, and only He is qualified to possess the earth.
- G. "He cried out with a loud voice just as a lion roars"—Rev. 10:3a:
1. A lion's roaring is likened to a king's wrath—Prov. 19:12; 20:2.
 2. This indicates that Christ, as the King of the earth, is provoked to wrath.

III. "The mystery of God is finished"—Rev. 10:7b:

- A. In the dispensations from Adam to Moses and from Moses to Christ, everything was unveiled, manifested, and there was no mystery.
- B. In the dispensation of the millennial kingdom and in the new heaven and new earth, everything will be unveiled, and there will be no more mystery.
- C. In the dispensation from Christ to the millennial kingdom—the church age, the age of grace—everything is a mystery:
 1. The incarnation of Christ, as the beginning of the dispensation of mystery, is a mystery—1 Tim. 3:16:
 - a. Through the incarnation of Christ, the infinite God was brought into a finite man.
 - b. The entire God, not God the Son only, was incarnated; hence, Christ in incarnation is the entire God manifested in the flesh.
 2. Christ is the mystery of God—Col. 2:2:
 - a. God is a mystery, and Christ, as the embodiment of God to express Him, is the mystery of God.
 - b. As the mystery of God, Christ is the embodiment, definition, and explanation of God; all that God intends to do is related to Christ.
 - c. In Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; that is, the fullness of the Triune God dwells in Christ in a bodily form—v. 9.
 3. The church is the mystery of Christ—Eph. 3:4-6:

Message Six (continuation)

- a. Christ is a mystery, and the church, as the Body of Christ to express Him, is the mystery of Christ.
 - b. This mystery is God's economy, which is to dispense Christ, as the embodiment of God, into God's chosen people in order to produce a Body to be the increase of God's embodiment in Christ, that God may have a corporate expression.
 - c. Christ and the church as one spirit are the great mystery—5:32.
4. The kingdom of the heavens (Matt. 13:11), the gospel (Eph. 6:19), the indwelling of Christ (Col. 1:27), and the coming resurrection and transfiguration of the saints as the end of the dispensation of mystery (1 Cor. 15:51-52) are all mysteries.
 5. At the trumpeting of the seventh trumpet, all these mysteries will be completed; therefore, the mystery of God will be finished.

Message Seven

**The Spirit Speaking to the Churches,
the One Who Has the Key of David,
and the One Who Will Dine with the Overcomers**

Scripture Reading: Rev. 3:7-22

I. In Revelation 2 and 3 Christ is the Spirit who speaks to all the churches:

- A. In Revelation 2 and 3 the speaking of the unlimited, life-releasing, sevenfold intensified, pneumatic Christ to the seven churches at the beginning of each epistle respectively (2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14) becomes the speaking of the sevenfold intensified, all-inclusive life-giving Spirit to all the seven churches at the end of each epistle universally (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22).
- B. Thus, the speaking Christ becomes the speaking Spirit, the Spirit who speaks to all the churches; Christ speaks to a particular local church, and the Spirit speaks to the universal Body.
- C. This not only indicates that the Spirit is the Lord and that the Lord is the Spirit, but it also emphasizes that in the darkness of the church's degradation the Spirit is vitally important, as indicated by the sevenfold intensified Spirit in 1:4.
- D. The seven epistles in Revelation 2 and 3 are words spoken by the Lord Jesus, but today when we read them, the seven Spirits of God speak these words to us in our spirit for the purpose of God's economy; the Lord's word at the beginning of each epistle is to a certain local church, but when the people from all the ages read it, it becomes the Spirit's speaking to all the churches.
- E. The speaking of the Spirit always turns us to the infusing of Christ; the Spirit's speaking is Christ's infusing—cf. 2 Cor. 3:16-18:
 1. Whenever we listen to the speaking of the seven Spirits of God to the churches, we are immediately under a precious, sweet, and dear transfusing, an infusing that changes us, transforms us, makes us the proper material, and builds us into God's building.
 2. Whatever must go to the lake of fire is burned away by the seven lamps (Rev. 4:5), and now we are under the seven eyes (5:6), being infused with all that Christ is in order that we may become a part of the New Jerusalem.
- F. Even though the believers in the churches are in a position to hear the Spirit's speaking and thus can easily have ears to hear, not all of them will closely follow His speaking; hence, there is the call for the overcomers.

Message Seven (continuation)

- G. Those who have an ear to hear what the Spirit says to the churches should hear, and those who hear will be overcomers:
1. The Lord always wants to open our ears to hear His voice so that we may see things according to His economy—Job 33:14-16; Isa. 50:4-5; Exo. 21:6.
 2. The heavy ears need to be circumcised—Jer. 6:10; Acts 7:51.
 3. The sinners' ears need to be cleansed with the redeeming blood and anointed with the Spirit—Lev. 14:14, 17, 28.
 4. To serve the Lord as priests, we must have our ears cleansed with the redeeming blood—Exo. 29:20; Lev. 8:23-24.
 5. As the Spirit is speaking to the churches, we all need an opened, circumcised, cleansed, and anointed ear to hear the Spirit's speaking.
- H. The Spirit's speaking is regarding the seven kinds of churches in church history: the initial church (Ephesus), the suffering church (Smyrna), the worldly church (Pergamos), the apostate church (Thyatira), the reformed church (Sardis), the recovered church (Philadelphia), and the degraded recovered church (Laodicea):
1. The last four kinds of churches will all remain until the Lord comes back.
 2. Undoubtedly, only the recovered church can fulfill God's eternal purpose, and only she is what the Lord is after; we must take the Lord's choice.
 3. Laodicea is a distorted Philadelphia, having lukewarmness and spiritual pride—Rev. 3:14-17:
 - a. Laodicea means to know everything but in reality to be fervent about nothing; in name it has everything, but it cannot sacrifice its life for anything; it remembers its former glory but forgets its present condition before God.
 - b. If we want to continue in the way of Philadelphia, we must remember to humble ourselves before God—cf. vv. 7-22; Isa. 57:15; 66:1-2.
- II. In the recovered church (Philadelphia), Christ is seen as the One upon whose shoulder the key of (the treasury of) the house of God (typified by the house of David for the building up of the kingdom of God) is set—22:22; Rev. 3:7:**
- A. To the recovered church, Christ is the One who has the key of David, the key of the kingdom, with authority to open and to shut; the Lord has given the recovered church in the one accord an opened door that no one can shut—v. 8; cf. Psa. 133.

Message Seven (continuation)

- B. The key of David opens the door for us to be transformed into a white stone and built into the house of God as a pillar with the name of God, the name of the New Jerusalem, and the new name of the Lord—Rev. 2:17; 3:12:
1. For us to be built into God, become a constituent of the New Jerusalem, and become a part of the new Christ is humanly impossible, but the law of the Spirit of life within us contains an element that deals with impossibility—Rom. 8:2; Rev. 3:7-13; cf. Gen. 28:12-19; John 1:51.
 2. Christ has the key to control the door of God's treasury, in which are the riches of God in Christ for our enjoyment; we have experienced both His opening and His shutting up of these riches to us—Eph. 4:30; 1 Thes. 5:17; 1 John 1:7, 9:
 - a. In order to enjoy His riches as the treasure, we need to remain in the touch with the Lord, staying in contact with the Lord according to the sense of life, to be poor in spirit and pure in heart—2 Cor. 2:10; Rom. 8:6; 10:12-13; Col. 3:16; Matt. 5:3, 8.
 - b. In order to enjoy His riches as the treasure, we need to learn to exercise the keys of denying the self, taking up the cross, and losing the soul-life; all of us are "Shebnas," who should be removed and replaced by Christ for Him to be everything in us and to us and do everything through us and for us—Isa. 22:15-19; Matt. 16:24-25.

III. In the degraded recovered church, Christ is seen as the One who will dine with the overcomers and give the overcomers to sit with Him on His throne, as He overcame and sat with His Father on His throne—Rev. 3:20-21:

- A. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, then I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me"—v. 20:
1. The door is not the door of the hearts of individuals but the door of the church; the Lord as the Head of the church is standing outside the degraded church, knocking at her door.
 2. The door is the door of the church, but the door is opened by individual believers; the church in Laodicea has knowledge but does not have the Lord's presence.

Message Seven (continuation)

3. In the eyes of the Lord the degraded recovered church is (1) wretched because she is proud of being rich in the vain knowledge of doctrine but in reality is sorely poor in the experience of the riches of Christ; (2) miserable because she is naked, blind, and full of shame and darkness; (3) poor because she is poor in the experience of Christ and in the spiritual reality of God's economy; (4) blind because she lacks true spiritual insight in the genuine spiritual things; and (5) naked because she does not live by Christ or live Christ as her subjective righteousness, as the second garment in her daily walk—vv. 15-17; cf. Psa. 45:1, 9-14.
 4. The Lord is dealing with the whole church, but the acceptance of the Lord's dealing must be a personal and subjective matter.
 5. To dine with the Lord is not merely to eat one item of food but to partake of the riches of a meal, a feast; this may imply the fulfillment of the type of the children of Israel eating the rich produce of the good land of Canaan—Josh. 5:10-12.
 6. Through our enjoyment of Christ as the tree of life, the hidden manna, and the feast, we will be mingled with Him in our constitution as one entity in order to express Him as the New Jerusalem—Rev. 2:7, 17; 3:20.
- B. "He who overcomes, to him I will give to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat with My Father on His throne"—v. 21:
1. To sit with the Lord on His throne will be a prize to the overcomer, that he may participate in the Lord's authority and be a co-king with Him in ruling over the whole earth in the coming millennial kingdom—Luke 19:11-27; Matt. 25:21, 23.
 2. God's intention is to work Himself into man and to work on man in order that man can be on the throne; His desire is to make us people of the throne—Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21; 22:5; cf. Isa. 14:12-14.
 3. Through His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, the Lord Jesus was brought to the throne; a real man whose name is Jesus is on the throne (Ezek. 1:26); now today the Lord of heaven and earth, the Lord of the universe, is a man; this is why we declare, "Jesus is Lord," and this is why we call, "O Lord Jesus."

THE SPIRIT SPEAKING TO THE CHURCHES

Message Seven (continuation)

4. The Lord Jesus led the way to the throne; He was the Pioneer, the Forerunner (Heb. 6:20; 2:6-9), cutting the path to the throne; He has cut the path and taken the lead so that we may follow (vv. 10-12).
5. Now we are marching to the throne, for God intends to bring us into glory and to set us on the throne; God desires to manifest Himself through man, and He desires to reign, to administer, through man; God's intention is to cast Satan down and to redeem many of those taken captive by Satan and bring them to His throne.
6. We have been called to be sons of God, and we are destined to be kings, but we need God to work in us and on us to qualify us for kingship—Rom. 5:17, 21; cf. Ezek. 1:22, 26; Matt. 8:9.

Message Eight

**The Man-child, the War in Heaven,
and the Overcoming Saints**

Scripture Reading: Rev. 12:5, 7-11

I. “She brought forth a son, a man-child, who is to shepherd all the nations with an iron rod; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne”—Rev. 12:5:

- A. *Brought forth* here signifies resurrection, as in Acts 13:33-34:
 - 1. The man-child is composed of the overcoming saints who have died and been resurrected.
 - 2. This is proved by the words *unto death* in Revelation 12:11.
- B. In the Bible, woman signifies the weaker one and man the stronger one—1 Pet. 3:7:
 - 1. The man-child in Revelation 12 signifies the stronger part of God’s people.
 - 2. That the man-child is to shepherd all the nations with an iron rod indicates that the man-child consists of the overcomers, as mentioned in 2:26-27.
- C. To be caught up is to be raptured:
 - 1. The rapture of the man-child differs from that of the majority of the believers, which is mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 4:17.
 - 2. There, the majority of the believers are raptured to the air, and at the last trumpet (1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thes. 4:16), which is the seventh trumpet (Rev. 11:15).
 - 3. Here, the man-child is raptured to the throne of God, and before the one thousand two hundred and sixty days, which is the time of the great tribulation of three and a half years (forty-two months, 12:14; 13:5; 11:2), beginning from the sixth seal, before the fifth trumpet (9:1).

II. “There was war in heaven”—12:7a:

- A. Immediately after the man-child is raptured to heaven, Michael and his angels begin to war against Satan:
 - 1. This indicates that the man-child, the stronger part of God’s people, is always engaged in fighting God’s enemy, Satan.
 - 2. They have been fighting Satan continually on earth.
 - 3. Heaven is waiting for them to arrive that a war may be waged to cast Satan out of heaven.
 - 4. The Bible reveals the names of two angels—Michael and Gabriel.

Message Eight (continuation)

5. Gabriel is a reporter bringing news to God's people (Dan. 8:16; 9:21-22; Luke 1:19, 26), whereas Michael is a fighter contending for God's people (Dan. 10:13, 21; 11:1; 12:1; Jude 9).
- B. "The dragon warred and his angels" (Rev. 12:7b); these angels must be the fallen angels, who follow Satan to rebel against God (Matt. 25:41).
- C. Satan, the enemy of God, was judged by the Lord Jesus on the cross—John 12:31; 16:11:
 1. After that, the overcoming believers are needed for the carrying out of that judgment, for the executing of that sentence.
 2. The war waged by the overcoming believers against Satan is actually the executing of the Lord's judgment upon him.
 3. Eventually, through their fighting, he is cast out of heaven—Rev. 12:7-9.

III. "Now has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ, for the accuser of our brothers has been cast down, who accuses them before our God day and night. And they overcame him [the devil] because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they loved not their soul-life even unto death"—vv. 10-11:

- A. They overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb:
 1. Satan may accuse us, but we can answer that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from every sin—1 John 1:7.
 2. Any apparent condemnation that does not stop after we have confessed and applied the blood is not God's enlightenment but Satan's accusation—v. 9.
 3. We must not only reject the accusations which are without cause, but we must also reject all the accusations which have cause.
 4. When we commit sin, we do not glorify God, but when we do not trust the precious blood, we dishonor Him all the more—Matt. 26:28; cf. Heb. 10:29.
 5. We must always apply the blood, telling the devil that although we are not perfect, we are under the precious blood—1 Pet. 1:18-19; Acts 20:28.

Message Eight (continuation)

- B. They overcame him because of the word of their testimony:
 - 1. “Testimony” means to tell others what there is in Christ, and the word of testimony is something which must be spoken forth.
 - 2. The overcomers must frequently proclaim the victory of Christ, testifying that the devil has been judged by the Lord—1 John 3:8; Heb. 2:14.
 - 3. Satan does not fear when we try to reason with him, but he does fear when we proclaim the spiritual facts of Christ’s victory—cf. 2 Chron. 20:20-22:
 - a. That the name of Jesus is above every name is a spiritual fact which we must declare in faith, not only to men but also to Satan—Phil. 2:9-11; 1 Cor. 12:3b.
 - b. We must proclaim to Satan and his demons that Jesus is Lord, that the Lord is victorious, and that Satan has been crushed under His feet—Gen. 3:15; John 14:30b; Rom. 16:20.
- C. They loved not their soul-life even unto death:
 - 1. Due to Adam’s fall, Satan joined himself to man’s soul-life—man’s self; to overcome him we must not love our soul-life; rather, we must hate it and deny it—Matt. 16:23-24; Luke 14:26; 9:23:
 - a. Satan wants us to act in our own strength and move in ourselves with the power of our soul, our natural ability.
 - b. Natural ability is the ability which we originally had and which has never been dealt with by the operation of the cross.
 - c. The failure of the church is due to man’s bringing in his natural ability.
 - d. The purpose of the cross is to deal with our natural strength and ability so that we will not dare to move by ourselves, as seen in the cases of Moses and Peter—Acts 7:23-30; Luke 22:32-34; 1 Pet. 5:5-6.
 - e. We should have the attitude that we will not live by our self in any way; we will not value our own ability or have any self-confidence—1 Cor. 2:2-4; Phil. 3:3; cf. Isa. 11:2b.
 - 2. We must be self-sacrificing persons, a drink offering, allowing Christ as the heavenly wine to fill us and cause us to become wine to God—Phil. 2:17; 2 Tim. 4:6; Judg. 9:13:

Message Eight (continuation)

- a. The drink offering typifies Christ as the One poured out as the real wine before God for His satisfaction—Exo. 29:40-41.
- b. The apostle Paul became a drink offering that was poured out upon the sacrifice and service of the saints' faith—Phil. 2:17; 2 Tim. 4:6.
- c. The drink offering typifies not only Christ Himself, but also Christ who saturates us with Himself as the heavenly wine until He and we become one to be poured out for God's enjoyment and satisfaction and for God's building—Matt. 9:17; Phil. 2:17; 2 Tim. 4:6.

Message Nine

The Lamb Whom the Overcoming Firstfruits Follow

Scripture Reading: Rev. 14:1-5;
Gen. 5:22-24; Heb. 11:5-6; Matt. 24:45-51

I. Revelation 14:1-5 reveals Christ as the Lamb whom the overcoming firstfruits follow:

- A. The firstfruits are the living overcomers, who will be the first ripe ones in God's field; hence, they will be reaped before the harvest as firstfruits to God and to the Lamb:
 - 1. The firstfruits will be caught up to the heavenly Mount Zion, to the place of God's dwelling in the third heaven, in order to be in the presence of God and Christ.
 - 2. The meaning of rapture is to be taken into the Lord's presence; in order to be taken into the Lord's presence, we must be in His presence today—Luke 21:36; 2 Cor. 2:10; Hosea 6:2; 2 Tim. 4:8; Acts 26:16.
 - 3. The rapture is for defeating the enemy and satisfying God; the Lord needs the man-child to fight against His enemy, but He needs the firstfruits even more for His satisfaction and enjoyment—Rev. 12:5; 14:1, 4b.
- B. The Bible reveals two aspects of the rapture: the rapture of the overcomers before the great tribulation and the rapture of the majority of the believers at the end of the great tribulation—Matt. 24:40-41; Luke 21:36; Rev. 3:10; 1 Thes. 4:15-17; Rev. 12:5; 14:1.
- C. In Leviticus 23:10 we see a type of the rapture—the type of the crop ripening in the field—Matt. 13:24; Rev. 14:14-16:
 - 1. The reaping of God's crop is what we call the rapture; this reaping indicates that the believers will be taken away from the earth—Matt. 13:30, 39b.
 - 2. Part of the crop—the firstfruits—ripens earlier and is reaped earlier; the rest of the crop—the harvest—ripens later and is reaped later.
 - 3. According to Revelation 14, there are two kinds of rapture—the rapture of the firstfruits and the rapture of the harvest—vv. 4b, 14-16.
- D. The firstfruits are raptured to the house of God in Zion as the fresh enjoyment to God; this is for God's satisfaction—Exo. 23:19a; Lev. 23:10; cf. John 20:17a.
- E. The firstfruits have the name of the Lamb and the name of His Father written on their foreheads; this is the designation of their being one with the Lamb and with the Father and of their belonging to Them—Rev. 14:1b.

Message Nine (continuation)

- F. The firstfruits are the earliest among God's crop to reach maturity—Heb. 5:14—6:1; 1 Cor. 2:6; Eph. 4:13; Phil. 3:15:
 - 1. To be transformed is to be changed in our natural life; to be matured is to be filled with the divine life that changes us—Rom. 12:2; Eph. 3:19b.
 - 2. For God's expression there is the need of maturity; only a mature life can bear God's image and exercise His dominion—Gen. 1:26; Rom. 5:10, 17, 21.

II. In order for us to follow the Lamb and go on to maturity to become the firstfruits, we must walk with God by faith to escape death and obtain the testimony of being well pleasing to God:

- A. The way to escape death and obtain the testimony of being well pleasing to God is to walk with God—Gen. 5:22-24; Heb. 11:5-6:
 - 1. To walk with God is not to override God, not to be presumptuous, not to do things according to our own concept and desire, not to do things according to the current of the age, and not to do anything without God—cf. Psa. 19:12-13; Josh. 9:14b; Luke 24:15.
 - 2. To walk with God is to take Him as our center and everything, to live and do things according to God and with God, according to His revelation and leading, and to do everything with Him—Rom. 8:4, 13-14; Gal. 2:2a; 2 Cor. 5:14-15.
 - 3. To walk with God means that we do not live by what we are or can do but by the immortal life, which is Christ Himself—vv. 4, 9.
 - 4. To walk with God is to have habitual fellowship with God, to be in constant touch with the Lord, and to be under His constant infusion—1 John 1:3; Phil. 4:6; 2 Cor. 3:16, 18.
 - 5. To walk with God is to continually exercise our spirit to enjoy the Blessed Trinity—Jude 14, 19-21.
 - 6. To walk with God implies the denying of our self and everything that is of our self so that we may be one with Him; it implies that we have given ourselves to Him, that we will give in to Him and let Him take the lead—Matt. 16:24-25; 2 Cor. 2:13-14.
- B. To walk with God is to walk by faith—5:7; Heb. 11:5-6:

Message Nine (continuation)

1. Faith means that we believe that God is—vv. 1-2, 6; 2 Cor. 4:13, 18:
 - a. Without faith it is impossible to please God, to make God happy—Heb. 11:6a.
 - b. To believe that God is, is to believe that He is everything to us and that we are nothing—John 8:58; Eccl. 1:2.
 - c. To believe that God is implies that we are not; He must be the only One, the unique One, in everything, and we must be nothing in everything—Gen. 5:24; Heb. 11:5.
 - d. To believe that God is, is to deny our self; in the whole universe He is, and all of us are nothing—Luke 9:23.
 - e. I should not be anything; I should not exist; only He should exist—it is no longer I, but Christ—Gal. 2:20.
 - f. At his conversion the Lord told Saul of Tarsus, “I am Jesus”—Acts 9:5:
 - 1) The Lord was saying, “I am the great I Am; I am the One who is; you must believe that I am and that you are not.”
 - 2) Eventually, Saul was over, and Paul came up—13:9.
 - g. This is faith—“O the joy of having nothing and being nothing, seeing nothing but a living Christ in glory, and being careful for nothing but His interests down here”—J. N. Darby.
2. Faith means that we believe that God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him—Heb. 11:6; Gen. 15:1; Phil. 3:8, 14:
 - a. Enoch’s reward was the highest degree of life—escape from death—Heb. 11:5a; 2 Cor. 5:4; Rom. 8:6, 10-11; 5:17.
 - b. The Lord is a rewarder, and we need to be His seekers—Psa. 27:4, 8; 42:1-2; 43:4; 73:25; 119:2, 10.
- C. Enoch, as the first person to be raptured, is the representative of all the overcomers who will be raptured while they are living—Matt. 24:37-51; Rev. 14:1; Luke 21:34-36:
 1. Our being raptured depends on our being mature in the divine life by our walking with God—Heb. 6:1a.
 2. Enoch continually walked upward with God day and night for three centuries, becoming closer to God and more one with God each day until “he was not, for God took him”—Gen. 5:24; cf. S. S. 8:5a.

Message Nine (continuation)

III. In order for us to follow the Lamb and go on to maturity to become the firstfruits, we must be faithful in service in the Lord's commission to give God as food to the members of His household so that we may win Christ as our reward in the coming kingdom—Matt. 24:45-51:

- A. God has a household and a household administration, an economy, to dispense Himself as food to the members of His household for His expression—1 Tim. 1:4; 3:15; Eph. 2:19.
- B. God has set faithful and prudent slaves over His household as household administrators, stewards, channels of supply, to give His people food at the proper time—Matt. 24:45; 1 Cor. 9:17; Eph. 3:2; 1 Cor. 4:1; 1 Pet. 4:10; Phil. 1:25.
- C. *Give them food* refers to ministering the word of God and Christ as the life supply to the believers in the church; Christ as the life-giving Spirit is our food, embodied and realized in the word of life—John 6:57, 63, 68; Acts 5:20:
 - 1. In order to enjoy the Lord as our spiritual food so that we can feed others, we must pray over and muse on His word, tasting and enjoying it through careful considering—Eph. 6:17-18; Psa. 119:15; Ezek. 3:1-4.
 - 2. We must devote ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the word—Acts 6:4; 2 Cor. 3:6, 8; John 7:37-39; cf. Heb. 7:25; 8:2.
- D. To say in our heart that our Master delays is to love the present evil age and not to love the Lord's appearing—Matt. 24:48; 2 Tim. 4:8, 10; cf. Acts 26:16:
 - 1. We must beware of covetousness, not storing up treasure for ourselves but being rich toward God—Luke 12:15-20; 2 Cor. 6:10; Eph. 3:8.
 - 2. "Remember Lot's wife" is a solemn warning to the world-loving believers—Luke 17:31-32; cf. Rom. 1:21, 25.
 - 3. We must be watchful and beseeching so that the day of the Lord's coming would not come upon us suddenly as a snare—Luke 21:34-36; cf. Matt. 2:3.
- E. To beat our fellow slaves is to mistreat our fellow believers—24:49a; 18:3-7; Acts 9:4:
 - 1. We must not judge and condemn our fellow believers but be kind to them, tenderhearted, forgiving them, even as God in Christ forgave us—Luke 6:37; Eph. 4:31-32.

Message Nine (continuation)

2. We must not revile or criticize our brothers but consider them more excellent than ourselves—1 Cor. 6:10; Phil. 2:2-3, 29:
 - a. To revile a brother is to criticize or demean him harshly with abusive language—cf. Luke 17:2.
 - b. Those who take in reviling words bear the same responsibility as those who speak reviling words; such words damage the Body.
 - c. God will never entrust authority to those who by nature like to criticize others.
3. We must not lord it over our fellow believers but serve them as a slave to feed them with the resurrected Christ as the life-giving Spirit—1 Pet. 5:3; Matt. 20:25-28:
 - a. For one to lord it over the saints means that he replaces the Lord in their lives by making decisions for them or by telling them where to move, thus, insulting the headship and lordship of Christ.
 - b. If we tell others where they should go without encouraging them to pray, seek the Lord's leading, and have the proper fellowship in the Body, this is a great insult to the Lord!
- F. To eat and drink with the drunken is to keep company with worldly people, who are drunk with worldly things—24:49b; cf. Eph. 5:18:
 1. Because of their divine nature and holy standing, the believers should not be yoked together with the unbelievers; this should be applied to all intimate relationships between believers and unbelievers, not only to marriage and business—2 Cor. 6:14; 1 Cor. 15:33; cf. Prov. 13:20.
 2. We must flee youthful lusts and pursue the all-inclusive Christ with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart—2 Tim. 2:22.

Message Ten

**Christ—the Establisher of the Kingdom
and
the Word of God—King of Kings and Lord of Lords**

Scripture Reading: Rev. 20:1-6; 19:11-16, 19-21

I. Christ is the Establisher of the kingdom—Rev. 20:1-6:

- A. After fighting His enemies, Christ will establish the kingdom of God on the earth, the millennial kingdom, and reign with His overcoming believers for a thousand years—v. 2.
- B. The whole earth must be cleared up as a preparation for God’s kingdom to come.
- C. Only one thing remains, and that is Satan, the source of all the problems.
- D. The first item mentioned in Revelation 20, a chapter concerning the millennium, is the binding of Satan:
 - 1. Although the Lord judged Satan on the cross, that judgment has not yet been fully executed.
 - 2. When the Lord returns, He will fully execute the judgment that He accomplished on the cross upon Satan.
 - 3. Satan will be bound and cast into the abyss, being powerless to act or damage anyone; then the earth will become Christ’s kingdom.
- E. According to the prophecies of the Bible, the millennium is in two sections: the upper, heavenly, section and the lower, earthly, section:
 - 1. The upper section of the millennium is called the kingdom of the Father (Matt. 13:43), and the lower section is called the kingdom of the Son of Man (v. 41).
 - 2. The kingdom of the Messiah, or the Messianic kingdom, is another name for the lower section of the millennium.
- F. Revelation 20:4-6 reveals that Christ as the Establisher of the kingdom will reign with the overcoming saints:
 - 1. Because the overcomers bring in the kingdom of Jesus Christ, the Lord will reign for a thousand years, and the overcomers will also reign with Christ for a thousand years.
 - 2. Revelation 20:4 says, “I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them”:
 - a. The word *they* refers to the overcomers.
 - b. They are now sitting upon thrones, and authority to judge has been given to them:

Message Ten (continuation)

- 1) To have the authority to judge means to have the kingdom—cf. Dan. 7:10, 18, 22.
 - 2) Verse 4 in Revelation 20 indicates that the overcomers have received and are enjoying the kingdom.
- G. The overcomers become qualified to reign with Christ by the humanity of Jesus being worked into them—2:26.
- H. The overcomers who will reign with Christ in the millennium will enjoy the best resurrection:
1. Revelation 20:6 speaks of “the first resurrection.”
 2. The first resurrection is also the “out-resurrection,” that is, the extraordinary resurrection for which the apostle Paul sought—Phil. 3:11.
- I. Revelation 20:6a says, “Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection”; this must be the highest blessing—to inherit the kingdom manifested on earth and even to be the kings within it.
- J. “They will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years” (v. 6b); the overcomers will be priests to contact God and co-kings with Christ to reign over the nations in the millennium (2:26-27; 12:5).
- II. In Revelation 19:11-16 and 19-21 Christ is revealed as the Word of God—King of kings and Lord of lords:**
- A. After His wedding feast (v. 7) Christ will come as a fighting General with His bride, the overcoming believers, who are His army, to fight Antichrist; man will even wage war directly against the Lord of lords and the King of kings:
1. Antichrist, the false prophet, and the ten kings and their armies will make war against the Lamb.
 2. This war will be a fighting of the earth against the heavens, of man against God.
 3. Christ’s enemies will become all the more evil, even declaring war against Him.
 4. It is indeed astounding that man could actually declare war on God.
 5. Christ, the Bridegroom, will come with His bride to fight against them.
- B. “Behold, a white horse, and He who sits on it called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war”—v. 11:

CHRIST—THE ESTABLISHER OF THE KINGDOM

Message Ten (continuation)

1. *Faithful and True* will be a title of Christ.
 2. Christ is faithful both to God and to those who believe in Him.
 3. In His faithfulness He defeats and destroys those who oppose God and persecute the believers.
 4. He is also true in carrying out God's economy and in caring for those who believe in Him.
- C. Christ is God's faithful and true Witness who sits on a white horse, judges in righteousness, and makes war:
1. Christ will come back to fight against Satan's power of unrighteousness, which today operates in the world as the mystery of lawlessness and which will issue in Antichrist, the man of lawlessness—2 Thes. 2:3, 7-8.
 2. The entire world is under the satanic power of unrighteousness.
 3. In righteousness Christ will return to make war against the unrighteousness practiced by Antichrist and all his partners.
 4. Christ will not only judge in righteousness but also fight in righteousness; He judges by fighting.
- D. "His name is called the Word of God"—Rev. 19:13b:
1. This indicates that the Lord Himself is the Word of God.
 2. That the Lord's name is called the Word of God means that He is the expression, the testimony, and the speaking of God.
 3. The Word of God is the definition, the explanation, and the expression of God.
 4. In order to know God, we need to read, study, behold, contemplate, and gaze on Christ as the Word of God.
- E. In Revelation 19, as the Word of God, Christ speaks for God by executing God's judgment upon the rebellious people:
1. Even as the Lord fights, He speaks for God and expresses God.
 2. God is not a God of confusion; He is righteous and sovereign; He is also a God of order, and as such, He cannot tolerate disorder and rebellion.
 3. As Christ fights against the enemy, He will speak that God is sovereign, righteous, and orderly.
 4. He will declare that God is the God over everyone and that He does not tolerate rebellion against His authority.
 5. The Warrior is the Word; His fighting is the speaking of God's Word.

Message Ten (continuation)

6. The Lord's fighting in the war at Armageddon will be a powerful speaking:
 - a. It will tell Satan, Antichrist, the false prophet, and the entire universe that God is sovereign and that no one can rebel against Him.
 - b. The God of order will sweep away all rebellion.

III. After Christ takes possession of the earth, He will reign over the earth as the King in the kingdom, ruling over the nations with His overcoming believers—20:4, 6; 2:26-27:

- A. As the coming King, He will be the Head and the center in the upcoming kingdom of God in the millennium.
- B. This will be the fulfillment of Isaiah 32:1, Jeremiah 23:5, and Zechariah 14:9, 17.
- C. Christ has redeemed the earth and all its peoples (Col. 1:20) to be the sphere and components of the kingdom, He has sold all to buy the kingdom (Matt. 13:44), and He has rescued the earth with all its peoples from the usurpation of Satan (Rev. 20:2-3).
- D. He will have the full right to be the King of the restored earth and the restored nations.
- E. In His upcoming reign God's authority and glory will be fully manifested (Matt. 6:13), and the whole earth with its peoples will be brought into righteousness, peace, joy, and the full blessing of God's creation (Isa. 32:1, 16-18; 35:1-2, 5-7).

Message Eleven

The Lamb-God Being on the Throne within the City

Scripture Reading: Rev. 4:2-3; 22:1-5; 21:23; Ezek. 1:22, 26-28

I. The Lamb-God is on the throne within the city—Rev. 4:2-3; 22:1-5; 21:23:

- A. *The throne of God and of the Lamb* shows that there is one throne for both God and the Lamb, indicating that God and the Lamb are one—the Lamb-God, the redeeming God, God the Redeemer—22:1; 4:2-3.
- B. In eternity the very God who sits on the throne is our redeeming God, from whose throne proceeds the river of water of life for our supply and satisfaction.
- C. This depicts how the Triune God—God, the Lamb, and the Spirit, who is symbolized by the water of life—dispenses Himself into His redeemed under His headship (implied in the authority of the throne) for eternity.

II. The throne is the center of our Christian life:

- A. In our daily life, in our family life, in our marriage life, in our business life, and in our church life, the center must be God's throne; everything should be subjected to His headship.
- B. Every morning after rising up, we need to say, "Lord, thank You for a new day for me to take You as my Lord. I subject myself under Your headship for the whole day. Lord, set up Your throne in my life. Set up Your throne in the center of my being. Lord, bring my whole day with my daily life under Your throne"; if we would offer such a prayer to the Triune God every morning, from that moment we would have the living water flowing within us.
- C. In our experience, whenever we subject ourselves to the Triune God, taking Him as our Head, we enjoy a flow within us; the river flows with the God who purposed, with the Lamb who redeemed, and with the Spirit who is now the all-inclusive, processed, life-giving Spirit.
- D. Under His headship we enjoy the flow of life with the supply of life and the way of life; in the flow of life we serve Him, we see Him, and we reign with Him—22:2-5.

III. Ezekiel 1 reveals that the highest point in our spiritual experience is having a clear sky with God's throne above it; to reach this point means that in everything we allow God to have the preeminence and are completely submissive to His authority and administration—vv. 22, 26:

Message Eleven (continuation)

- A. The spiritual sky over the heads of the living creatures is crystal clear, like a great expanse of awesome crystal; furthermore, this sky is expanding and is as stable, unchanging, as crystal—v. 22.
- B. In such a situation, there is nothing between us and God and nothing between us and one another; we have a thorough and clear fellowship with the Lord and with one another.
- C. This requires the maintaining of a pure conscience without any offense toward God and men; the story of our sky is the story of our conscience—Acts 24:16.
- D. The throne is Christ's ruling presence:
 - 1. The Lord's presence is always with His throne; the Lord's throne is both in the third heaven and in our spirit—Rev. 4:2-3; Heb. 4:16; cf. 2 Tim. 4:22:
 - a. The very Christ who is sitting on the throne in heaven (Rom. 8:34) is also now in us (v. 10), that is, in our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22), where the habitation of God is.
 - b. At Bethel, the house of God, the habitation of God, which is the gate of heaven, Christ is the ladder that joins earth to heaven and brings heaven to earth—Gen. 28:12-17; John 1:51.
 - c. Since today our spirit is the place of God's habitation, it is now the gate of heaven, where Christ is the ladder that joins us, the people on earth, to heaven, and brings heaven to us.
 - d. Hence, whenever we turn to our spirit, we enter through the gate of heaven and touch the throne of grace in heaven through Christ as the heavenly ladder.
 - 2. The throne above the crystal clear expanse indicates that whenever we have a clear sky in our Christian life and in our church life, we will be under the ruling of the throne; the authority in the church is the throne above the clear sky.
 - 3. The throne is not only for God to reign over us but also for God to accomplish His eternal purpose; if we have the throne in our spiritual life, God will not only rule over us but will also fulfill His purpose in us, with us, and through us—Rom. 5:17, 21; cf. Matt. 28:18-20.
 - 4. The throne has the appearance of a sapphire stone; a sapphire stone, which is blue in color, signifies the heavenly situation, condition, and atmosphere of Christ's ruling presence—Exo. 24:10.

Message Eleven (continuation)

IV. Ezekiel 1 reveals that the One on the throne looks like a man, yet with Him there is the appearance of the glory of Jehovah, indicating that the One sitting on the throne is both God and man; this is Jesus Christ, the God-man, the mingling of God and man—vv. 26, 28:

- A. Jesus Christ was the complete God, and He was incarnated to be a man; having the nature of man, He lived, died, resurrected, and ascended as a man, and now as the One on the throne, He is still the Son of Man—John 1:1, 14; 6:62; Acts 7:56, 59-60.
- B. Hence, since the ascension of the Lord Jesus there has been a man on the throne; in the millennium and in the new heaven and new earth for eternity, there will still be a man on the throne—Matt. 19:28; Rev. 22:1, 3.
- C. God's mysterious intention in His relationship with man is to mingle Himself with man and thereby to become the same as man and make man the same as He is in life, in nature, and in expression but not in the Godhead; man was created in the image of God to express God and to rule for God—Gen. 1:26-28; cf. Isa. 14:12-14:
 - 1. The One on the throne and the four living creatures both have the appearance of a man, indicating that the four living creatures on earth are the expression of the One on the throne; this expression is the manifestation of God in humanity—Ezek. 1:5; 1 Tim. 3:15-16.
 - 2. God in heaven desires to gain man on earth for His expression by working Himself into man; furthermore, God's intention is to work on man in order that man will be on the throne—Eph. 3:16-21; Rev. 3:21; 5:10; 20:4; 22:5; Matt. 19:28.
 - 3. As the Pioneer, the Forerunner, the Lord Jesus cut the way to enter into glory and sit on the throne, and we, His many brothers, are now following Him—Heb. 2:6-12; Rev. 3:21; 22:5.

V. Ezekiel 1 says that the appearance of the man on the throne has two aspects: from His loins upward He has the appearance of electrum, and from His loins downward, the appearance of fire—v. 27:

- A. The electrum is a glowing metal, a mixture of gold and silver; gold signifies the nature of God, and silver signifies redemption; thus, the electrum, composed of the elements of gold and silver, signifies the Lamb-God, the redeeming God—v. 4.

Message Eleven (continuation)

- B. The upper part of a man, from his loins to his head, is the part of feeling, of sensation, signifying his nature and disposition; according to His nature and disposition the Lord Jesus on the throne has the appearance of electrum, signifying the redeeming God.
 - C. The lower part of a man's body is for moving; the appearance of fire from the loins downward signifies the Lord's appearance in His move with God's burning and sanctifying power.
 - D. When the Lord comes to us, He comes as fire to enlighten, search, and burn; then through the fire He becomes the glowing electrum to us, and we are filled with the radiant expression of the redeeming God.
 - E. After all the negative things have been burned out of us by the Lord as the consuming fire (Heb. 12:29), what will remain in us is the electrum, the redeeming God.
- VI. Ezekiel 1 says that there is a rainbow as the brightness around the man who is sitting on the throne, signifying the splendor and glory around the Lord on the throne—v. 28; Rev. 4:3:**
- A. At Noah's time the rainbow in the cloud was a sign of God's faithfulness in keeping His covenant with man and every living creature, signifying that He would never again destroy mankind with a flood—Gen. 9:13.
 - B. A rainbow can be considered as being produced from three basic colors—red, yellow, and blue: red, the color of fire, refers to God's holiness; yellow, the color of electrum, signifies God's glory; and blue, the color of the sapphire throne, signifies God's righteousness—Psa. 89:14:
 1. God's righteousness, holiness, and glory are three divine attributes that keep sinners away from God—Gen. 3:24.
 2. However, Christ came, died on the cross to satisfy the requirements of God's righteousness, holiness, and glory, and was resurrected, and He is now our righteousness, holiness, and glory—1 Cor. 1:30.
 3. Because we, the believers, are now in Christ, in the sight of God we bear the appearance of Christ as righteousness, holiness, and glory; this is the appearance of a rainbow as a testimony of God's faithfulness in sparing us and saving us, the fallen ones, from His judgment on sinners.

Message Eleven (continuation)

4. In the New Jerusalem, a city whose foundations have the appearance of a rainbow (Rev. 21:19-20), we, the aggregate of the saved ones, will be a rainbow reflecting the brightness of God's righteousness, holiness, and glory and testifying forever that God is righteous and faithful.
5. As portrayed in Ezekiel 1, the Christian life and the church life will consummate in such a rainbow; at that point God's eternal plan will have been accomplished.

Message Twelve

**Christ Coming with Reward and Punishment,
a Lamp Shining in a Dark Place,
and Christ Appearing Privately to His Overcomers
as the Morning Star**

Scripture Reading: Rev. 22:12, 16; 2 Pet. 1:19

I. “Behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me to render to each one as his work is”—Rev. 22:12:

- A. The Lord repeats His warning, “I come quickly” (3:11; 22:7), so that we will consider His reward, to be rendered at His coming back.
- B. At the Lord’s coming, this reward will be rendered to each one of the believers, after their rapture, at the judgment seat of Christ—2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 4:5; Rom. 14:10; Matt. 16:27.
- C. The Greek word translated “reward” in Revelation 22:12 means “wages.”
- D. When the Lord Jesus comes again to possess the kingdom, He will reward or punish all those who belong to Him:
 - 1. Some will receive His punishment because the Lord’s word “My reward is with Me” implies that there is not only reward but also punishment.
 - 2. In keeping with this, in Revelation 22:7 the Lord declared, “I come quickly. Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this scroll.”
 - 3. He who keeps the words of the prophecy of Revelation is blessed because he will be rewarded.
 - 4. The reward we receive on that day has much to do with our attitude today:
 - a. First Corinthians 3:8 says that we will be rewarded according to our labor.
 - b. In Matthew 16:27 the Lord Jesus said that at His coming back He will reward us according to our doings.
- E. Eternal salvation has nothing to do with our works, but the kingdom reward will be altogether according to our works that we have done by the Lord’s life after being saved.
- F. Every saved one will be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ so that each one may receive the things done through the body according to what he has practiced, whether good or bad; those who practice good will receive a reward, and those who practice evil will receive punishment—2 Cor. 5:10.

Message Twelve (continuation)

- G. We will stand before the judgment seat and give the Lord an account concerning all our past living, walk, and conduct; it is because of this that even the apostle Paul says that he dared not examine himself, but He who examined him was the Lord—1 Cor. 4:3-4.
 - H. The way we serve and work for the Lord after we are saved is a great matter.
 - I. Paul says, “If anyone’s work which he has built upon the foundation remains, he will receive a reward”—3:14.
 - J. When the Lord comes back, there will be a judgment; in that judgment He will determine whether we will receive a reward or punishment.
 - K. The reward will be decided by the judgment seat of Christ: “We must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done through the body according to what he has practiced, whether good or bad”—2 Cor. 5:10.
- II. “We have the prophetic word made more firm, to which you do well to give heed as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts”—2 Pet. 1:19:**
- A. Peter likens the word of prophecy in the Scripture to a lamp shining in a dark place:
 - 1. This indicates that this age is a dark place in the dark night (Rom. 13:12), and all the people of this world are moving and acting in darkness.
 - 2. The prophetic word of the Scripture, as the shining lamp to the believers, conveys spiritual light that shines in their darkness (not merely knowledge in letters for their mental apprehension), guiding them to enter into a bright day, even to pass through the dark night until the day of the Lord’s appearing dawns.
 - 3. Before the Lord as the sunlight appears, we need this word as light to shine over our footsteps.
 - B. *The day dawns* (2 Pet. 1:19) is a metaphor illustrating a coming time that will be full of light, as a bright day dawning, with the morning star rising, before its dawning, in the hearts of the believers, who are illuminated and enlightened by giving heed to the shining word of prophecy in the Scripture:

Message Twelve (continuation)

1. In the time of apostasy the believers do well to give heed in this matter, that the prophetic word, as a lamp, may shine through the darkness of apostasy until such a day dawns upon them.
2. This will cause and encourage them to earnestly seek the Lord's presence and be watchful so that they will not miss the Lord in the secret part of His coming (parousia), when He will come as a thief.
3. This metaphor must allude to the coming age, the age of the kingdom, as a day that will dawn at the appearing (the coming) of the Lord (v. 16) as the Sun of righteousness (Mal. 4:2), whose light will shine to break through the gloom of the dark night of this age.
4. Preceding this, in the darkest hour of the night the Lord will appear as the morning star (Rev. 2:28; 22:16) to those who are watchful and looking for His dear appearing (2 Tim. 4:8).
5. They have been enlightened by the shining of the prophetic word, which is able to lead them to the dawning day.
6. If we give heed to the word in the Bible, which shines as a lamp in a dark place, we will have His rising in our hearts to shine in the darkness of apostasy where we are today, before His actual appearing as the morning star.

III. "I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright morning star"—Rev. 22:16b:

- A. Christ, who is signified by the heavenly luminaries, the lights, is the bright morning star—v. 16b.
- B. At His coming back Christ will be the rising sun to His people generally (Mal. 4:2) but the morning star to His watchful lovers particularly.
- C. The latter will be a reward to the overcomers: "I will give the morning star"—Rev. 2:28.
- D. Christ as the Root and Offspring of David is related to Israel and the kingdom, whereas His being the bright morning star is related to the church and the rapture.
- E. The morning star appears before the darkest hour, prior to the dawn.
- F. The great tribulation will be this darkest time, after which the day of the kingdom will dawn; this indicates that Christ will appear as the bright morning star in the darkest time, prior to the close of this age.

CHRIST COMING WITH REWARD AND PUNISHMENT

Message Twelve (continuation)

- G. In the kingdom the Lord will appear publicly to His people as the sun, but before the great tribulation He will appear privately to His overcomers as the morning star to rapture them.
- H. The bright morning star will appear only to the watchful ones.
- I. The slumbering believers will not see the morning star; they will see Christ only as the sun in a general way.
- J. The watchful ones will have the priority to taste the freshness of His presence at His coming back after a long absence.
- K. The entire Bible concludes with the desire for the Lord's coming expressed as a prayer.
- L. John's prayer in Revelation 22:20 is the last prayer in the Bible.
- M. "He who testifies these things says, Yes, I come quickly. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!"—v. 20.