

# The Crystallization BEYOND THE EMPTY TOMB

In her pursuit of Christ, Mary Magdalene went beyond the empty tomb (John 20:1-22), *and so should we*. Early on the day of the Lord's resurrection, Mary came to the tomb, "saw the stone taken away," ran to Peter and John, and gave them a report. Peter and John ran to the tomb, entered it, and beheld the evidence of resurrection—the linen cloths and the handkerchief. They saw, believed, and went away, having faith in the objective fact of Christ's resurrection. Like many orthodox believers today, they were satisfied with the objective truth, but, unlike Mary, they did not go beyond the empty tomb to seek the resurrected Christ Himself and experience Him. Mary's earnest seeking was rewarded not only with a manifestation of the resurrected Christ but also with a revelation of the significance of His resurrection: "Go to My brothers and say to them, I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God."

Through Christ's resurrection His disciples were regenerated with the divine life, the life of the Triune God, which had been released by His death. In resurrection the eternal only begotten Son of God became "the Firstborn among many brothers." These many brothers are the "many sons" whom the Father is leading into glory. Before His resurrection Christ, the only begotten Son, was the Father's individual expression. Through His resurrection His brothers, the many sons as the multiplication of the Son in the divine life, were brought forth to be the corporate expression of the Father in the Son. Now the Lord can speak of His Father and our Father. By His life-imparting resurrection He dispensed the divine life and nature into us, imparting to us the life and nature of the Father. Because the firstborn Son and the many sons are the same in life and nature, God is the Father not only of the Lord Himself but also of His many brothers, who are "all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26).

Faith in the objective fact of Christ's resurrection and a personal experience of Christ in resurrection are both necessary, but they are not sufficient. The personal experience of the resurrected Christ should lead to the corporate experience of the pneumatic Christ, Christ as the life-giving Spirit in resurrection (1 Cor. 15:45b). On the day of His resurrection, the resurrected Christ, who appeared with a body

of flesh and bones, breathed Himself into His disciples as pneuma, as Spirit, as breath: "He breathed into them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit." This breathing was an issue of His second "becoming." Through incarnation Christ, as the eternal Word, became flesh—the "becoming" for redemption. Through resurrection Christ, as the last Adam in the flesh, became the life-giving Spirit—the "becoming" for life-imparting. If we have received the pneumatic Christ as the holy breath, we may be assured that Christ now dwells within us.

Many fail to progress beyond the empty tomb because they lack a fuller knowledge both of the revelation regarding the Triune God in His essence, economy, process, and dispensing and of the scriptural truth concerning the experience of

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the Triune God. Others fail to progress because their "guides" oppose this experience, dismissing it as mindless mysticism. They have been hindered and even condemned for their earnest

seeking by those who prefer systems and theologies and who, in so doing, deviate from the pure word of the Bible. As believers, we do not have to be satisfied with just facts and doctrines; we can be ushered by God into a personal experience of the resurrected Christ. However, if we fail to see the organic aspects of the Triune God, we may neglect our fundamental relationship in life with the Triune God. If we focus on the essential Trinity and ignore the economical Trinity, we will miss the further steps of Christ's process.

Beginning with faith in the fact of Christ's resurrection, we need to advance to a personal experience of the resurrected Christ and to a corporate experience of the pneumatic Christ. Regrettably, most Christians have failed to make this advance. Those who are fixated on the crucifixion and stay at "the foot of the cross" may not have a proper faith in the objective truth of Christ's resurrection. Unfortunately, even many believers who have this faith do not go beyond the empty tomb. Believers in Christ, however, can advance to know the Christ who, as the embodiment of the processed and consummated Triune God, breathes Himself into us to be our life and our everything for the fulfillment of God's goal—the producing and building up of the Body of Christ, which will consummate in the New Jerusalem.