

# Annotations on Key Verses from the Book of Genesis: (Part One — Chapters 1 through 25)

by Ed Marks

The entire Bible speaks of God's eternal economy to dispense Himself as the divine life into man so that man would grow with the growth of God for God's corporate expression to become God's building, which is the church as the Body of Christ consummating in the New Jerusalem (1 Tim. 1:3-4; Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:16; Rev. 21:2, 9-10). The goal of God's economy is God's building. The entire Bible can be considered a building manual spoken forth by God as the divine Architect (Heb. 11:10). Genesis 1 and 2 give us the blueprint of God's building; Revelation 21 and 22 reveal the finished product of His building; and Genesis 3 through Revelation 20 show us the building work of God to build Himself into man for His expression.

**Gen. 1:26:** "And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

Genesis 1:26 reveals God's eternal purpose to build Himself into man by creating man in His image to express Him and with His dominion to represent Him. Since Christ is the image of the invisible God (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15), man was created according to Christ with the intention of Christ's being dispensed into man, built into man, and being expressed through man. Just as a glove is created in the image of a hand and according to the likeness of a hand in order to contain a hand, man was created in the image and likeness of God according to Christ in order to contain Christ as the embodiment of God. Man is thus a vessel of mercy, honor, and glory to contain Christ as the God of mercy, honor, and glory to be the treasure in his earthen vessel for Christ's expression (Rom. 9:21, 23; 2 Cor. 4:7). By having God in Christ as his life and content, man can also represent God with His

dominion to reign in life over Satan, sin, and death. We can reign in life by receiving Christ as the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness (Rom. 5:17). Christ is the abundance of the gift of the righteousness of God to us for our judicial redemption, and Christ is the abundance of grace to us for our organic salvation. Grace is God in Christ as the Spirit freely dispensed into us for our enjoyment to do everything in us, through us, and for us so that we can be conformed to the image of Christ and be saved in the life of Christ to be enthroned as co-king with Christ to reign in life with God's dominion over all things (8:29; Rev. 5:10; 22:5).

**Gen. 2:22:** "Jehovah God built the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man."

Whereas Genesis 1 reveals God's eternal purpose, Genesis 2 reveals the way God fulfills His purpose. Genesis 2:7 shows that God created man as a vessel with a spirit (the breath of life, cf. Prov. 20:27; Zech. 12:1) to contact Him and receive Him. Then He placed man before the tree of life (signifying God in Christ as life) so that man would receive Christ by eating Him as spiritual food. Thus, Christ can flow Himself into and out of the believers as the living water of life so that they may be transformed into precious materials (gold, bdellium, and onyx stone) for God's building of the corporate Eve, the church that consummates in the New Jerusalem (John 7:37-39; Gen. 2:7-12, 22; Rev. 21:18-21).

Adam is a type of Christ, and Eve is a type of the church. Just as Eve came out of Adam's side and was bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh, so the church as the bride of Christ comes out of Christ and is composed purely of the element of Christ (Gen. 2:23; cf. Eph. 5:28-30). Anything that does not come out of Christ is not the

church. Just as Adam was put to sleep by God, Christ was put to sleep by God through Christ's death on the cross (the reality of death is sleep, John 11:11; 1 Thes. 4:13). Out of Adam's side came a rib, which God built into a woman to be Adam's counterpart. Out of Christ's side came forth blood and water, which God uses to build the church to be Christ's counterpart (John 19:34). Blood and water is a "double cure" for both the guilt and the power of sin (*Hymns*, #1058). Christ's blood is for cleansing us from the guilt of sin, and the flowing water of the Spirit of life saves us from the power of sin. Because sin had not yet entered into man, there was no need of the blood for man's redemption at the time of Eve's being built; thus, there was only the need of the one substance of Adam's rib to build a woman. After sin entered into man, however, there is the need for both blood and water. The blood redeems man and brings man back to God's original intention—to build Himself into man by Himself as the flowing water of resurrection life (signified by the rib) so that He can gain His bride, His corporate Eve, His glorious church, for His corporate expression, His eternal glory. Christ as the Redeemer loved the church and gave Himself up for her by shedding His blood for her redemption. Now Christ as the life-giving Spirit is sanctifying the church, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word so that she is not only separated unto God but also saturated with God. This sanctifying work culminates in the church's being presented to Christ as His glorious bride, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Eph. 5:25-27).

**Gen. 3:15: "I will put enmity / Between you and the woman / And between your seed and her seed; / He will bruise you on the head, / But you will bruise him on the heel."**

The seed of the woman has both an individual and corporate aspect. The individual seed of the woman is the incarnated God born of the virgin Mary, the Word become flesh, the Lord Jesus. He came to undo the works of the devil, the serpent, and He bruised the head of the serpent by destroying him on the cross (1 John 3:8; Heb. 2:14). The coming of this God-man, devil-destroying seed was prophesied in Isaiah 7:14 and fulfilled in Matthew 1:23 with the incarnation of the Lord Jesus as Emmanuel—God with us. Galatians 4:4 and 5 confirm this by saying that God sent forth His Son, who was born of a woman (the seed of a woman), so that we might be redeemed to receive the sonship, becoming the sons of God. The corporate aspect of the seed of the woman is seen in Revelation 12:1-5 with the universal bright woman and the birth of her seed, the birth of the man-child. This universal bright woman represents all the people of God throughout the ages, and her seed (the man-child), represents the overcomers who are born, brought forth, out of her to be caught up to God and to His throne. They are

the earlier raptured ones who pay the price in this age to overcome the devil, the accuser, by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of their testimony, and through their not loving their soul-life even unto death (v. 11). The Lord Jesus as the individual seed of the woman is the leading Overcomer (3:21), and the overcomers as the corporate seed among God's people are the following overcomers. The Lord as the individual seed is the Head, center, reality, and life of the overcomers to make them His corporate seed for the ultimate destruction of His enemy.

Furthermore, through His death on the cross as the seed of the woman, the Lord Jesus opened the way to the tree of life (the way to Christ in the Holy of Holies), which was once closed to fallen man (Heb. 10:20). After man's fall, Genesis 3:24 says that God drove the man out of the garden and "placed the cherubim and a flaming sword which turned in every direction to guard the way to the tree of life." If God had not closed the way to the tree of life, fallen man would have partaken of it and therefore would have lived forever in his sinful nature. Thus, God closed the way to the tree of life until Christ as the seed of the woman would come and die to satisfy the demands of God's righteousness (signified by the sword, cf. Lam. 3:42-43; Rom. 2:5), God's holiness (signified by the flame, Deut. 4:24; 9:3; Heb. 12:29), and God's glory (signified by the cherubim, cf. Ezek. 9:3; 10:4; Heb. 9:5). Once Christ as the seed of the woman died on the cross, the way to the tree of life was opened. Now man can be blessed to have his robes, his conduct, washed in the blood of the Lamb so that he can partake of Christ as the tree of life (Rev. 22:14). Now the divine attributes of God's righteousness, holiness, and glory—instead of barring the way to the tree of life—are being dispensed into man so that God's divine attributes can become man's human virtues for the full expression of God and the display of the multifarious wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 3:10-11).

**Gen. 4:26: "To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time men began to call upon the name of Jehovah."**

This is the culminating verse of Genesis 4, a chapter that speaks of Cain killing Abel and of Cain doing something additionally terrible. Verse 16 says, "Cain went forth from the presence of Jehovah and dwelt in the land of Nod, east of Eden." It is a terrible thing to leave the presence of Jehovah. When we have the Lord's presence, we have everything. When we lose the Lord's presence, we lose everything. The word *Nod* means "wandering." The Lord's presence is our compass; once we lose the Lord's presence, we are doomed to a life of meaningless wandering. The converse of this is seen with Enosh, who enjoyed the Lord's presence by calling on the name of Jehovah. The name *Enosh* means "frail, mortal man." When man began to realize that he was frail, not strong,

he began to call on the name of Jehovah, the all-powerful One. When man began to realize that he was mortal, he began to call on the name of Jehovah, the immortal One. Jehovah in the New Testament is Jesus, the incarnated and resurrected Savior. "No one can say, Jesus is Lord! [or, Lord Jesus!] except in the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:3). When we call "O Lord Jesus," we are in the Holy Spirit, who is the person and presence of the Lord. When we call upon His name, we enjoy "seasons of refreshing...from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:20). Romans 10:12 and 13 say that the Lord is "rich to all who call upon Him," and "whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." The Hebrew word translated "call" means to "call out to, to cry unto," that is, to cry out audibly. When we call on the name throughout our daily life out of a pure heart in order to touch Him by saying "Lord Jesus," we enjoy the unsearchable riches of Christ. Furthermore, we are saved, not only from eternal perdition, as our initial salvation, but also from all the negative things of the enemy, as our daily salvation. We need to flee youthful lusts and pursue Christ as righteousness, faith, love, and peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart (2 Tim. 2:22). Our fleeing and our pursuing of Christ are simultaneous as we are "with those" who call on the Lord with a single heart of having Christ as their unique goal and aim. Thus, calling on the Lord is also a corporate matter for our day-by-day salvation from the lusts of the flesh so that we may enjoy the unsearchably rich Christ. The final prayer in the Bible is a prayer of calling upon the name of the Lord. When the Lord declares that He will come quickly, John responds both by praying back the Lord's word to Him and by calling upon His name. In these last days, his prayer and ours should be "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:20).

**Gen. 5:24: "Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him."**

Enoch was the first person raptured in the Bible. He walked with God for three hundred years (v. 22); daily and continually he was in the closest communion and oneness with God, until God took him and "he was not." Hebrews 11 says that before Enoch was translated so that he should not see death, he obtained the testimony that he had been well pleasing to God, and to be well pleasing to God is to believe that "He is" and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (vv. 5-6). To walk with God is to walk by faith, and to walk by faith is to believe that "God is" and "we are not." This means that we believe that God is everything and we are nothing. He is everything to us in all things, and we account ourselves as nothing in all things. To walk with God means that we are not presumptuous but that we do everything according to His revelation and leading and not according to our own

concept and desire. To walk with God means that we take Him as our center and our everything. To walk with God is to live in the real, constant, and conscious companionship with God, enjoying the presence of the Lord as grace with our spirit in a daily and continual way (2 Tim. 4:22; Phil. 4:23).

The results of walking with God are manifold. The first of these is great and abounding joy, the joy of the Lord. "In Your presence is fullness of joy" (Psa. 16:11). Walking with God also gives us a great sense of security and abiding peace, because we are continually experiencing Him as Emmanuel, "God with us" (Matt. 1:23). If God is with us and for us, who can be against us (Rom. 8:31)? In our identification with Christ we can say, "I have set Jehovah before Me continually; / Because He is at My right hand, I shall not be shaken" (Psa. 16:8). Another result of walking with God is spiritual enlightenment. Because Enoch took the Lord as his center and everything, he was enlightened to see the Lord's second coming with myriads of His saints in order to execute judgment on the ungodly (Jude 14-15). When we walk with God by

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doing everything according to His revelation and leading in the closest and most intimate fellowship with Him, He becomes the glory and beauty of our transformed character (Exo. 28:2; 2 Cor. 3:18). Our walking with God results in our supreme usefulness to Him, because we bring the presence of God with us to all whom we contact in order to infuse God into them. Because God is with us in our spirit, in our mind, in our emotion, and in our will to be magnified in our body (Phil. 1:20), the light of His presence illumines others through us, the beauty of His person cheers others by us, and the nobility of His presence elevates all those who come into contact with Him in us. By walking with God, we live a life that is well pleasing to God (Heb. 11:5), and we enjoy God's eternal companionship (cf. Exo. 33:11, 14; Ezek. 48:35).

**Gen. 6:8: "But Noah found favor [grace] in the sight of Jehovah."**

At Noah's time "the wickedness of man was great in the earth...and...every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (v. 5). Thus, God decided

to judge fallen mankind, but Noah found grace in the sight of Jehovah (vv. 6-8). When Satan has done his best to damage the situation, there have always been some who found grace in the eyes of God to become ones who turned the age. The main purpose of the record of Genesis is not to show the fall, but to show how much God's grace can do for fallen people. In the New Testament age grace is God Himself, the presence of God, enjoyed by us to be everything to us and to do everything in us, through us, and for us (John 1:14, 16-17; Rev. 22:21). We can daily experience grace in the following ways. First, the enjoyment of the Lord as grace is with those who love Him (Eph. 6:24; John 21:15-17). Second, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ as the bountiful supply of the Triune God is enjoyed by us through the exercise of our human spirit (Heb. 10:29; Gal. 6:18; Phil. 4:23; Philem. 25; 2 Tim. 4:22). Third, God's word is the word of grace (Acts 20:32; Col. 3:16; cf. Jer. 15:16). Fourth, we experience the Christ as the grace of life in meeting with the saints on the ground of oneness (Psa. 133:3; 1 Pet. 3:7; Acts 4:33; 11:23). Fifth, we can experience the Lord as our increasing and all-sufficient grace in the midst of sufferings and trials (2 Cor. 12:9). Sixth, we need to labor for the Lord in the power of His grace (1 Cor. 15:10, 58; 3:12). Seventh, we need to be good stewards of the varied grace of God (1 Pet. 4:10; Eph. 3:2; 4:29; 2 Cor. 1:15). Eighth, by the power of grace, the strength of grace, and the life of grace, we can be right with God and with one another; grace produces righteousness (Heb. 11:7; Rom. 5:17, 21).

Noah's work was a work that changed the age. God gave Noah an all-inclusive revelation, a further revelation, the revelation to build the ark, which was the way that God would terminate the corrupted generation and bring in a new age. The ark is a type of Christ (1 Pet. 3:20-21)—not only the individual Christ but also the corporate Christ, the church, which is the Body of Christ and the new man to consummate in the New Jerusalem (Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 2:15-16; Col. 3:10-11; Rev. 21:2). The reality of the building of the ark in the New Testament age is the working of Christ into people to build them together in Christ so that they may become God's manifestation in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:15-16). The crucial matter in our work is to minister the building God into others so that the Triune God may build Himself into their being (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:21-22; 3:16-17; 1 Cor. 14:4). We need to pray that the Lord will teach us to work in this way (2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Cor. 3:9-10, 12).

**Gen. 7:1: "Then Jehovah said to Noah, Come into the ark, you and all your household, for you alone I have seen to be righteous before Me in this generation."**

The ark is a type of Christ as the embodiment of the Triune God (Col. 2:9), and the three stories of the ark

signify the Triune God. The Spirit (signified by the lower story) brings us to the Son, and the Son brings us to the Father; when we come to the Father, we are in the "third story" (Luke 15:4-10, 18-23; Eph. 2:18). This reality is seen in 1 John, which unveils that the fellowship of the divine life is the fellowship of the Spirit, which brings us into the enjoyment of God the Son as grace and truth and ultimately to the source of grace and truth, which is God the Father as love and light (John 1:14, 16-17; 1 John 1:3, 5; 4:8, 16). We need to enter into the deepest and highest intimacy with our Triune God so that He can bring us to the "third story" to show us His mysteries, secrets, and hidden treasures (1 Cor. 2:9; 2 Cor. 2:10; Exo. 33:11). Noah's entering into the ark is a type of our entering into Christ through believing and being baptized into Him (John 3:16; Gal. 3:27). God's shutting Noah in the ark (Gen. 7:16) signifies that once we believe into the Lord Jesus, we are "shut in" by God and are now permanently in Christ with no way to get out of Him (cf. John 10:28-29; Psa. 139:7-12). The ark was made of gopher wood, a kind of cypress, a resinous wood that can withstand the attack of water; this is a figure of the crucified Christ, who can withstand the waters of death (Gen. 6:14; Acts 2:24). The ark was covered within and without with pitch, which is a type of the redeeming blood of Christ. The Hebrew word translated "pitch" has the same root as the word translated "expiation," which means "to cover." Noah and his family were saved from the judgment of the flood by the pitch upon the ark, signifying that the believers in Christ are saved from God's judgment by the redeeming blood of Christ (Rom. 5:9). Whenever we look at the blood, we have peace; whenever God looks at the blood, He is satisfied; whenever Satan looks at the blood, he is unable to attack; whenever the angels look at the blood, they rejoice (Rev. 12:11).

The water through which Noah passed is a figure of water baptism (1 Pet. 3:20-21). The pitch on the ark, signifying the blood of Christ, saved Noah from the judgment of the flood, whereas the water of the flood, signifying the water of baptism, not only judged the world but also separated Noah from the evil age (Exo. 14:26-30; Acts 2:40-41). The ark's passing through the water of death and coming to rest on the mountains of Ararat is a type of Christ's passing through death and resurrecting out of death (Gen. 8:4; cf. Exo. 12:2, 6). It also shows that when we were baptized into Christ, we were baptized into His death and raised together with Him to walk in the newness of resurrection life (Rom. 6:3-4).

**Gen. 8:16: "Go forth from the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons' wives with you."**

Because the last days just before the Lord's coming will be like the days of Noah (Matt. 24:37), we want to live by faith according to Noah's example, so that we can be

prepared to be Christ's bride and ushered into a new age, the kingdom age of a thousand years. "By faith Noah, having been divinely instructed concerning things not yet seen and being moved by pious fear, prepared an ark for the salvation of his house, through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith" (Heb. 11:7). The ark that Noah built signifies the practical and present Christ as God's salvation; thus, to build up the ark is to build up Christ in our experience, which is to work out our own salvation for the building up of the Body of Christ, the corporate Christ (Phil. 2:12-13). To receive salvation by faith is once for all; to work out our own salvation, to carry it out, bring it to its ultimate conclusion, is lifelong. To work out our own salvation is to follow the pattern of Noah, who built the ark not according to his own imagination but absolutely according to God's revelation and divine instructions by faith (Gen. 6:15; Heb. 11:7). To work out our own salvation is to work together with God in His unique work (2 Cor. 6:1), and the one unique work of the ministry is to minister Christ into others so that He may build Himself into their being for the building up of the Body of Christ (Gen. 6:14; 1 Cor. 3:6-12).

To work out our own salvation is to accumulate the experiences of Christ revealed in Philippians for the building up of the Body of Christ. In Philippians 1 salvation is to live Christ for His magnification in any circumstance by the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the supply of the Body of Christ (vv. 19-21). In Philippians 2 salvation is to shine forth Christ by holding forth the word of life, doing all things without murmurings and reasonings (vv. 12-16). In Philippians 3 salvation is to have Christ as our lived-out righteousness by being fully occupied with pursuing Christ as our goal to have Him as our highest enjoyment (vv. 7-14). In Philippians 4 salvation is to have a human life filled with Christ as the reality of the attributes of God by enjoying Christ as our secret of sufficiency in our intimate fellowship with Him and doing all things in Him as our dynamo (vv. 5-13). We need to take heed to Paul's word to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who operates in us the willing and the working for His good pleasure (2:12-13).

**Gen. 9:13: "I set My bow in the clouds, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth."**

God's covenant with Noah and the rainbow as a token of His covenant signify that we are the church of the covenant, living in the reality of the new covenant of grace (vv. 8-17). The rainbow around God's throne signifies that God is the covenanting God, the faithful God, who will keep His covenant while executing His

judgment upon the earth (Rev. 4:3; Ezek. 1:26-28). The three primary colors of the rainbow are blue (the color of the sapphire throne, which signifies God's righteousness, v. 26; Psa. 89:14), red (the color of the sanctifying fire, which signifies God's holiness, Ezek. 1:4, 13, 27; Heb. 12:29), and yellow (the color of the glowing electrum, which signifies God's glory, Ezek. 1:4, 27; Heb. 1:3). Christ died on the cross to satisfy the requirements of God's righteousness, holiness, and glory and was resurrected to be our righteousness, holiness, and glory (Gen. 3:24; 1 Cor. 1:30). Christ Himself, signified by the rainbow of righteousness, holiness, and glory, is the covenant of God given to His people (Isa. 42:6; Heb. 8:10-12).

First Corinthians 1:30 reveals that Christ is wisdom to us from God, transmitting Himself into us as righteousness (that we might be reborn in our spirit), sanctification (that we might be transformed in our soul), and redemption (that we might be transfigured in our body). This matches Paul's word in Ephesians 5:25 through 27, where Paul says that Christ loved the church and gave

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Himself up for her (for our judicial redemption to be our righteousness for the rebirth of our spirit), that He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word (that we might be transformed metabolically in our soul with Christ as our new element), and that He might present the church to Himself glorious (transfigured by Christ in our body to be Christ's bride). In eternity as the New Jerusalem (a city whose foundations have the appearance of a rainbow—Rev. 21:19-20), we will be a rainbow to testify of God's faithfulness to carry out His new covenant in making us exactly the same as He is as righteousness, holiness, and glory (vv. 10-11). The spiritual reality of this rainbow should be manifest in the church today. We need to allow God to fill us with His presence of righteousness by giving Him the full opportunity to work in us as the fire of holiness for His splendor of glory through us. The rainbow is a sign of God's faithfulness in keeping His covenant that there will be no more judgment of death; we must live under the new covenant and not believe in any failure, weakness, darkness, or negative thing; we are the covenanted people, and we have a verse of promise to meet every situation

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(such as Rom. 8:1; 2 Cor. 12:9; 2 Tim. 1:10; 2:1; Jude 24; 1 John 1:9; 1 Cor. 1:9).

**Gen. 10:8: “Cush begot Nimrod: He began to be a mighty one on the earth.”**

Nimrod was a mighty hunter before the Lord (Gen. 10:8-11). He was a mighty one in the earth, a person who was absolutely independent of God. He built a kingdom for himself, and the beginning of his kingdom was Babel. Although many Christians know that mankind constructed the tower and city of Babel, few realize that the kingdom of Babel was formed by Nimrod. The first kingdom in human history was probably the kingdom of Babel formed by Nimrod, who also built the great city of Nineveh in Assyria. His building was a sign that mankind was completely independent of God. Abraham, on the contrary, did not build anything but a little altar. He dwelt in a tent. Noah likewise did not build anything except the ark and an altar. The people who put their trust in God do not engage in much building activity. The more we place our confidence in God, the less independent building we will have. Only the giant workers—those who are independent of God—will construct their high towers. (*Life-study* 198-199)

**T**he self is the fallen soul declaring independence from God. When man is independent from God, the result is division instead of the oneness among God’s people that He desires. In addition to Nimrod, the first type of Antichrist and the first person to oppose God, we see the seeds of division in Genesis 10 that culminated in the city of Babel that Nimrod built in rebellion against God. Genesis 10:25 says, “To Eber were born two sons: The name of the one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided...” The name *Peleg* means “division.” Genesis 9:6 shows that after the flood God gave man the authority to rule others so that there might be peace and oneness among men, but Satan caused man to abuse this authority to form nations. The forming of nations was born out of man’s desire to have his own dominion instead of representing God with God’s dominion and authority over man. The forming of the nations in Genesis 10 issues in Babel in chapter 11 and “prefigures the forming of the divisions and denominations in Christianity, which will eventually consummate in Babylon the Great with her daughters (Rev. 17)” (Recovery Version, Gen. 10:25, note 1).

**Gen. 11:4: “They said, Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower whose top is in the heavens; and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered over the surface of the whole earth.”**

The city of Babel was made with bricks (v. 3), but God’s building is made of stones (1 Pet. 2:5). Eventually, the

New Jerusalem will be built with precious stones (Rev. 21:18-20). Stones are different from bricks. Stones are God-made; bricks are man-made. Precious stones are not only God-made but also God-transformed. Bricks are made by man with the earth.

The earth is for growing life (Gen. 1:11). To make bricks is to kill, to burn, the element of the earth that grows life. In figure, the earth signifies humanity (2:7; 3:19; Matt. 13:3-8 and notes; 1 Cor. 15:47a). Thus, the rebellion instigated by Satan kills the element within man that grows the divine life by burning it out, and it misuses man to build up a man-made city and a godless life. (Recovery Version, Gen. 11:3, note 1)

The church is unique in that it does not burn the earth. The church plows the earth, sows seeds into it, and waters it. That life seed, which is Christ, will grow and produce materials for the building up of God’s holy city...We are doing the work of planting and growing. We are plowing, sowing, watering, and growing; we are not burning or killing. We do have a building, the building of God, but it is not built with man-made bricks or by human labor; it is built with God-created and transformed stones and by the divine work. (*Life-study* 491-492)

**T**he building of the city of Babel was the culmination of men’s rebellion against God. At Babel men renounced God with a desire to make a name for themselves. At Pentecost men welcomed the Spirit of God with a desire to uplift the name of Christ. At Babel God judged the rebellion of men, brought in the confusion of different languages, and men were scattered over the face of the earth (Gen. 11:7-9). At Pentecost God blessed His redeemed people, brought in the oneness of speaking forth Christ with the magnificent works of God to one another, and united men in Christ by the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:5-11). In the one new man, the church as the Body of Christ, we should have one mouth to glorify God, and we should all speak the same thing—Christ (Rom. 15:5-6; 1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 2:2).

In the rebellion of mankind at Babel, man fell to the uttermost, causing God to eventually forsake the created race of Adam and to call one man, Abraham, out of that race that He might still have a way to fulfill His original purpose in creating man. (Recovery Version, Gen. 11:7, note 2)

**Gen. 12:2: “I will make you a great nation, / And I will bless you / And make your name great; / And you shall be a blessing.”**

The blessing of Abraham is spoken of in Galatians 3:14: “In order that the blessing of Abraham might come to the

Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” In the Old Testament the physical aspect of the blessing of Abraham was the good land (Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 17:8; 26:3-4). The good land is a type of the all-inclusive Christ who is realized as the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:17). The book of Colossians says that Christ is the allotted portion of the saints (1:12). This allotment is similar to each of the Israelites receiving an allotted portion of the good land (Josh. 14:1). Colossians also reveals that we are rooted in Christ as our living land and that we can walk in Him (2:6-7). According to Deuteronomy 8:9, we will not lack anything in this land. Christ as our land is unsearchably rich, and what He is meets our every need (Eph. 3:8). We need to pray for a revelation of Christ as the all-inclusive Spirit being our good land for our experience and enjoyment (1:17). Regarding the good land, Jehovah said to Abraham,

Now lift up your eyes, and look from the place where you are...for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your seed forever...Rise up; walk through the land according to its length and its breadth, for I will give it to you. (Gen. 13:14-17)

The land that Abraham saw was the land that God gave to him. Then he walked through the land for his experience. In like manner, what we see of Christ in the spirit is what we get of Christ. The Christ that we see is the Christ that God will give to us, and we can then walk in Him for our experience and enjoyment. We need to pray for an enlarged vision of Christ as the Spirit with His all-bountiful supply so that He can be enlarged, extolled, and magnified in our experience of Him (Phil. 1:19-20). Furthermore, we need to ask the Lord to bless us with the Spirit, to fill us to overflowing with the Spirit, so that we can bless others with the Spirit. Then we will have the ministry of the Spirit to inscribe others with the Spirit so that they can become the living letters of Christ (2 Cor. 3:3, 8). To be filled with the Spirit is to be blessed with the Spirit, and to flow out the Spirit is to bless others with the Spirit for the increase and building up of the Body of Christ (John 7:37-39).

**Gen. 13:18: “Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and there he built an altar to Jehovah.”**

As believers in Christ, we are repeating the history of Abraham; the Christian life is the harvest of the life and history of Abraham (Gal. 3:6-9, 14, 16, 28-29). In order to live a life by faith for the building up of the church as the household of the faith, we need to know the God of Abraham, to “walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham” (Rom. 4:12; Gal. 5:25; 6:10). Abraham’s faith

did not originate with himself; rather, his believing in God was a reaction to the God of glory appearing to him and to the transfusing and infusing of God’s element into his being (Acts 7:2). God’s appearing and transfusing issue in our consecration, causing us to build an altar and live totally for God. By God’s appearing and transfusing, Abraham trusted in God for his instant leading, taking the Lord’s presence as the road map for his traveling (Gen. 12:7-8; 13:3-4, 18; Heb. 11:8). We need to follow in the steps of Abraham by loving the Lord’s appearing (His present manifestation and His future coming) for the sake of His move, which is fully in, by, and with the Spirit (2 Tim. 4:8; John 14:21; Acts 26:16).

An altar is for worshipping God by offering all that we are and have to God for His purpose; building an altar means that our life is for God, that God is our life, and that the meaning of our life is God (Gen. 8:20-21; Exo. 29:18-22; Psa. 43:4). Abraham’s dwelling in a tent testified that he did not belong to the world but lived the life of a sojourner on earth; erecting a tent is an expression, a declaration, that we do not belong to this world,

The land that Abraham saw was the land that God gave to him. Then he walked through the land for his experience. The Christ that we see is the Christ that God will give to us, and we can then walk in Him for our experience and enjoyment.

that we belong to another country (Heb. 11:9-10, 15-16; cf. Rev. 1:11; 2 Cor. 5:20; Exo. 17:15). Abraham had his failures, and there was the forsaking of the altar and the tent; however, with him there was a recovery, and the Lord’s recovery is a matter of returning to the altar and the tent with calling on the name of the Lord (Gen. 12:8-10; 13:3-4, 18; Rom. 10:12-13; 12:1-2). Abraham’s tent with the altar built by him was a prefigure of the Tabernacle of the Testimony with the altar built by the children of Israel (Exo. 38:21). Abraham’s tent was a miniature of the New Jerusalem, the ultimate tent, the ultimate tabernacle of God (Gen. 9:26-27; John 1:14; Rev. 21:2-3). As we are living in the “tent” of the church life, we are waiting for its ultimate consummation—the ultimate “Tent of Meeting,” the New Jerusalem (1 Tim. 3:15; Lev. 1:1; Heb. 11:10; cf. Lev. 23:39-43).

**Gen. 14:14: “When Abram heard that his brother had been taken captive, he led out his trained men, born in his house, three hundred eighteen of them.”**

To live by faith, as Abraham did, is to cooperate with

Christ in His heavenly ministry, not only by living a life of the altar and the tent but also by fighting for Lot, which signifies our fighting for our brother in Christ, that he may be rescued from the captivity of the enemy (12:7-8; 14:1-24). Lot made the mistake of separating himself from Abraham and moving his tent as far as Sodom (13:5-12). "Now the men of Sodom were very wicked and sinful toward Jehovah" (v. 13). To leave Abraham was to leave God's goal and God's protection (cf. Phil. 3:17; 1 Cor. 4:16-17; Heb. 13:7). This shows that we need to join ourselves to and follow the proper persons in God's economy so that we may be kept in the line of life and the flow of the Lord's move (1 Cor. 15:33; Prov. 13:20; 2 Tim. 1:15-18; 2:22). Because the land around Sodom was rich, Lot journeyed toward Sodom. Eventually, he moved into the city, lived there, and settled there. Under God's sovereignty Sodom was conquered, and Lot was taken captive (Gen. 14:12). Abraham did not count the weak point of his brother and did not take pleasure in Lot's suffering and calamity. As far as Abraham was concerned, it was a shame for him to see that his brother had been captured (cf. 1 John 5:16; Isa. 58:6-7; Prov. 10:12; James 5:19-20). When Abraham received the information about Lot's capture, he made a strong decision to fight for Lot. Also, before he went out to war, he prayed, lifting up his hand to Jehovah, God the Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth (Gen. 14:14, 22; 1 Tim. 2:8). Abraham decided to take his three hundred eighteen men and fight against the four kings and their armies, because behind the scene, Melchizedek was interceding for Lot, Abraham, and Abraham's fighting (Gen. 14:18-20; Heb. 7:1-4, 25-26; 4:14-16; Rom. 8:26-29, 34).

To know the God of Abraham is to know Christ in His heavenly ministry as our kingly High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 5:6, 10). In His earthly ministry Christ was a High Priest according to the order of Aaron for the putting away of sin (John 1:29; Heb. 9:26); in His heavenly ministry Christ was designated a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek to minister God into us for our overcoming of sin (Gen. 14:18-20; Heb. 8:2; cf. Zech. 6:13). To know Christ as the High Priest in His kingship as the King of righteousness and the King of Salem (peace), is to be under His headship and lordship, allowing Him as the life-giving Spirit to rule within us so that we can become the New Jerusalem, where both righteousness and peace reign (Heb. 7:1-3; Isa. 9:6; 32:1, 17; 2 Pet. 3:13; Eph. 1:10). To know Christ in His priesthood is to contact Him so that we may be saturated, soaked, and mingled with Him by entering into His praying for us, taking care of our case before God, and ministering to us the processed God (the God who has been processed through incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection) as the bread and the wine (Matt. 26:26-28). The apostolic ministry in cooperation with Christ's heavenly ministry "fights for the brother" by

interceding for the saints according to God and His economy and by ministering God into the saints for their overcoming supply and enjoyment (Heb. 7:25; 8:2; Luke 22:31-32; John 21:15-17; Acts 6:4; Rev. 1:12-13).

**Gen. 15:1: "After these things the word of Jehovah came to Abram in a vision, saying, Do not be afraid, Abram; I am your shield and your exceedingly great reward."**

God Himself, His presence, is our shield, and God Himself, His presence, is our exceedingly great reward. We need to pray that the Lord would hide us in the hiding place of His presence from all the attacks of the evil one (Psa. 31:20). "You, O Jehovah, are a shield around me, / My glory and the One who lifts up my head" (3:3). "Jehovah God is a sun and a shield; / Jehovah gives grace and glory" (84:11). "You are my hiding place and my shield; / In your word do I hope" (119:114). "Every word of God is tried; / He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him" (Prov. 30:5). As we abide in God's word, we need to pray daily that the Lord would be our shield to deliver us in everything and in every way from the evil one (Matt. 6:13). It is good to pray as the psalmist did, "Guard me like the pupil of Your eye. / In the shadow of Your wings hide me" (Psa. 17:8).

While we are experiencing Him as the God of our protection (43:2), we need to pursue Him as our exceedingly great reward. In the book of Philippians, Paul says that he counted all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, and he counted all things as refuse that he might gain Christ and be found in Him (3:8-9, 14). To gain Christ is to win Christ as our prize in our daily pursuit of Him. Paul pursued toward the goal, the fullest enjoyment and gaining of Christ, for the prize, the uttermost enjoyment of Christ in the millennial kingdom. Philippians reveals that we need to take Christ as our reward in this age so that we might enjoy Him in full as our reward in the next age. Philippians reveals the following aspects of Christ, whom we need to experience and enjoy as our exceedingly great reward: Christ is our living (1:21), Christ is our expression (v. 20), the mind of Christ can be our mind (2:5), Christ is our lived-out righteousness (3:9), Christ is the most excellent One (v. 8), Christ is our goal (vv. 13-14), Christ is our virtues (4:8), Christ is our power (v. 13), Christ is our secret (vv. 11-12), and Christ is our expectation (3:20-21). Let us continually forget the things that are behind and stretch forward to gain more and more of the unsearchably rich Christ, our exceedingly great reward (3:13-14).

**Gen. 16:15: "Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael."**

Galatians 4 says that Hagar and Sarah signify two covenants. Hagar, the concubine of Abraham, signifies the old



covenant of the law, and Sarah signifies the new covenant of grace (vv. 22-31). The old covenant of the law brings forth children unto slavery, but the new covenant of grace brings forth children unto sonship. Galatians 4:28-31 says that we are not children of the maidservant, the law, but children of the free woman, grace. We are no longer under the law but under grace (Rom. 6:14). Grace is Christ Himself, the embodiment of the Triune God, as the life-giving Spirit for our enjoyment. The law makes demands upon man that man cannot keep. Grace supplies man with what God is in order to meet what God demands.

Galatians 5:4 says, “You have been brought to nought, separated from Christ, you who are being justified by law; you have fallen from grace.” To nullify the grace of God means that in our experience we deny Christ the opportunity to live in us and do not live by the Spirit (2:20-21; 4:19; 5:25; cf. Col. 2:19). To go back to the law is to reject this grace, to nullify this grace, to fall from grace. To fall from grace is to be brought to nought, reduced to nothing, separated from Christ, deprived of all profit from Christ (cf. John 15:5). If we go to anything other than Christ, such as the law or character improvement, and do not cleave to Christ so that we may enjoy Him all the time, our enjoyment of Christ will be confiscated (cf. Col. 2:18). We need to stand fast in the grace into which we have entered (Rom. 5:1-2).

If we would be those who do not nullify the grace of God, we need to abide in Christ, which is to remain in Him (John 15:4-5). Furthermore, we need to enjoy Christ, especially by eating Him as our spiritual food (6:57). Then we should go on to be one spirit with Christ (1 Cor. 6:17), to walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16, 25), to deny the natural “I” (2:20), and to abandon the flesh (5:24). We need to be those who are receiving and enjoying the grace of the Lord in our spirit; the receiving of Christ as the Spirit of grace is a lifelong, continuous matter (John 1:16; Heb. 10:29). Day by day a marvelous divine transmission should be taking place: God is supplying the Spirit of grace bountifully, and we should be receiving the Spirit of grace continually (Gal. 3:2-5). The way to open ourselves to the heavenly transmission to receive the supply of the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit of grace is to exercise our spirit to pray and call on the Lord (1 Thes. 5:16-18; Rom. 10:12-13). As we receive Christ as our grace and enjoy Him as grace, we shall gradually become one with Him organically; He will become our constituent, and we shall become His expression (2 Cor. 1:12; 12:9).

**Gen. 17:1: “When Abram was ninety-nine years old, Jehovah appeared to Abram and said to him, I am the All-sufficient God; / Walk before Me, and be perfect.”**

God is revealed here as the All-sufficient God (*El Shaddai*, Heb.) for His believing ones to walk in His presence, constantly enjoying Him and His all-sufficient supply, and for them to be perfect by having God added to them as the element and factor of their perfection. We need to see the intrinsic significance of the Hebrew name *El Shaddai*.

God (*El*) signifies the “Strong One”...The qualifying word *Shaddai* is formed from the Hebrew word “*shad*,” the breast, invariably used in Scripture for a woman’s breast; e.g. Gen. 49:25; Job 3:12; Psa. 22:9; Song 1:13; 4:5; 7:3, 7, 8; 8:1, 8, 10; Isa. 28:9; Ezek. 16:7. *Shaddai* therefore means primarily “the breasted.” God is “*Shaddai*,” because He is the Nourisher, the Strength-giver, and so, in a secondary sense, the Satisfier, who pours Himself into believing lives. As a fretful, unsatisfied babe is not only strengthened and nourished from the mother’s breast, but also quieted, rested, satisfied, so *El Shaddai* is that name of God which sets Him forth as the Strength-giver and Satisfier of His people. (Scofield, Gen. 17:1, note 1)

Hagar signifies the old covenant of the law, and Sarah signifies the new covenant of grace. We are no longer under the law but under grace. The law makes demands that man cannot keep. Grace supplies man with what God is in order to meet what God demands.

This matches the revelation of God in Isaiah, which reveals that God is not only a Father (1:2-3; 63:16; 64:8) and a Husband (54:5) to His chosen people but also a nursing Mother. God says to His chosen ones, “As one whom his mother comforts, / So will I comfort you; / And you will be comforted in Jerusalem” (66:13). Paul was one with Christ to such an extent that he became like a nursing mother to the young Thessalonians: “We were gentle in your midst, as a nursing mother would cherish her own children” (1 Thes. 2:7).

Paul enjoyed Christ as *El Shaddai*, the All-sufficient God, when he spoke of receiving “the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,” so that he could live Christ for Christ’s magnification (Phil. 1:19-21). Because He is the All-sufficient One, God He can be our supplying Shepherd, and we can say with the psalmist, “Jehovah is my Shepherd; I will lack nothing” (Psa. 23:1). We need to be the babes and sucklings who praise Him and enjoy Him in the simplicity that is in Christ (8:2; Matt. 21:16; 2 Cor. 1:12; 11:3). He is truly everything to us. Christ as the All-sufficient God is the Lamb of God to redeem us,

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the Sun of righteousness to heal us, the tree of life to supply us, and the smitten Rock to water us. He is our life, our light, our way, our comfort, our health, our peace, our joy, our hope, our glory, and our wealth. He is our wisdom, our power, our boast, our righteousness, our victory, our truth, and our holiness. Christ as the All-sufficient One is our Savior, our Shepherd, our Lord, our Advocate, our Counselor, our Father, our God, our Brother, our Friend, and our love. He is our Captain, our Guard, our Teacher, our Guide, our Bridegroom, our Master, and our Head. He is our Prophet, our Priest, our King, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, our Mediator, our Guarantee, and our faithful Witness. He is our Sabbath, our new moon, our morning, our day, and our eternity. Christ as the All-sufficient God is also our trust, our desire, our satisfaction, and our delight. As the All-sufficient God, He meets our every need. The best news of all is that this marvelous, unsearchably rich Christ as the all-sufficient supply *lives within us* (Gal. 2:20)! “Since such a treasure I possess, / My heart doth sing for joy; / And I must sing, and sing again; / Oh, what a Christ have I!” (*Hymns*, #510).

**Gen. 18:1: “Jehovah appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre as he was sitting at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day.”**

The Bible tells us that Abraham was “the friend of God” (2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23). God appeared to Abraham in the form of a mortal man and communed with him on a human level (Gen. 18:1-2, 13-15). As Abraham was enjoying sweet fellowship with God, he received a revelation from Him regarding the birth of Isaac and the destruction of Sodom (vv. 9-22). Isaac typifies Christ as the seed of Abraham, and Sodom typifies Satan, sin, and death with all their evil influences. This shows that God’s intention is to work Christ into us, to bring Christ forth through us, and to destroy the “Sodom” in our home life, work life, and in our Christian and church life (Gal. 1:15-16; 2:20; 4:19; 1 Cor. 5:8). Humanly speaking, it was impossible for the very aged Abraham and Sarah to have a child. However, just like Abraham, in our intimate fellowship with God, we receive the revelation that all the impossibilities become possibilities with Christ (Luke 18:27; Gen. 18:14).

Isaac was born by the strength of God’s grace, not by the strength of man’s natural life. This took place after Abraham had been circumcised and he and his wife, Sarah, had become completely deadened (v. 11; Rom. 4:18-19), signifying that the time of life, the time when Christ will be life to us, will come after our natural strength has been terminated. (Recovery Version, Gen. 18:14, note 1)

God revealed to Abraham His intention to destroy

Sodom, because He was seeking an intercessor for the rescue of Lot from the destruction of Sodom, where Lot dwelt (vv. 17-22; cf. Heb. 7:25; Isa. 59:16; Ezek. 22:30). The glorious intercession that Abraham made before God was a human, intimate conversation between two friends, an intimate talk according to the unveiling of God’s heart’s desire. Genesis 18 presents a clear revelation of the basic principles of intercession. The proper intercession is not initiated by man but by God’s revelation; thus, it expresses God’s desire and carries out God’s will (vv. 17, 20-21; 19:27-29; Psa. 27:4-8; Heb. 4:16; 7:25; James 5:17). Apparently, Abraham was interceding for Sodom; actually, he was interceding for Lot by implication (Gen. 18:23; 19:1, 27-29). This shows that we should intercede for God’s people who have drifted into the world. Intercession is an intimate conversation with God according to the inward intention of His heart; for this we must learn to linger in the presence of God (18:25-32; Matt. 6:6). Intercession is according to God’s righteous way; in Abraham’s intercession for Lot, he did not beg God according to His love and grace, but he challenged God according to His righteous way (Gen. 18:23-25; Rom. 1:17). Abraham’s intercession did not terminate with Abraham’s speaking but with God’s speaking. This shows that genuine intercession is God’s speaking in our speaking (Gen. 18:33; Rom. 8:26-27). What a wonder it is that we can fellowship with God as His friends and commune with Him on a human level!

**Gen. 19:1: “The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom.”**

Lot was a righteous and godly man (2 Pet. 2:6-9). Nevertheless, although he had come out of Ur of Chaldea and was dwelling as one of God’s people with Abraham in the land of Canaan...he became defeated because he separated himself from Abraham, with whom was God’s witness and testimony, and drifted into the wicked city of Sodom (13:11-13; 14:12), which was condemned by God and was to be destroyed under His judgment.

Ur of Chaldea was a place of idols, Egypt was a place of worldly riches and pleasures, and Sodom was a city of sin. These three places form a triangular boundary around the land of Canaan. God’s called ones live within this triangle and must be careful lest they fall back to the city of idols, go down to the place of worldly pleasures, or drift into the city of sin. (Recovery Version, Gen. 19:1, note 1)

**I**n their giving up God, the wicked Sodomites were given up by God to “passions of dishonor”; this is the ultimate issue of man’s rebelling against God and rejecting his conscience (vv. 4-11; Rom. 1:21-27; 2:14-15; 1 Tim. 4:2). Romans 1:21 says, “Though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God or thank Him, but rather became vain in their reasonings, and their heart, lacking understanding,

was darkened." Verse 25 says that these ones "exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshipped and served the creation rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen." These verses show that if we glorify God, thank God, worship God, and serve God, we will be protected from every kind of evil. In God's complete salvation we can be washed from all the sinful things of Sodom, sanctified by God, and justified, accepted, by God (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

The angels sent to destroy Sodom found Abraham sitting in his tent in the heat of the day, but they found Lot sitting in the gate of Sodom. Lot's willingness to sacrifice his two virgin daughters to satisfy the Sodomites' lust shows that Lot, having dwelt a considerable time in the sinful city of Sodom, had lost his sense of morality and shame (Gen. 19:8, 11-13, 30-38). Lot did not have any willingness to escape from the evil and condemned city, but the Lord was merciful to him, plucking him out of Sodom like a brand of wood plucked out of a fire (v. 16; cf. Zech. 3:2). God instructed Lot not to look behind him as he was fleeing the destruction of Sodom, but Lot's wife did not heed this warning. She took a look back at the sinful city that God was judging, and she became a pillar of salt (Gen. 19:17, 26). Her lingering look back at the city of Sodom manifested her love for the sinful domain that God was going to judge. "Remember Lot's wife" is a solemn warning to the world-loving believers (Luke 17:26-32; 19:15-17, 26; 14:34-35; 1 John 2:27-28). To maintain our living in fellowship with God, we need to overcome the stupefying effect of the world's indulgent living.

**Gen. 20:2: "Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister. And Abimelech the king of Gerar sent and took Sarah."**

When Abraham journeyed from Hebron (v. 1), he left God's presence and the proper standing on which He could have fellowship with God (13:18 and notes). Although he had been circumcised both physically and spiritually (17:10, 23-24 and note 10<sup>1</sup>), when he left the proper standing of fellowship with God, Abraham was again in the flesh and repeated his previous failure (12:13). This shows that no matter how high our spiritual attainment may be, as long as we are still in the old creation, if we do not remain in fellowship with God, we are capable of being in the flesh and of behaving like the worldly people. We should never have any confidence in our flesh; the flesh is absolutely untrustworthy (Rom. 7:18; Phil. 3:3). We must put our trust in the Lord's presence. (Recovery Version, Gen. 20:2, note 1)

Ephesians 4:17 and 18 show that it is possible for believers in Christ to live like the unbelievers if they do not walk

by the Spirit of life as the presence of God in their spirit:

This therefore I say and testify in the Lord, that you no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk in the vanity of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance which is in them, because of the hardness of their heart. (Eph. 4:17-18)

Abraham's lying to Abimelech was planned by him from the time he began to follow the way of God. Thus, his failure in [Genesis 20] exposed his hidden weakness in the matter of following the Lord and trusting in Him absolutely. (Recovery Version, Gen. 20:13, note 1)

In figure, Abraham signifies faith and Sarah signifies grace (Gal. 3:7; 4:23). When Abraham failed, Sarah suffered and Abraham lost the testimony of grace. This shows that whenever faith fails on our side, grace suffers on God's side, and whenever the enjoyment of grace is lost, the testimony of grace also is lost.

Although Abraham's faith failed, God still preserved him

Despite Sarah's barrenness and Abraham's failure, he still had to pray for Abimelech's need. If we forget our need and pray for the needs of others, God will answer not only our prayer for them but also our prayer for ourselves.

by His sovereign care. God wisely and sovereignly restored Sarah, taking care of His grace and His testimony. (Recovery Version, Gen. 20:14, note 1)

Despite Sarah's barrenness and Abraham's failure, he still had to pray for Abimelech's need. This shows that if we forget our need and pray for the needs of others, God will answer not only our prayer for them but also our prayer for ourselves (v. 17; Job 42:7-10). Also, our interceding for others does not depend on our condition but on who we are in God's sight. Regardless of our condition, we are God's called ones, and as His called ones, we are His prophets, His new creation, and the members of the Body of Christ (Gen. 20:7; 1 Cor. 14:31; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 5:30).

**Gen. 21:6: "Sarah said, God has made me laugh; everyone who hears will laugh with me."**

It is significant that Isaac's name means "laughter."

Why did Abraham call his son "laughter"? He called him

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Isaac for two reasons. First, God promised Abraham that Sarah would give birth to a son. When Sarah heard, she laughed. It was natural for her to laugh. When she looked at herself, she could not help but laugh. Her time of childbearing was past, and her womb was closed. How could she ever bear a child? She thought that this was impossible. Therefore, when God told Abraham that she would have a child, she laughed. Second, when Sarah brought forth a son a year later, she was indeed laughing for joy. Hence, God called the child's name *Isaac* (Gen. 18:10-15; 21:1-3, 6-7), which means "laughter." The first time she laughed because of the impossibility of the promise. The second time she laughed because she discovered to her surprise that it was possible. If a man has never experienced the first laughing, he can never experience the second laughing. If a man has never realized his own inability, he can never experience God's ability. Sarah knew herself; she had full knowledge of herself. She knew that she could not make it. But as soon as she looked to God's work, she was able to laugh. What is resurrection? Resurrection means that God has given us something that we did not have in ourselves. The Bible testifies again and again that man cannot make it by himself. But many people think that they can make it. In the matter of service, if some would truly laugh at themselves, saying, "I cannot make it," they would find themselves laughing again, saying, "I did not make it. I have seen through myself. The Lord has made it for me"... Resurrection means that you cannot make it and that God has done everything.

...Resurrection means that everything is of God and not of us. It means that God alone is able and that we are not able. Resurrection means that everything is done by God, not by ourselves. All those who think highly of themselves and who hold a misguided judgment of themselves have never realized what resurrection is. No one should be mistaken to think that he can do anything by himself. If a man continues to think that he is able, that he can do something, and that he is useful, he does not know resurrection. He may know the doctrine of resurrection, the reason for resurrection, or the result of resurrection, but he does not know resurrection. All those who know resurrection have given up hope in themselves; they know that they cannot make it. As long as the natural strength remains, the power of resurrection has no ground for manifestation. As long as Sarah could beget a child, Isaac would not come. What we can do belongs in the natural realm, and what is impossible for us to do belongs to the realm of resurrection. (Nee 148-149)

**Gen. 22:2: "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you."**

Abraham's offering of his beloved and only son, Isaac, on the altar is a vivid picture of God the Father's offering of His beloved and only Son, Jesus Christ, on the cross. In this picture Isaac typifies Christ in a detailed way. Isaac, as Abraham's only son (vv. 2, 12, 16), typifies Christ as God's only begotten Son (John 3:16). Isaac was Abraham's beloved son...and Christ was the Father's beloved Son, in whom He delighted (Matt. 3:17). Isaac took his father's will...and Christ also chose the will of His Father (Matt. 26:39). Isaac was obedient unto death...likewise, Christ was obedient unto death (Phil. 2:8). Isaac carried the wood for the burnt offering and walked to the top of Mount Moriah...in the same way, Christ bore His cross and walked to Golgotha (John 19:17). Isaac was offered to God as a burnt offering on Mount Moriah; Christ also was offered to God on the same mountain...to fulfill the type of the burnt offering. Isaac was "killed" on the altar and was returned to Abraham on the third day, that is, in resurrection (Heb. 11:19); similarly, Christ was crucified on the cross and was resurrected on the third day (1 Cor. 15:4). Isaac was multiplied in resurrection...and Christ also was multiplied in His resurrection (John 12:24; 1 Pet. 1:3). Isaac was the seed of Abraham for the blessing of all the nations...likewise, Christ is the unique seed of Abraham in whom the blessing of Abraham has come to the nations (Gal. 3:8, 14, 16). (Recovery Version, Gen. 22:2, note 1)

Isaac, a type of Christ as the promised seed (Gal. 3:16), was given to Abraham by God. Here God asked Abraham to give back to God what God had given him. This surely was a test to Abraham (Heb. 11:17). This shows a basic principle in God's economy: all that God has given us, even what He has wrought in us and through us, must eventually be offered back to Him, that we may live a life of faith, not holding on to anything, even to the things given by God, but relying only on Him. After Isaac was offered, he was returned to Abraham in resurrection and became a blessing (...Heb. 11:19). Likewise, after we have offered to God what we have received of Him, He will return it to us in resurrection and it will become a blessing for the fulfillment of His purpose. (Recovery Version, Gen. 22:2, note 3)

**Gen. 23:19: "Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan."**

Although Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac were living at Beer-sheba (21:33), Sarah died and was buried in Hebron, the place of fellowship with God. Hebron is between Beer-sheba on the south and Jerusalem on the north. Thus, Hebron was not only a place of fellowship but also a way that led to Jerusalem. In spiritual significance, the cave of Machpelah in Hebron (23:19), in which Sarah was buried, is the gateway to the New Jerusalem.

The cave of Machpelah was at the end of a field, in which were many trees (v. 17). A field is a place where life grows; thus, it implies resurrection. Abraham did not bury Sarah in a place of death but in a place of life, a place full of resurrection (1 Cor. 15:36). This indicates that Abraham believed in the God of resurrection (Rom. 4:17) and was filled with the expectation that his wife would be resurrected and would be in the city which has the foundations, the New Jerusalem. According to Abraham's realization, Sarah's death was not a termination but an entering into the gate of resurrection, the gateway into the expected city and the better country (Heb. 11:10, 16). (Recovery Version, Gen. 23:9, note 2)

**Gen. 24:4 "But you shall go to my country and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son Isaac."**

In Genesis 24 there is a wonderful type of Christ marrying the church. In this chapter we see God the Father (typified by Abraham), God the Son (typified by Isaac), God the Spirit (typified by Abraham's steward), and the bride (signified by Rebekah). In eternity past God the Father made an eternal purpose, an eternal plan, to gain the church as a bride for His Son out of the human race (John 3:29; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 3:9-11; 5:25-32; Rev. 19:7-9; 21:2, 9-10). In time God the Father commissioned God the Spirit, sent Him on an errand, to carry out the Father's plan by going to reach and contact the chosen bride and bring her to God the Son to be His counterpart, His wife (Gen. 24:44).

Just as the servant was hunting for a wife for Isaac, the Spirit is hunting for a wife for God the Son through His seeking sanctification (vv. 11, 14, 24; John 4:6-7, 10; 1 Pet. 1:2; Luke 15:8-10; John 16:8-11). Just as the servant brought the riches of Isaac to Rebekah, the Spirit brings the riches of Christ to the bride (Gen. 24:10, 22, 47, 53; John 16:13-15). Just as the servant imparted Isaac's wealth to Rebekah for her beautification in order for her to return to Isaac for his glorification, the Spirit transmits the riches of Christ's glory to His bride for her beautification in order for her to return to Christ for His glorification (Gen. 24:47, 53, 61-67; Eph. 3:16, 21).

We are adorned to be Christ's bride by the dispensing of His unsearchable riches into us through the Spirit's dispositional sanctification (Rev. 21:2, 19; Isa. 54:11-12; 1 Thes. 5:23; Eph. 3:8). To receive the dispensing of Christ in His unsearchable riches, we must know, we must use, and we must exercise our spirit, caring for the sanctifying Spirit's speaking and working in our spirit (Rom. 15:16; Eph. 1:17; 2:22; 3:5, 16; 4:23; 5:18; 6:18). To receive the dispensing of Christ in His unsearchable riches, we must be sanctified by the metabolic cleansing

of the instant, present, and living word of Christ (5:26-27; cf. S. S. 8:13-14). To receive the dispensing of Christ in His unsearchable riches, we must pray ourselves into God so that we may feed those under our care (Phil. 1:19; Luke 11:1-13; 2 Cor. 6:10; Matt. 24:45-46).

Just as Rebekah was convinced by the servant to marry Isaac, the Spirit attracts us to Christ and causes us to love Him whom we have not seen (Gen. 24:54-58; 1 Pet. 1:8; 2:7). Just as the servant brought Rebekah to Isaac, the Spirit is bringing us to Christ to present us to Christ as His lovely bride (Gen. 24:51, 61-67; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; 13:14). Just as Isaac received Rebekah in the evening, Christ will receive His bride at the evening, the close, of this age (Gen. 24:63).

Isaac brought Rebekah into the tent of Sarah, his mother, and loved Rebekah, signifying that Christ will receive His bride in grace (typified by Sarah) as well as in love. After marrying Rebekah, Isaac was comforted, satisfied; likewise, Christ will be satisfied on the day of His marriage. (Recovery Version, Gen. 24:67, note 1)

**Just as Rebekah was convinced by the servant to marry Isaac, the Spirit attracts us to Christ and causes us to love Him. Just as the servant brought Rebekah to Isaac, the Spirit is bringing us to Christ to present us to Christ as His lovely bride.**

**Gen. 25:5: "Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac."**

Isaac inherited all things from his father (24:36). In the New Testament all of us called believers are heirs of God's absolute and unconditional grace, inheriting all the riches of the divine fullness for our enjoyment (Eph. 1:3, 6; 3:8, 19). Isaac was a model, a pattern, of the enjoyment of God's grace for God's good pleasure (Gen. 24:36; 26:3-4, 12-33; Rom. 5:1-2; Acts 4:33; 11:23). Grace is God in Christ as the Spirit to be our life and life supply for our enjoyment so that He can become the constituent of our being for the building up of the Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem (John 1:16-17; Heb. 10:29; 1 Cor. 15:10; cf. Gal. 2:20-21; 2 Cor. 13:14). It is our destiny to enjoy the grace of God; this destiny was pre-ordained before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:3-6; 2:7). After Abraham's natural strength and self-effort were dealt with by God, Isaac was born (Gen. 17:15-19; 18:10-14; 21:1-7); this implies that Isaac was born of grace, which is represented by Sarah (Gal. 4:23-28, 31; 1 Pet. 3:6-7). Abraham's life reveals that if we would enjoy God's grace and have the full enjoyment of His

riches, we must suffer loss and have our natural life circumcised, cut off; the greatest frustration to knowing and experiencing grace is the self (Gen. 17:18-19; cf. Phil. 3:3). Isaac's life reveals that our suffering to terminate our natural life is for the enjoyment of God's grace (cf. 2 Cor. 1:8-9, 12; 12:7-10; Rom. 5:1-5). Isaac was grown up in grace; to grow in grace is to grow in the enjoyment of all that Christ is to us as our spiritual food and living water (Gen. 21:8; 1 Pet. 2:2; 1 Cor. 3:2, 6; Eph. 3:8; 4:15). The Spirit of grace (Heb. 10:29) is the grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7), the varied grace of God (4:10), the God of all grace (5:10), and the all-sufficient grace (2 Cor. 12:9); this grace is now with our spirit (Gal. 6:18).

The way to daily receive and enjoy grace is through the blood, the word, the Spirit, and the church. The redeeming blood, the blood of the covenant, God's own blood, brings sinful, corrupted people into the eternal enjoyment of God (Acts 20:28; Matt. 26:28; Lev. 16:11-16; Heb. 10:19-20; 1 John 1:7, 9). The word of grace can be eaten by us and become to us the gladness and joy of our heart (Acts 20:32; Jer. 15:16; John 6:63). The Spirit of grace as the bountiful supply of the processed and

consummated God is the oil of exultant joy with which we are anointed as the partners of Christ (Heb. 1:9; 10:29; Zech. 12:10). The church of God experiences the fresh and refreshing grace of God as the descending dew, which comes to us from the heavens through God's compassions to water and transform us (Psa. 133:2; Lam. 3:22-23; 2 Cor. 13:14; Acts 11:23). Through our enjoyment of the God of all grace, the kingdom of God will be realized, and God in Christ will be fully expressed for eternity (Rev. 22:21). **AF**

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### Footnote from the Recovery Version of the Bible

“And God said, Let Us make man in Our **image**, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth” (Gen. 1:26).

**image:** God's image, referring to God's inner being, is the expression of the inward essence of God's attributes, the most prominent of which are love (1 John 4:8), light (1 John 1:5), holiness (Rev. 4:8), and righteousness (Jer. 23:6). God's likeness, referring to God's form (Phil. 2:6), is the expression of the essence and nature of God's person. Thus, God's image and likeness should not be considered as two separate things. Man's inward virtues, created in man's spirit, are copies of God's attributes and are the means for man to express God's attributes. Man's outward form, created as man's body, is a copy of God's form. Thus, God created man to be a duplication of Himself that man may have the capacity to contain God and express Him. All the other living things were created “according to their kind” (vv. 11-12, 21, 24-25), but man was created according to God's kind (cf. Acts 17:28-29a). Since God and man are of the same kind, it is possible for man to be joined to God and to live together with Him in an organic union (John 15:5; Rom. 6:5; 11:17-24; 1 Cor. 6:17).

Christ the Son, as God's embodiment (Col. 2:9), is the image of the invisible God, the expression of the essence of God's attributes (Col. 1:15; 2 Cor. 4:4; Heb. 1:3). Man was created according to Christ with the intention that Christ would enter into man and be expressed through man (Col. 1:27; Phil. 1:20-21a). Created man is a living vessel, a container, to contain Christ (Rom. 9:21, 23; 2 Cor. 4:7). Eventually, in His incarnation Christ put on human nature and became in the likeness of men (Phil. 2:6-8) so that through His death and resurrection man may obtain God's eternal, divine life (1 Pet. 1:3; 1 John 5:11-12) and by that life be transformed and conformed to the image of Christ inwardly (2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:29) and transfigured into the likeness of Christ's glorious body outwardly (Phil. 3:21) that he may be the same as Christ (1 John 3:2b) and may express God with Him to the universe.

Created man was a duplication of God in God's image and likeness, but he did not have the reality of God or the life of God. Thus, he still needed to receive God as his life by eating of the tree of life so that he might have the reality of God to express Him.