

The Consummation of the Divine Economy in Revelation

by John Campbell

Revelation 4:11 says, “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, for You have created all things, and because of Your will they were, and were created.” Ephesians 1:9 and 11 speak further concerning God’s will: “Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself...the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will.” The Bible reveals that God has a good pleasure, His heart’s desire, and out of this desire He made a will. According to His will, God formed a purpose, a plan. Moreover, God has a consideration, a counsel in Himself, concerning the way to accomplish His will. In the New Testament the way to carry out God’s purpose for His will is called “God’s economy” (1 Tim. 1:4). Ephesians 1:10 speaks of the economy of the fullness of the times, the fulfillment of God’s plan, which will reach its consummation when the new heaven and new earth appear after all the dispensations of God in all the ages have been completed. This economy is the mystery of God concerning Christ and the church, which has now been revealed through the New Testament ministers (Col. 1:26; Eph. 5:32; 3:3-5).

An economy (οἰκονομία, from οἶκος and νόμος) is a “house law,” an administration of a household or estate (Strong 51), the management of a household or of household affairs (Thayer 440). The root word νέμω means to “deal out, dispense,...esp. of meat and drink”; it is the same word used of herdsmen who drive their flocks to pasture (Liddell 1167). The New Testament thought of an economy is a household administration carried out through the distribution of goods, especially of food, to the members of the household (Eph. 3:2; Matt. 24:45). The “goods” in God’s house are nothing less than the unsearchable riches of the all-inclusive Christ. In Ephesians 3:8-9 Paul says,

To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of

Christ as the gospel and to enlighten all that they may see what the economy [οἰκονομία] of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things.

Paul goes on to reveal that this dispensing is to produce a universal, corporate testimony of God. Verses 10 and 11 say, “In order that now to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies the multifarious wisdom of God might be made known through the church, according to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

In His economy God intends, arranges, and plans to dispense Himself into His chosen, created, called, redeemed, and regenerated people. Through God’s dispensing of Himself into us in regeneration, those are born of God and thus possess His divine life and nature to become God-men, men who are born again to become God’s species (John 1:12-13; 3:3, 5-6). Now through His continual and further shepherding through dispensing, we are growing in His life and being built together to be the corporate expression of God, the church as Christ’s Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all (Eph. 2:21-22; 1:22-23). This great expression will consummate in the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21:1-2). Thus the economy of God, the dispensing of God, the union of God with the believers, and the corporate expression of God are four great matters revealed to us in the Bible. We should pray for a spirit of wisdom and revelation (Eph. 1:17) to see these matters so that they may become the central lane and ultimate goal for our Christian life.

As the last book of the Bible, Revelation is the conclusion, completion, and consummation of the entire divine revelation. All the seeds of the divine realities sown in the previous books of the Bible are matured and brought to perfection in this book of consummations. In Revelation we can see the completion, the harvest, of the four great

matters in the Bible—the economy of God, the dispensing of God into man, the ultimate union of God and man, and the corporate expression of God in man for eternity.

The Economical Trinity and the Seven Spirits of God

The focus of the book of Revelation is the unique, ultimate revelation of Christ, the particular, consummate testimony of Jesus, and the universal, eternal economy of God. This book begins with a particular greeting: “Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is coming, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn of the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth” (1:4-5). He who is, who was, and who is coming is God the eternal Father. The seven Spirits are the operating Spirit of God, that is, God the Spirit. Jesus Christ is God the Son—to God the faithful Witness, to the church the Firstborn of the dead, and to the world the Ruler of the kings of the earth. This greeting speaks of the Triune God. However, there are two characteristics that distinguish this portrayal of the Triune God from those in the

is simply the Son, but in God’s economy He is Jesus, Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn of the dead, the Ruler of the kings of the earth, the One who loves us and has released us from our sins by His blood, the One who has made us a kingdom and priests, and the One who comes to execute God’s final government (1:5-7). These modifiers refer not to the Son in His existence but to the Son in His economy, move, and actions.

Verse 4 speaks of the seven Spirits who are before the throne of God. In existence, the Spirit is one, but the Spirit is intensified sevenfold to fulfill His function to carry out God’s economy. In essence and existence, God’s Spirit is one, but in the intensified function and work of God’s operation, God’s Spirit is sevenfold. That the seven Spirits are listed here in the second place of the Trinity reveals the importance of the intensified function of the sevenfold Spirit of God. This is confirmed by the repeated emphasis in Revelation on the Spirit’s speaking (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; 14:13; 22:17). According to the economical aspect of the Trinity, in Revelation the age has changed from the Son to the Spirit; moreover, in this age the Spirit has been intensified. In chapter 5, verse 6, it says,

The view of the Trinity in the book of Revelation is the final unveiling of the Triune God in the Bible. The complexities of the economical Trinity in this book are related to the finalization of God’s New Testament economy.

I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders 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.

The seven Spirits of God are the seven eyes of the Lamb (Zech. 3:9; 4:10). Eyes are for observing and searching. Christ as the redeeming Lamb has seven observing and searching

Gospels and Epistles. Matthew 28:19 speaks of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit with no further modifiers. In Revelation 1, however, the Triune God is presented in a new sequence, speaking first of the Father, then of the Spirit, and third of the Son. Moreover, the Spirit in Revelation is the seven Spirits of God.

The reason for these differences is that the Divine Trinity in Revelation is not the essential Trinity but the economical Trinity (Lee, *Economy* 212). The essential Trinity refers to God’s existence. In God’s existence, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit coexist and coinhere from eternity to eternity. All three are God, all three are eternal, and all three coinhere, that is, indwell One another. Revelation, however, does not touch the existence of the Trinity but the economy of the Trinity; therefore, it stresses the administration, government, activity, motion, move, act, and work of the Trinity. According to God’s economy, the Father is the One who is now, who was in the past, and who shall be in the future. These modifiers indicate economy, revealing the Father in His move to carry out His purpose. Similarly, in essence God the Son

eyes for executing God’s judgment upon the universe and to transfuse and infuse all that God is into His chosen people to fulfill God’s eternal purpose, which will consummate in the building up of God’s eternal habitation and full expression, the New Jerusalem. Revelation 4:5 says, “Out of the throne come forth lightnings and voices and thunders. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.” Christ carries out God’s administration by the shining of the seven Spirits as the seven lamps of fire. The seven Spirits are burning, shining, observing, searching, judging, and infusing for the intensified work of God’s operation for His economy.

Ultimately, at the end of Revelation, the Spirit as the consummation of the Triune God not only speaks to, enlightens, and supplies God’s people but also, through His divine dispensing, becomes joined to them in an intrinsic union (22:17). The view of the Trinity in the book of Revelation is the final unveiling of the Triune God in the Bible and can be understood only in the light of the divine economy. The complexities of the economical Trinity in

this book are related to the finalization of God's New Testament economy and the conclusion of the divine revelation. The Divine Trinity continually dispenses Himself with all His riches into His chosen people to reconstitute their being with His life, nature, element, and essence. The ultimate issue of the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity will be the consummate expression of God in eternity.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ in His Processes

The ultimate unveiling of God's economy in Revelation centers on the revelation of Jesus Christ (1:1). Jesus Christ is the all-inclusive, excellent, marvelous, mysterious, and wonderful One. In the Old Testament He is revealed in types, figures, shadows, allegories, history, poetry, and prophecies. In the Gospels Christ is revealed as God manifested in the flesh through His living, work, teachings, death, resurrection, and ascension. In the Acts and the Epistles He is revealed through His disciples, by direct accounts, plain words, and clear teachings. Finally in Revelation, the revelation of Jesus Christ reaches its conclusion, completion, and consummation. In this final book Christ is revealed in at least twenty-six aspects (Lee, *Revelation* 43-49)—Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn of the dead, the Ruler of the kings of the earth (v. 5), the Son of God (2:18), the Son of Man (1:13), the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End, the Alpha and the Omega (v. 17; 2:8; 22:13), the living One (1:18), the Holy One, the true One (3:7), the faithful One (19:11), the Amen, the beginning of the creation of God (3:14), the Root of David (5:5), the Offspring of David (22:16), the Lion of the tribe of Judah (5:5), the Lamb (v. 6; 21:23; 22:1), the King of kings, the Lord of lords (19:16), the Word of God (v. 13), the morning star (22:16), the lamp (21:23), the Husband (v. 2), and another Angel (7:2; 8:3; 10:1; 18:1).

Christ is also revealed in the processes that He passed through for the carrying out of His ministry to save sinners, produce the churches, raise up the overcomers, and build up the New Jerusalem as the ultimate consummation of the universal expression of the Triune God for eternity. In His processes He was tried through sufferings as bronze is fired in a furnace (1:15), He passed through an all-inclusive death and a glorious resurrection (v. 18; 2:8), and He accomplished a victorious ascension into heaven (4:1-2; 5:6). In addition, Christ is revealed in His second coming, both secretly as a thief and openly on the cloud (3:3; 16:15; 1:7; 14:14; 19:11), to rapture the believers, save Israel, take possession of the earth, and defeat Antichrist and his armies at Armageddon.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ as the High Priest and the Lion-Lamb

The revelation of Jesus Christ in the final book of the Bible is both ultimate and unique, conveying several

aspects of Christ in God's economy that are unveiled in no other book. In chapter 1 Christ is the Son of Man in the midst of the churches as the heavenly High Priest in His priestly garments, caring for the churches in His humanity in love yet with a willingness to judge (vv. 13-16). He is clothed with a garment reaching to the feet (the priestly robe—Exo. 28:33-35) and girded about at the breasts with a golden girdle, signifying His care for the churches in love and divine strength. His head and hair are as white as white wool, as snow, signifying His ancientness in His heavenly, divine nature. Moreover, His eyes are like a flame of fire, and His feet like shining bronze. Fire is for divine judgment (1 Cor. 3:13; Heb. 6:8; 10:27; 12:29). The Lord's eyes being like a flame of fire is mainly for His judgment both of the church and the world. When He comes to take possession of the earth by exercising judgment over it, even His feet will be like pillars of fire (Rev. 10:1). Bronze also signifies divine judgment (Exo. 27:1-6). That Christ's feet are like shining bronze signifies that His perfect and bright walk qualifies Him to exercise divine judgment for the carrying out of God's economy.

As the High Priest, Christ's voice is like the sound of many waters, the sound of the voice of the almighty God (Ezek. 1:24), indicating the seriousness and solemnity of His speaking. Out of His mouth proceeds a sharp two-edged sword—His discerning, judging, and slaying word (Heb. 4:12; Eph. 6:17)—that deals with all negative persons and matters. Moreover, His face shines as the sun shines in its power, which is His judging enlightenment for bringing in His kingdom (Matt. 16:28—17:2). Such a One is living forever and holds the keys of death and of Hades. The revelation of Christ as the High Priest in Revelation 1 is both ultimate and unique, depicting a judging Christ with a fearsome visage who is active to purge, purify, and perfect the churches as His testimony in the accomplishing of God's economy for the fulfillment of His purpose.

Christ is also revealed in Revelation as the One ministering in the heavens for the carrying out of God's economy in the opening of the seven seals. Chapter 4 unveils the scene in the heavens, in the center of which is the throne of God, on which God sits, ready to execute His universal administration for the fulfillment of His eternal purpose. In chapter 5 is the same scene in the heavens after Christ's ascension. Verse 5 says, "Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so that He may open the scroll and its seven seals." The lion is a symbol of Christ, portraying Him as a strong fighter against the enemy, as prophesied in Genesis 49:8-9. In Revelation 5 Christ is the ultimate Overcomer, the fighting, victorious Lion, who is worthy to open the scroll and its seven seals for God's economy. Verse 6 continues,

I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders 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.

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 sins of fallen man. By so doing, He removed the hindrances to the fulfillment of God's purpose. To the enemy Christ is a Lion, the Fighter, and to us He is a Lamb, the Redeemer. Hence, He is the Lion-Lamb for the accomplishment of God's economy.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ as "Another Angel"

In Revelation, Christ as the Executor of God's New Testament economy is revealed in a unique way as the Angel (7:2; 8:3; 10:1; 18:1). In the Old Testament, Christ was called "the Angel of Jehovah"; that Angel was God Himself (Gen. 22:11-12; Exo. 3:2-6; Judg. 6:11-24; Zech. 1:11-12; 2:8-11; 3:1-7).¹ Here in Revelation He is again referred to as an Angel (οἰκονομία, a messenger, one who

Another Angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and much incense was given to Him to offer with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense went up with the prayers of the saints out of the hand of the Angel before God. And the Angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar and cast it to the earth; and there were thunders and voices and lightnings and an earthquake. (vv. 3-5)

Here Christ, the High Priest in the heavenly temple, holds a golden censer, signifying the prayers of the saints. The incense is Christ Himself with all His merits to be added to the prayers of the saints that the prayers offered upon the golden altar might be acceptable to God. In figure, this incense is burned and ascends to God with the prayers of the saints, causing the saints' prayers to become effective before God. In this scene, Christ as the Angel fills the censer with the fire of the altar and casts it to the earth. This implies the answer to the prayers of the saints, especially the prayer of the martyrs in the fifth seal (6:9-11) and the prayer mentioned in Luke 18:7-8. The prayer of the saints in Revelation 8 must be for the judgment of the earth, which opposes God's economy. The answer to the saints' prayers is the executing of God's judgment upon the earth through the succeeding seven trumpets. The third mention of Christ as the Angel is in chapter 10. Verses 1 and 2 say,

I saw another strong Angel coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon His head, and His face was like the sun, and His feet like pillars of fire; and He had

in His hand a little opened scroll. And He placed His right foot on the sea and the left on the land.

When Christ is seen "on the cloud" by all the tribes of the earth, His coming will be open, visible, and manifest (14:14; Matt. 24:30; 26:64). In Revelation 10, however, Christ is still clothed with a cloud, indicating that at this point His coming is still secret and not yet open. The rainbow upon His head indicates that Christ in His judgment upon the earth will keep the covenant that God made with Noah concerning the earth (Gen. 9:8-17). It indicates also that Christ will execute judgment according to the faithful and covenant-keeping God who sits on the throne with the rainbow around it (Rev. 4:2-3). Christ's placing His feet on the sea and on the land is His treading on them to take possession of them, according to the principle of Deuteronomy 11:24: "Every place on which the sole of your foot treads will be yours." This indicates that Christ is coming down to take possession of the earth. Only He is worthy to open the scroll of God's economy, and only He is qualified to possess the earth (Recovery Version, Rev. 10:1-2, notes).

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is sent). The expressions *another Angel* and *another strong Angel* indicate that Christ is not a common angel but One of "another class, another appearance" (Panton, as per Nee 57), a unique and special Angel sent by God. Revelation 7:2 and 3 say,

I saw another Angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and He cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom authority was given to harm the earth and the sea, saying, Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we seal the slaves of our God upon their foreheads.

Just before the opening of the seventh seal, which is the major part of the great tribulation, Christ delays the destruction of the things on the earth until the one hundred forty-four thousand of Israel—those who keep the commandments of God during the tribulation (12:17)—are marked out. This is the shepherding work of Christ to preserve the chosen of Israel, who will ultimately become components of the New Jerusalem (21:12). Chapter 8 tells us,

Revelation 18:1 says, “After these things I saw another Angel coming down out of heaven, having great authority; and the earth was illumined with His glory.” In 10:1 Christ is still clothed with a cloud, and in 14:14 He is sitting on a cloud. In chapter 18, however, His glory shines over the earth, indicating that His open coming back to earth is even nearer. At the end of the great tribulation, Christ will shine over the earth to destroy the material Babylon the Great with His great authority (v. 2). According to 7:2; 8:3; 10:1; and 18:1, Christ, the Angel of God, stands on the position of One who has been sent by God to execute God’s economy. As the Angel, Christ seals the chosen Israelites and cares for the redeemed believers to preserve them while He executes His judgment upon the earth; He offers the incense of the merit of His person and work with the prayers of the saints for their effectiveness and acceptance to God; He executes God’s judgment upon the earth, the heavens, and upon men; He takes possession of the sea and the land at His second coming; and He comes in His illuminating glory to announce the destruction of Babylon the Great. This is the wonderful, active, and operative Christ in His service for God’s economy for the fulfillment of God’s eternal purpose.

God’s Economy in His Universal Administration

As the concluding, completing, and consummating book of the Bible, Revelation unveils the carrying out of God’s economy through His universal administration, the center of which is Christ. In the universal, divine administration Christ is the Ruler of the kings of the earth (1:5). All the people on earth are His, and He is the Ruler of all the nations. Christ as God’s Administrator is above all kings and leaders to rule sovereignly over the earth with His authority so that the environment may be fit for God’s chosen people to receive His salvation. In this function He is the King of kings and Lord of lords who will lead His army to judge and defeat Antichrist with his false prophet and all his followers from the nations (19:11-16). In the coming age Christ will be the King in the kingdom, ruling over the nations with His believers (20:4, 6; 2:26-27).

The scene in heaven in chapters 4 and 5 reveals Christ as the universal Administrator, the Executor, of God’s economy. In the center of this scene there is the throne of God (4:2) that in this book is mainly for judgment and administration, which is a matter of God’s economy. This throne is the throne of the Father, which became also the throne of Christ the Son, which He will share in the coming age with His overcoming saints and in eternity with all His redeemed (Matt. 19:28; Rev. 3:21; 22:1, 3, 5). It is the throne of universal worship from the saints, angels, and all creatures (4:9-11; 5:13; 19:4-5), the throne from which issues the scroll of God’s economy through His administration (5:1, 7), the throne of God’s judgment in His wrath (6:16-17), the throne of God’s care and the Lamb’s

shepherding (7:9-10, 17), the throne in the heavenly temple, before which is the golden altar of incense (8:3), the scene of the rapture of the man-child and of the one hundred forty-four thousand firstfruits (12:5; 14:3), the throne of the accomplishment of all things for God’s judgment and God’s expression (16:17), the throne of the final judgment of men and demons (20:11-13), the throne of God and of the Lamb for the universal, eternal administration of the new heaven and new earth, and the throne of the supply of eternal life, out of which will proceed the living water of life, in which the tree of life grows, as the supply of God’s redeemed in eternity (21:3, 5; 22:1-2, 5).

God’s administration for the execution of His economy is also seen in the scroll, the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven bowls. The scroll (5:2) is the new covenant, the grand title deed enacted with the blood of the Lamb, embodying the destiny of the church, Israel, the world, and the universe. The seven seals are the contents of the scroll and the contents of the book of Revelation itself, for this book is the opening, the unveiling, of the seven seals. Through His incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection, Christ as the Lion-Lamb is fully qualified in His ascension to open the mystery of God’s economy which is contained in the seven seals. The unveiling of this mystery began immediately after Christ’s ascension and will continue into eternity future. The first four seals comprise four horses with their riders, signifying the preaching and advance of the gospel, the raging of war, the spreading of famine, and the killing of death as a result of war and famine (6:1-8). All these—the gospel, war, famine, and death—will continue until the end of the age. The fifth seal discloses Christian martyrdom, from the first century to the time near the end of this age, with the prayer of the martyred saints from Paradise for vengeance (vv. 9-11). The sixth seal, which marks the beginning of supernatural calamities in the great tribulation, is God’s answer to the cry of the martyred saints in the fifth seal (vv. 12-17).

The seventh seal brings in the seven trumpets, which are the contents of the seventh seal (8:1-2). The first six trumpets execute God’s judgment first on the environment of rebellious mankind and then on rebellious men directly (vv. 7-12; 9:1, 13). After this, on the negative side, the seventh trumpet brings in the plagues of the seven bowls (15:1, 7) and, on the positive side, brings in the coming of the eternal kingdom of Christ (11:15, 17), the judgment of the dead (v. 18; John 5:27-29), the giving of the reward at the judgment seat of Christ to the prophets and the saints (2 Cor. 5:10), and the giving of reward at the throne of God’s glory to those who fear God’s name (Matt. 25:31-34; Rev. 14:6-7). Hence, the seventh trumpet includes all the things from the end of the great tribulation to eternity future—the last plagues; the resurrection and rapture of the saints; the rewarding of the saints; the marriage of the Lamb (19:7-9); the coming

back of Christ to the earth; the destruction of Antichrist, the false prophet, their followers, the material Babylon the Great, and Satan (18:1—19:4; v. 11—20:3); the reigning in the millennial kingdom (vv. 4-6); the final judgment upon the earth, Satan, and the dead (vv. 7-15); and the ultimate consummation of God's economy for His purpose in the new heaven and new earth with the New Jerusalem for eternity (21:1—22:5).

God's Economy in His Judgment

Revelation, as the concluding book of God's administration, is a book of judgment. As the High Priest walking in the midst of the churches, Christ carries out His shepherding and perfecting of the churches by exercising judgment through the enlightening of His eyes, which are like a flame of fire (1:14). One of the functions of the priests in the tabernacle was to dress the lamps, that is, to trim their charred wicks (Exo. 30:7). As the High Priest in Revelation 1, Christ is trimming the wicks of the seven golden lampstands, the seven churches, cutting away those things that are not needed and that frustrate their shining.

Even more than the administration of the affairs of earth and heaven, which is revealed in Revelation, the dispensing of the riches of Christ into His members is the vital, inward, and intrinsic aspect of the economy of God.

At the end of this age, Christ as God's Administrator will judge all the world by the sixth seal, the seven trumpets, and the seven bowls. Through the sixth seal, the earth and the hosts of heaven will be shaken and changed both as a warning to men on the earth and as the initiation of the coming great tribulation (6:12-17). Following this, the first four trumpets of the seventh seal execute God's judgment on the earth, the sea, the rivers, and the heavenly bodies (8:7-12). The fifth and sixth trumpets, as the first and second woes, respectively, will touch rebellious men directly (v. 13—9:21). After this, the seventh trumpet brings in the third woe, which is the plagues of the seven bowls, in which the wrath of God is finished (11:14-15; 15:1, 7), and the destruction of the destroyers of the earth immediately upon the Lord's return (11:18). All these judgments will transpire as part of the "hour of trial, which is about to come on the whole inhabited earth, to try them who dwell on the earth" (3:10).

God's judgment in His administration is carried out through fire (1 Cor. 3:13; Heb. 6:8; 10:27); "Our God is also a consuming fire" (12:29). When Christ comes to

take possession of the earth by exercising judgment over it, His feet will be like pillars of fire (Rev. 10:1), and when He comes to fight against Antichrist and his armies, His eyes will be a flame of fire (19:12). Verse 2 of chapter 15 says, "I saw as it were a glassy sea mingled with fire and those who come away victorious from the beast and from his image and from the number of his name standing on the glassy sea, having harps of God." Those who stand on the glassy sea, having overcome the beast, his image, and the number of his name, sing, "Your righteous judgments have been manifested" (v. 4). This glassy sea is not of water but of fire. Since the deluge, God, in accordance with His promise that He would not judge the earth and all living creatures again with water (Gen. 9:15), always exercises His judgment upon man with fire. Daniel 7 reveals that God's throne of judgment is a fiery flame out of which a fiery stream issues (vv. 9-10). The flame of God's judging fire sweeps all negative things in the entire universe into this glassy sea. Eventually, the glassy sea becomes the lake of fire, into which Antichrist, the false prophet, Satan, unbelieving men, the rebellious angels, and demons are cast (19:20; 20:10-15; Matt. 25:41).

Near the beginning of the great tribulation, Christ as the Executor of God's administration will execute a special judgment upon apostate Christendom, which is called Babylon the Great, for it is God's mind to do so (Rev. 17:5, 16-17). Then at the end of the tribulation, Christ will judge the material Babylon, the embodiment of today's godless world system (18:10, 20). Following this, 19:11-13 says,

I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sits on it called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. And His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems, and He has a name written which no one knows but Himself. And He is clothed with a garment dipped in blood; and His name is called the Word of God.

As the Executor of God's administration through judgment, Christ will judge the rebellious nations in the war at Armageddon, in which He will descend as the Word of God to destroy Antichrist, his rebellious armies, and the false prophet. This will be the treading of the winepress of the fury of God, as mentioned in 14:18-20 and 16:16.

As God's Administrator, Christ will judge several categories of persons before and after the millennium. Verse 18 of chapter 11 says,

The nations became angry, and Your wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to give the reward to Your slaves the prophets and to the saints

and to those who fear Your name, to the small and to the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth.

According to the sequence of events in this verse, the judgment of the dead here is not the judgment at the great white throne after the millennium. Rather, it is a judgment before the millennium as to who should share in the resurrection of life (John 5:27-29; 1 Cor. 15:23) and who should be left to the resurrection of condemnation after the millennium (Rev. 20:11-12). The giving of rewards will also transpire at Christ's second coming. After the resurrection and rapture of the saints, Christ at His judgment seat will judge the believers to determine who among them is worthy of a reward and who needs further discipline (2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 3:12-15). Then at the commencement of the millennial kingdom, Christ will set up the throne of His glory to judge the nations, separating the sheep from the goats based upon their treatment of God's suffering people during the tribulation (Matt. 25:31-46). The sheep will then enter into the millennium as the nations over whom Christ with His overcomers will execute God's administration with authority and judgment in righteousness (Rev. 2:26-27; 12:5; 20:4). Lastly, at the end of the millennium, Christ as God's Administrator will judge the unbelievers in the resurrection of the unrighteous at the great white throne (20:11-12, 15).

God's Economy in Christ's Second Coming

Revelation 1:7 says, "Behold, He comes with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the land will mourn over Him. Yes, amen." Christ is coming! In this book, Christ's coming back is revealed in two aspects (Lee, *Revelation* 20-21). In one aspect Christ will come secretly as a thief to steal the precious things, that is, the watchful, ready, and overcoming believers (3:3; 16:15). Revelation 3:3 says, "Remember therefore how you have received and heard, and keep it and repent. If therefore you will not watch, I will come as a thief, and you shall by no means know at what hour I will come upon you." As the thief, Christ will come secretly on a day and hour that no one knows (Matt. 24:36). Then at the close of the great tribulation, at the last trumpet (the seventh trumpet), Christ will come openly on the cloud, publicly and with a visible manifestation (Rev. 14:14; 1 Thes. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:52; 2 Thes. 2:1-3). At this time He will come as the Savior to the remnant of Israel (Rev. 1:7; Zech. 12:10), He will reap the harvest of the majority of the living believers, those who still remain on the earth during the tribulation (Rev. 14:15-16), and He will tread the winepress of the fury of God in the war at Armageddon (vv. 18-20; 16:12-16).

In Christ's second coming He will take possession of the earth. As we have seen, Christ as another strong Angel comes down out of heaven and places His right foot on the

sea and the left on the land (10:1-2), signifying that He receives the land and the sea as His possession (cf. Deut. 11:24; Josh. 1:3). This fulfills the poetic prophecy of Psalm 8:

You have caused Him to rule over the works of Your hands; / You have put all things under His feet: / All sheep and oxen, / As well as the beasts of the field, / The birds of heaven and the fish of the sea, / Whatever passes through the paths of the seas. (vv. 6-8)

In His second coming Christ will exercise His right over the earth in order to make the whole earth His kingdom. At the sounding of the seventh trumpet, Revelation 11:15 says, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever." The Lord's reigning forever and ever is His reigning in the millennial kingdom and in the new heaven and new earth with the New Jerusalem. Revelation 12:10 says, "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." When the kingdom in its manifestation comes, the salvation of God, the power of God, and the authority of Christ will come in full with the kingdom. At this time Christ with His overcoming believers as His co-kings will reign on and over the earth and will exercise authority over the nations (2:26; 5:10). In all the foregoing ways, Christ as God's Administrator, the Executor of His economy, will bring all things into a proper order to produce new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells (2 Pet. 3:13-14). Such a new universe will be the scene of the eternal New Jerusalem, the ultimate manifestation of the union of God and man for the consummate expression of the Triune God for eternity.

The Divine Dispensing by the Speaking Christ and the Seven Spirits

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, an economy is a household administration, the management of a household mainly through the apportioning and dispensing of the goods of the house, primarily its food supply. Accordingly, God's economy is His arrangement, plan, and administration to dispense the unsearchable riches of Christ to the members of the church, His household. Even more than the outward administration of the affairs of earth and heaven, which is revealed so thoroughly in Revelation, the dispensing of the riches of Christ into His members is the vital, inward, and intrinsic aspect of the economy of God. No other point is so crucial or so central as this one. God chose us, predestinated us, redeemed us, saved us, and regenerated us for the purpose of dispensing and working Himself into us. God's intention is revealed in the Old Testament through types and figures, but the full development of the revelation concerning God's intention to dispense Himself into us is

in the New Testament. In this sense the entire New Testament is a “dispensing book,” opening the veil to show us God’s desire to dispense Himself in His Divine Trinity into His people (Lee, *Economy* 9-10).

God’s dispensing as the intrinsic contents of His economy is consummated in Revelation, which is the conclusion and completion of the entire Bible. The entire New Testament reveals that in incarnation God was embodied and expressed in Christ the Son (John 1:14, 18), and through His death and resurrection Christ was transfigured to become the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:17). Therefore, the Spirit is the consummation of the processed and consummated Triune God. Moreover, the concluding book of the Bible tells us that this Spirit has been intensified sevenfold to become the seven Spirits. Revelation 5:6 says,

I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders 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.

Eventually, the sevenfold intensification of the Triune God in the overcoming church consummates in the golden lampstands in this age and in the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth in eternity.

In Revelation’s consummated vision of the Triune God, the third of the Trinity is the seven eyes of the second. A person’s eyes are for observing and transfusing. The sevenfold Spirit today is the eyes of our Savior so that He may observe us and transfuse all His riches into us.

The sevenfold intensified life-giving Spirit infuses the riches of the all-inclusive Christ into the churches through His speaking. At the beginning of each of the seven epistles in chapters 2 and 3, Christ presents Himself to each church respectively according to that church’s particular need. To the church in Ephesus, Christ is the One who holds the seven stars and walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands to care for them in love (2:1). To the church in Smyrna, He is the First and the Last, who became dead and lived again, to be the resurrection life to the suffering church (v. 8). To the church in Pergamos, Christ has the sharp two-edged sword, which is His discerning, judging, and slaying word, which is the Spirit (v. 12; 1:16; Eph. 6:17). To the church in Thyatira, Christ is the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire for searching and feet like shining bronze for treading (Rev. 2:18). To the church in

Sardis, Christ is the One who has the seven Spirits of God to enable the dying church to become intensely living (3:1). To the church in Philadelphia Christ is the Holy One, the true One, by whom and with whom the church can be holy, separated from the world, and true, faithful, to God (v. 7). To the church in Laodicea, Christ is the Amen, the firm, steadfast, and trustworthy One (v. 14).

By presenting Himself in these ways through His speaking to the churches, Christ supplies and infuses the churches with what He is and what He has done. Moreover, at the end of each epistle it is the Spirit who speaks to the churches (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). On the one hand, this indicates that in this consummate book the Spirit is the Lord and the Lord is the Spirit, and on the other hand, it emphasizes that in the darkness of the church’s degradation the sevenfold intensified Spirit is vitally active not only to perfect the churches through His judgment but also to supply them through His dispensing of the riches of the Triune God. Eventually, the sevenfold intensification of the Triune God in the overcoming church consummates in the golden lampstands in this age and in the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth in eternity.

The Divine Dispensing by the Tree of Life, the Hidden Manna, and the Feast

To the church in Ephesus, the speaking Spirit says, “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God” (2:7). The tree of life signifies the Triune God embodied in Christ as life to man in the form of food. That God placed man in front of the tree of life (Gen. 2:8-9) indicates that from the beginning God desired man to receive Him as his life by eating Him organically and assimilating Him metabolically, that God may become the very constituent of man’s being. In Revelation 2:7, as in 1 Peter 2:24, *tree* is ξύλον, meaning “wood,” a synecdoche for the cross. Christ passed through death and resurrection so that man may have life and live by eating Him (John 10:10; 6:51, 57, 63). Eventually, the crucified and resurrected Christ, as the embodiment of all the riches of God, will be the nourishment of all God’s redeemed people for eternity.

In the present age the church must receive the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity by eating Christ as the tree of life. Eating the tree of life, that is, enjoying Christ as our life supply, should be the primary matter in the church life. However, due to the degradation of the church, the Lord came in to call the overcomers to replace the church in the accomplishing of God’s economy. To those who overcome to eat the tree of life in the

church today, the further, higher enjoyment of the tree of life will be a reward in the New Jerusalem as the Paradise of God in the coming age. Eventually, to eat the tree of life—Christ with all the divine riches—will be the eternal issue of God’s redemption as the eternal portion of all the saved ones, whose names are written in the book of life (Rev. 22:2, 14; 21:27).

To the church in Pergamos, the speaking Spirit says, “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give of the hidden manna” (2:17). According to the picture in Exodus 16, manna is a type of Christ as the heavenly food that enables God’s people to go His way. The “open” manna was the common portion of all God’s people in the wilderness. However, a particular portion of manna was preserved in a golden pot concealed in the Ark of the Testimony, which was in the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle (vv. 32-34; Heb. 9:4). Whereas the open manna was for the Lord’s people to enjoy in a public way, the hidden manna, signifying the hidden Christ, is a special portion reserved for His overcoming seekers, who overcome the degradation of the worldly church, as signified by the church in Pergamos. While the church goes the way of the world, these overcomers come forth to abide in the presence of God in the Holy of Holies (our regenerated spirit—Heb. 10:19; 4:12; 2 Tim. 4:22), where they enjoy the hidden Christ as a special portion for their daily supply in the deepest way.

In Matthew 6:6 the Lord Jesus said, “When you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.” In order to enjoy the hidden manna, we must contact the heavenly Father in secret, experience some secret enjoyment of the Father, and receive some secret answer from Him. Such a secret, hidden, and inner enjoyment will cause us to have deep “roots” in the Lord with much growth beneath the “soil” (13:5-6, 8). If we seek the Lord, overcome the degradation of the church, and enjoy a special portion of the Lord today, He as the hidden manna will be a reward to us in the coming kingdom. To enjoy Christ in this way is to receive the divine dispensing of the Triune God in His economy in the deepest and most inward, intimate, and intrinsic way. As we eat Christ and preserve Him as the hidden manna within us, He makes us overcomers and also transforms us into white stones for the building of God’s dwelling place (Rev. 2:17), which will consummate in the New Jerusalem. May we all know, treasure, and preserve the enjoyment of Christ as the hidden manna.

In Revelation 3:20 the Lord says to the church in Laodicea, “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.” To dine

(δειπνέω) is to take the chief meal of the day, to eat not merely one kind of food but the riches of a feast. Allegorically, it is to share in the “most intimate and blissful intercourse” (Thayer 127) with Christ as the consummated life supply. This rich feast is alluded to by the eating of the rich produce of the good land of Canaan by the children of Israel (Josh. 5:10-12). The divine dispensing is carried out by our eating of Christ as the tree of life, the hidden manna, and as the feast full of His riches. Eventually, at the Lord’s coming, the enjoyment of the Lord as food will consummate in the participation in the marriage dinner of the Lamb (Rev. 19:9), the wedding feast (Matt. 22:2), as a reward to the overcoming believers to usher them into the enjoyment of the millennium.

The Divine Dispensing by the Water of Life through the Lamb’s Shepherding

Revelation 7:9 and 17 say,

After these things I saw, and behold, there was a great multitude which no one could number, out of every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes and palm branches in their hands...For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and guide them to springs of waters of life; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

The great multitude of the redeemed, who have been raptured to the presence of God, will enjoy God’s care and the Lamb’s shepherding for eternity. This shepherding includes both the feeding of the redeemed ones in the “green pastures” (Psa. 23:1-2), signifying Christ as the feeding place for His sheep with the riches of His life, and the satisfaction of their thirst through the “waters of rest,” signifying the Spirit who was consummated in Christ’s resurrection (John 7:37-39). In the New Jerusalem the supplying Triune God will give to him who thirsts from the spring of the water of life freely (Rev. 21:6; 22:17), and the river of water of life will proceed out of the throne of God and of the Lamb (v. 1). The seven Spirits who are the lamps of fire in this age, executing God’s New Testament economy, will become the river of water, saturating the holy city of God, the New Jerusalem. Fire is to purge, refine, and produce, and water is to saturate and supply. The Spirit is the refining fire in this age, and He is also the saturating, supplying water in this age, in the coming age, and in eternity.

The book of Revelation ends with a final greeting: “The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen” (v. 21). This concluding word discloses the present practicality of the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity for His economy. Only the grace of the Lord Jesus can enable us to live and walk according to the visions and prophecies

in this book. Not only this book but also the entire Bible closes with this grace, the grace that enables us to experience the all-inclusive Christ and participate in the Triune God so that we may become His eternal corporate expression for the fulfillment of His eternal purpose.

The Intrinsic Oneness of the Triune God and the Tripartite Man

The divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity into redeemed man begins in man's spirit at the time of his regeneration (John 3:6; Rom. 8:16; 2 Tim. 4:22) and continues with sanctification, renewing, and transformation in man's soul as his person—his mind, emotion, and will (Eph. 3:17; 4:23; Rom. 12:2). Eventually, even the believers' bodies will be transfigured and conformed to the body of Christ's glory (Phil. 3:21). As a result of this threefold dispensing (1 Thes. 5:23), the believers are conformed to the image of Christ, become like Him, and even become Him in life, nature, and expression but not in His Godhead (Rom. 8:29; 1 John 3:2). This intrinsic oneness of the Triune God and the tripartite man involves a union of the divine and

consummated God and the regenerated believers, the persons, indwell one another, that is, they coinhere, for the purpose and goal of carrying out God's economy. This coinhering is an incorporation (Lee, *Issue* 25-26, 41).

The union, mingling, and incorporation of God and man are brought to their ultimate consummation in the book of Revelation. To see the incorporation we must consider again the hidden manna in 2:17. Because the tabernacle in the Old Testament is a type both of the individual, enterable Christ and of the church as the increase and enlargement of Christ (John 1:14; 3:30; 12:24), it is a sign of the universal incorporation of God and man. Christ as the hidden manna is the center of the tabernacle. The hidden manna is in the golden pot, signifying the divine nature of God, indicating that Christ is in the Father (14:10-11). That the golden pot is in the Ark, made of acacia wood overlaid with gold, signifies that the Father is in Christ, who is of two natures—divine and human—in a mutual indwelling, that is, an incorporation. Moreover, the Ark is in the Holy of Holies, signifying the regenerated spirit of the believers indwelt by the Holy Spirit. This

mutual indwelling of the Father, Son, Spirit, and the believers corresponds to the four *ins* in John 14. This is the incorporation of the processed God with the regenerated believers. The way to be incorporated into the tabernacle is to eat Christ as the hidden manna. The more we eat Christ, the more we are incorporated into the Triune God as a universal incorporation. The consummation of this incorporation will be the New Jerusalem, which is called the tabernacle of God in eternity (Rev. 21:3). This is the deepest, most intrinsic application of

Christ's promise to the overcomers in 2:17. By enjoying the depths of Christ in a secret and intimate way, we are incorporated into the Triune God to become His consummated, eternal, universal, and corporate expression.

The Oneness and Living in the Divine-human Incorporation

After speaking of the hidden manna, verse 17 continues, "To him I will give a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no one knows except him who receives it." By partaking of the dispensing of the Triune God through our enjoyment of Christ as our life supply, we are transformed into precious stones for God's building (2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Cor. 3:12; 1 Pet. 2:5). These stones are justified and approved, as indicated in Revelation 2:17 by the color white. Just as a name designates a person, a new name designates a transformed person. This new name is the interpretation of the experience of the one who has been transformed. A transformed person undergoes a metabolic change in his entire inner being so that he has the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16), the inward parts of Christ

By enjoying the depths of Christ in a secret and intimate way, we are incorporated into the Triune God to become His consummated, eternal, universal, and corporate expression.

human lives, a mingling of the divine and human natures, and an incorporation of the divine and human persons.

In the spiritual sense of the word, to incorporate is to unite intimately, to blend, combine, or mingle thoroughly into a whole. Thus, *incorporation* refers to persons in a relationship of coinhering, that is, of mutual indwelling one another. In John 14:17 Jesus told His disciples that the Spirit of reality "abides with you and shall be *in you*" (emphasis added). The Spirit, the third of the Divine Trinity, being the reality of the Son, the second of the Divine Trinity and the embodiment of the Triune God, abides not only with the regenerated believers but also dwells in them. Following this Jesus said, "In that day you will know that I am *in My Father*, and you *in Me*, and I *in you*" (v. 20, emphasis added). *I am in My Father* indicates that the Son and the Father are incorporated into one. *You in Me* indicates that the regenerated believers are incorporated into the Son and into the Father in the Son. Then *I in you* declares that the Son in the Father is incorporated into the regenerated believers. The four *ins* in verses 17 and 20 indicate that in the divine and mystical realm, the

(Phil. 1:8—σπλάγχνα: bowels, inward affection, tender mercy, sympathy), and the will and determination of Christ (2 Cor. 5:9—φιλοτιμέομαι: earnest and ambitious striving). Such a person bears the image of Christ by his every expression. In principle, this is to become the same as Christ in life, nature, expression, and function for His corporate reproduction and expression in the church today and in the New Jerusalem in the coming age and in eternity.²

Revelation 3:12 says, “He who overcomes,...I will write upon him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which descends out of heaven from My God, and My new name.” The name of God denotes God Himself, the name of the New Jerusalem denotes the city, and the name of the Lord denotes the Lord. That the name of God, the name of the New Jerusalem, and the name of the Lord are written upon the overcomer indicates that what God is, the nature of the New Jerusalem, and the person of the Lord have all been wrought into the overcomer. Since the name of a person denotes the person himself, we may say that to be given the name of God, the holy city, and the Lord is to become God, the holy city, and the Lord through an inward, intrinsic oneness with the Triune God. Those who share this intrinsic oneness become the “holy city” (21:2, 10), sharing the holy nature of God, and they become pillars in the temple of God, who shall by no means go out of it anymore (3:12). Again, this portrays the ultimate issue of the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity into His chosen people—the universal, enlarged incorporation of the Triune God with redeemed, regenerated, transformed, and glorified tripartite man. Such an intrinsic union in incorporation will be the portion of the overcomers in the church age and the coming kingdom age and the portion of all the redeemed in eternity (14:1; 22:4). To the church Sardis, the speaking Spirit says,

You have a few names in Sardis who have not defiled their garments, and they will walk with Me in white because they are worthy. He who overcomes will be clothed thus, in white garments, and I shall by no means erase his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. (3:4-5)

Garments in the Bible signify what we are in our walk and living. White garments in particular signify that the walk and living of the overcomers are pure, approved, and unspotted with death. These garments are Christ Himself lived out of the believers as their subjective righteousness. Such righteousness is the expression of God, who lives in us (1 Cor. 1:30; Phil. 3:9). Paul said, “To me, to live is Christ” (1:21). Christ was not only Paul’s life but also his living. He lived Christ because Christ lived in him (Gal. 2:20). To live Christ is to be one with Him so that He and we have one life and one living. It is to live together as one person: Christ lives within us as our life, and we live

Christ without as His living. This is the practical expression of two persons—Christ and we, we and Christ—in a mutual coinherence. Such a living in the divine-human incorporation is the portion of the overcoming saints today, their wedding garment at the marriage dinner of the Lamb (Rev. 19:8), their battle dress for the destruction of Christ’s enemies at Armageddon (v. 14), and their prize in the millennial kingdom (3:5).

The oneness and living in the divine-human incorporation is expressed in 22:17, which says, “The Spirit and the bride say, Come!” In chapters 2 and 3 the Spirit is speaking to the churches. At the end of Revelation the Spirit and the bride, the church, are speaking as one. The all-inclusive, sevenfold intensified, life-giving, processed, indwelling Spirit is the consummation of the Triune God, who passed through the processes of incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. The bride is the consummation of the tripartite man, who passes through the processes of regeneration, sanctification, transformation, and glorification. Ultimately, the processed Triune God is the Bridegroom, and the processed tripartite man is the bride. These two consummated persons—the processed God and the transformed and glorified tripartite man—become a divine couple in eternity, living and speaking together in the consummation of the enlarged divine and human incorporation for the eternal expression of the Triune God.

The Seven Golden Lampstands as the Testimony of Jesus

The book of Revelation conveys first the unique and ultimate revelation of Christ and then the particular and consummate testimony of Jesus. The issue of God’s New Testament economy is the testimony of Jesus, which is the testifying church, as the spirit—the reality, substance, disposition, and characteristic—of the prophecy of this book (1:2, 9; 19:10). In Revelation the testimony of Jesus is first seen as the seven churches, which are the seven golden lampstands (1:11-12). That the lampstands are golden signifies that they are constituted with the divine nature. Although the church is composed of humanity, its basic nature is divinity. This strongly indicates that in the church, the human and divine natures are mingled as one. The intrinsic nature of the church of redeemed humanity is the “golden,” divine nature of God.

The lampstands are a mysterious figure, or sign, that portray the person of the Triune God and the Triune God’s economy to dispense Himself into man and make Himself one with man in order to have a great, corporate, and eternal expression of Himself. In Exodus 25:31-40 the lampstand in the tabernacle is a sign of the Triune God embodied and expressed, that is, Christ Himself as the embodiment and expression of the Triune God. Pure gold as the substance of the lampstand signifies God the Father

in His divine nature; the form of the lampstand signifies God the Son as the embodiment of God the Father (John 14:9-11; 2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15; 2:9); and the seven lamps signify God the Spirit being the seven Spirits of God for the sevenfold intensified expression of the Father in the Son. In Zechariah 4:2-6 the emphasis of the lampstand is on the all-inclusive Spirit as seven shining lamps, which are the seven eyes of Jehovah (3:9; 4:10) and the seven eyes of the Lamb, not only to observe and to judge but also to impart the divine life into God's people for the carrying out of God's economy to build up the church, which will consummate in the New Jerusalem as His eternal habitation.

In Revelation the lampstands are not only one but seven in number, signifying the seven local churches (1:11-12, 20). The seven lampstands in Revelation are the reproduction and multiplication of the one lampstand in the tabernacle, the temple, and the recovered temple. In the same way, the seven churches in Revelation are the embodiment of Christ and the sevenfold reproduction of the Spirit for God's building. Thus, the golden lampstands are the union, mingling, and incorporation of the Triune God with the

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tripartite man. The shining Spirit is the reality of the shining Christ, and the shining churches are the sevenfold reproduction and expression of the shining Spirit to accomplish God's eternal purpose that the New Jerusalem as the shining city may be consummated.

The Testimony of Jesus at the End of This Age and in Eternity

The testimony of Jesus in Revelation is also seen in the great multitude serving God in the heavenly temple in 7:9-17. These are the redeemed saints who have been raptured to the throne of God to enjoy His care and the Lamb's shepherding. Before the throne for eternity, the redeemed will serve God, enjoy God's tabernacling over them, be shepherded by feeding on Him, and drink the springs of waters of the eternal life. In eternity the throne of God and of the Lamb will be the center of the New Jerusalem (22:1-3). Therefore, the scene of shepherding through eating and drinking in 7:15-17 is before the throne in the New Jerusalem, God's eternal habitation for His expression.

In chapter 12 the testimony of Jesus is seen in the great sign of a woman with her man-child (vv. 1-6). This woman is "clothed with the sun, and the moon underneath her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars" (v. 1). The woman signifies the totality of God's people on the earth (cf. Gen. 37:9), consisting of the patriarchs (the twelve stars); the Old Testament people of God (the moon) in the time of the law, before the coming of Christ as the rising sun (Luke 1:78); and God's people in the New Testament age (the sun) as luminaries in the world and light in the Lord through their oneness with God, who is light (Phil. 2:15; Eph. 5:8; Matt. 5:14; 1 John 1:5). The man-child signifies the stronger part of God's people—the overcomers as a collective unit that fights the battle for God and brings God's kingdom down to earth. At the end of this age, the man-child will be resurrected and raptured to participate in the casting down of Satan to the earth for the coming of the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ (Rev. 12:7-11).

In chapter 14 the testimony of Jesus is the firstfruits and the harvest, God's people who are alive at the time of Christ's return to earth (vv. 1-5, 14-16). The firstfruits in particular are the first of God's "crop" to ripen in the field. These first-mature believers, who are ready and watchful for the Lord's coming, will be raptured to the heavenly Mount Zion prior to the great tribulation. Their intrinsic oneness with the Lord is signified by the name of the Lamb and of His Father written on their foreheads. They are one with the Lamb and with the Father, and they belong to the Lamb and to the Father. In principle, these are those living overcomers who are nourished

by the hidden manna to become white stones, upon whom a new name—the name of God, the name of the city of God, and the name of Christ—is written (2:17; 3:12). The harvest in 14:14-16 are those living believers, who after being ripened with the help of the scorching sun of the tribulation, are raptured at a later time.

Some of the believers who remain on the earth after the rapture, the harvesting, of the firstfruits will be martyred for their testimony, coming away victorious from the beast, Antichrist; from his image; and from the number of his name. These "late" overcomers standing on the glassy sea are also considered the testimony of Jesus in Revelation. After being martyred under the persecution of Antichrist, they will be resurrected to reign with Christ in the millennium (20:4).

The testimony of Jesus is also seen in the bride, the wife, of the Lamb. Verse 7 of chapter 19 says, "Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." The marriage of the Lamb is the issue of the completion of

God's New Testament economy. God's economy is to obtain for Christ a bride, the church, through His redemption and divine life. By the continual working of the Holy Spirit through all the centuries, this goal will be attained at the end of the age. Then the bride, the overcoming believers, will be ready, and the kingdom of God will come.

Immediately after the marriage dinner of the Lamb and the bride, Christ will come to the earth to judge the nations in righteousness and make war with Antichrist and his armies at Armageddon (vv. 11-13). Verse 14 says, "The armies which are in heaven followed Him on white horses, dressed in fine linen, white and clean." In principle, the part of the church which will be the man-child to fight against the enemy in the heavens will also be the army to fight with Christ against Satan, Antichrist, and his armies on earth. The battle dress of the army—fine linen, white and clean—is the same as the wedding garment of the bride, signifying the righteousnesses of the saints (v. 8), the righteous deeds in the living of the saints who are one with Christ in the divine-human incorporation for the eternal expression of the Triune God, which is the ultimate goal of God in His economy.

The New Jerusalem as the Ultimate Mingling of the Triune God and the Tripartite Man

As the greatest and ultimate sign in the Scriptures, the New Jerusalem signifies the organic constitution of the processed Triune God with His regenerated, transformed, and glorified tripartite elect. It is the finalization of the economy of God to dispense Himself into man to produce a universal, enlarged, divine-human incorporation for the corporate expression of God for eternity. According to the plan of the Father, through the redemption of Christ the Lamb, and by the dispensing of the sevenfold Spirit, God's chosen people are regenerated in their spirit, transformed in their soul, conformed to the image of Christ, and glorified even in their bodies to enjoy the most thorough and intrinsic metabolic reconstitution of their entire being to become the same as God is in the divine life and nature but not in His Godhead. In this way, becoming precious materials, they are built up as the golden lampstands in this age and the New Jerusalem in eternity to be the consummate, corporate expression of the dispensing Triune God.

The New Jerusalem is an eternal entity of two natures, the human and the divine. In His incarnation Jesus took on humanity to become the tabernacle of God (John 1:14). According to this principle, the New Jerusalem as the tabernacle of God among men (Rev. 21:3) is the dwelling place of God in His humanity among men on the earth. This speaks of the human nature of the New Jerusalem—the consummation of God who became flesh. At the same time, according to its divinity, the New Jerusalem is the temple of God—being the Lord God the

Almighty and the Lamb (v. 22)—as the dwelling place of His redeemed elect. Thus, the New Jerusalem is both a human tabernacle in which God dwells and a divine temple in which man dwells. God can dwell in a human tabernacle because He has become a man. Likewise, man can dwell in a divine temple because, through the work of God's full salvation in His economy, man has been made God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead.

In the same principle, the New Jerusalem, according to its humanity, is the human wife of the Lamb, the redeeming God (vv. 2, 9). Likewise, according to its divinity, it is the divine Husband of God's redeemed elect. Moreover, as the human wife, the New Jerusalem has the divine life and nature, and as the divine Husband, it is the redeeming God in His consummated embodiment, Christ, with the human life and nature. Thus, in its two mingled natures, the New Jerusalem is divine and human, human and divine. This union of the divine and human lives, the mingling of the divine and human natures, and the incorporation of the divine and human persons is the consummation of the eternal economy of God.

The Structure of the Holy City in the Mingling of Divinity with Humanity

The base of the New Jerusalem is pure gold, signifying the divine nature of God as the base for its building and the solid foundation of the divine throne for the divine administration (v. 18; 22:1). The river of water of life, signifying the Spirit, proceeds from this administration in the middle of the New Jerusalem's street as the supply to the entire city. In the river grows the tree of life, signifying Christ, as the supply to the entire city through the river (v. 2). The divine and human communication, signified by the street, proceeds from this glorious center to reach all twelve gates of the city, in order to bring the entire city into the submission to the one divine administration and to blend the entire city into the oneness of the one divinity-mingled-with-humanity communication (21:21; *Lee, Application 12*).

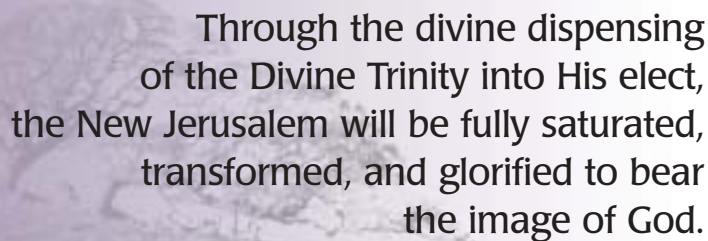
When an oyster is wounded by a grain of sand, it secretes its life-juice around the grain and makes it into a precious pearl. That the gates of the New Jerusalem are pearls signifies that the issue of Christ's "secretion" in His redeeming and life-releasing death and in His life-dispensing resurrection is our entrance into the holy city as the ultimate consummation of God's eternal economy. The wall and the foundations of the city are precious stones (vv. 19-20). We, the believers in Christ, were created by God with dust (Gen. 2:7), but through our regeneration by the Spirit and our growth in the divine life we are transformed into precious stones for God's building (John 1:42; 1 Pet. 2:5; 1 Cor. 3:12; 2 Cor. 3:18). God works Himself into us as the gold through Christ's redemption and resurrection by the transformation of the Spirit. This is the working of the

Triune God to bring Himself into our being and transform us into His image for the building of the New Jerusalem.

All the stones of the holy city's wall and the first layer of its foundations are jasper (Rev. 21:18-19). When John saw the scene in heaven, he wrote, "Behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and upon the throne there was One sitting; and He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance" (4:2-3). Jasper signifies the appearance of God with His communicable glory in His rich life. That the wall of the New Jerusalem and the first layer of its foundation are jasper signifies that the entire city is in the appearance of God in His glory.

The Light and Lamp of the City as the Ultimate Consummation of the Golden Lampstand

Revelation 21:23 says, "The city has no need of the sun or of the moon that they should shine in it, for the glory of God illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb." The illuminating glory of the shining God is the light of the city, and God as light is within the redeeming Christ as the lamp.



Through the divine dispensing
of the Divine Trinity into His elect,
the New Jerusalem will be fully saturated,
transformed, and glorified to bear
the image of God.

Moreover, the entire city of New Jerusalem is a "diffuser," diffusing the divine light over the nations outside the city (v. 24). The length, breadth, and height of the city are equal, being twelve thousand stadia (v. 16), giving the impression of a mountain of gold, at the peak of which is the throne of God and of the Lamb. This mountain serves as a stand for Christ as the lamp, within whom is God as the light. The entire city, therefore, is the appearance of a great lampstand. In Exodus 25 the lampstand signifies Christ as the embodiment of the Triune God; in Zechariah 4 it signifies the seven Spirits for God's building; and in Revelation 1 the seven golden lampstands are the seven local churches. Finally, the New Jerusalem itself becomes the ultimate consummation of the golden lampstand—God in Christ as the Spirit mingled with redeemed, transformed, and glorified man.

The Supply of the City and the Eternal Glory of the Triune God

The street of the New Jerusalem for the divine-human communication signifies the Father, the river flowing with

the water of life signifies the Spirit, and the tree of life signifies the Son, Christ (Rev. 22:1-2). Thus, the supply of the entire city is the processed and consummated Triune God, who passed through incarnation, human living, an all-inclusive death, an all-surpassing resurrection for the dispensing of life, and an all-transcending ascension to execute through His heavenly ministry what He accomplished in His earthly ministry. The Father is in the Son, and the Son is realized as the Spirit, who is the flow of the water of life proceeding out of the throne of God, the center of the divine administration and authority. The Father as the source, the Spirit as the flow, and Christ as the content—signified by the tree of life—flow from the throne on the street of fellowship to reach all the twelve gates of the city, conveying and imparting the riches of God as the supply to the city. In the nourishing, satisfying, and saturating supply of the Triune God, all of God's redeemed will serve God and the Lamb as His slaves, they will see the face of God and of the Lamb and have His name on their forehead, they will be under the shining of God, and they will reign with Him forever and ever (vv. 3-5).

As the issue of the eternal supply of the Divine Trinity, the New Jerusalem will be the built-up, consummated, and eternal expression of the Triune God. According to its structure, the New Jerusalem is a mountain of gold with pearl gates and a jasper wall built upon twelve layers of precious stones. Gold expresses God the Father in His intrinsic divine nature as the source of all the divine riches. Pearls express Christ in His death and resurrection as the embodiment of all the divine riches. Precious stones express the Spirit in His transforming work as the realization of all the divine riches in His all-inclusiveness as the ultimate consummation of the Triune God. Thus, the New Jerusalem is the eternal, triune expression of the Triune God as the finalization of God's economy to express Himself in man.

In chapter 21, verses 10 and 11 say, "He carried me away in spirit onto a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God." Verse 23 says, "The city has no need of the sun or of the moon that they should shine in it, for the glory of God illumined it." The New Jerusalem bears the shining of God as the ultimate consummation of His glory. The glory of God is the expression of God, that is, God Himself expressed. We have been predestined for this glory and called to it (1 Cor. 2:7; 1 Pet. 5:10; 1 Thes. 2:12). We are being transformed into this glory and will be brought into it (2 Cor. 3:18; Heb. 2:10). Eventually we will be glorified with Christ (Rom. 8:17, 30), as the ultimate step in God's complete salvation, to bear the glory of God for His full expression in the New Jerusalem.

The glory of God is related to His house, His habitation. It is the shekinah glory, the glory of God in His house.³ Exodus 40:34 tells us that when the cloud of God's presence covered the Tent of Meeting, the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle. Again, when the enlarged temple was built and consecrated, the glory of Jehovah filled the house (1 Kings 8:10-11; 2 Chron. 5:14; 7:1-3). When Christ brought God into humanity in His incarnation, He became the true tabernacle for God's habitation and His glorious manifestation (John 1:14; 2:19). Ephesians 3:21 says, "To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all the generations forever and ever. Amen." In the present age, we are being strengthened into our inner man according to the riches of God's glory (v. 16). This glory comes to us with God and, after being worked into us, will return to God with us. Thus, God's glory is wrought into the church, and He is expressed in the church. The ultimate consummation of the shekinah glory, the glory of God in His house, will be the New Jerusalem, the radiant city shining out God as the light through Christ as the lamp and declaring Him, through the holy city, to the entire new heaven and new earth. Through the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity into His elect, the New Jerusalem will be fully saturated, transformed, and glorified to bear the image of God through a full and complete union, mingling, and incorporation of divinity and humanity. This will be the finalization, the completion, and the ultimate consummation of God's economy for eternity. **AFC**

Notes

¹In Genesis 22, when the Angel of Jehovah appeared to Abraham, He said, "I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me" (vv. 11-12, emphasis added). In Exodus 3, the Angel of Jehovah appeared to Moses in a flame of fire and said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (vv. 2, 6). Similarly, when the Angel appeared to Gideon, it was Jehovah Himself who spoke to him (Judg. 6:12, 14, 16). Thus, it is clear that the Angel in these texts is God Himself in His Divine Trinity serving His elect as a Servant. For Christ to be the Angel of Jehovah means that God has appointed and commissioned Himself in His Divine Trinity to act in caring for His people. The Angel, therefore, is the pre-incarnate Christ as the "theophanic angel" (*mal'ak Yahweh* or *mal'ak 'Elohim*; Brown 521). Charles Ryrie says that the Angel of the Lord is a theophany, a self-manifestation of God. He here speaks as God, identifies Himself with God, and claims to exercise the prerogatives of God...It is often inferred that the angel in the O.T. is a preincarnate appearance of the Second Person of the Trinity. (30)

The "another Angel," or "another strong Angel," in Revelation 7:2; 8:3; 10:1; and 18:1 is the consummation of the revelation of Christ as the Angel of God.

²To be the same as God in expression and function is neither

to have the unique place and dignity of the Godhead nor to have all the functions of the Godhead, for the place, dignity, and many of His functions are His alone. The functions of God carried out by those who are transformed and conformed to the image of Christ include the imparting of the divine life through preaching and ministering, the bestowing of grace, planting the seed of life, watering the seed, building with the attributes of the Triune God (signified by gold, silver, and precious stones), judging, forgiving, and many other items revealed throughout the New Testament (Acts 5:20; 1 Thes. 2:8; 2 Cor. 3:6; 1:15; 1 Cor. 3:6, 12; 5:3-5; 2 Cor. 2:10).

³The word *shekinah*, used in many Hebrew expositions, may be translated as "dwelling, or abiding." It derives from *sākan*, meaning "to dwell, inhabit, settle down, abide" (Vine 65), from which also comes *miškān*, meaning "tabernacle." The latter two words are used in Exodus 40:35, which says, "Moses was not able to enter the Tent of Meeting, because the cloud settled [*shakan*] on it and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle [*mishkan*]." Thus, the shekinah glory is the glory of God in His house, the ultimate consummation of which will be the New Jerusalem, filled with the glory of God for eternity.

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