

In this article we will consider the all-inclusive death of Christ. In so doing, we will endeavor to point out that Christ died on the cross as the God-man with a sevenfold status to accomplish redemption and to release the divine life for the producing of the church.

### **The Church Being Purchased with God's Own Blood**

In Acts 20:28 Paul charges the elders of the church in Ephesus "to shepherd the church of God, which He obtained through His own blood." The Greek word translated "obtained" also means acquired or purchased. Whenever we purchase something, we acquire it, or obtain it. God acquired, obtained, the church by purchasing it. In order to purchase anything, we need to pay the price for that thing. What was the price God paid to purchase the church? According to Paul's word in 20:28, God obtained the church by paying the price of "His own blood."

The phrase *His own blood* in verse 28 is very unusual. It is quite bothering. Can God have blood? God is God; He is not a man or a creature. How, then, can God, the Creator, have blood? Some may try to explain this by saying that the blood in 20:28 is the blood of Jesus. But how can Jesus' blood be God's blood? The Lord Jesus is God, but 20:28 does not speak of Jesus; this verse speaks of God. As we consider this, we realize that it is very difficult to explain theologically. More than two centuries ago, Charles Wesley wrote a hymn that speaks of God dying for us. In this hymn Wesley says, "Amazing love! how can it be / That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?" In this hymn Wesley goes on to say, "'Tis mystery all! The Immortal dies!" Here Wesley declares that God died for us. When I was translating this hymn into Chinese years ago, I was troubled by this. I was not sure whether to be so bold as to translate it literally to indicate that God died for us. Do you have the boldness to say that God died for you? Charles Wesley saw the vision concerning this and declared in his hymn that God died for us.

### **The God-man**

The God who died for us is not the God before incarnation. Prior to incarnation, God certainly did not have blood, and He could not have died for us. It was after the incarnation, in which God was mingled with humanity, that He died for us. Through incarnation, our God, the Creator, the eternal One, Jehovah, became mingled with man. As a result, He was no longer only God—He became a God-man. As the God-man, He surely had blood and was able to die for us.

# The All-Inclusive Death of Christ

*by Witness Lee*

---

*The  
conception  
and birth of  
the Lord Jesus  
was God's  
incarnation  
constituted  
of the divine  
essence added  
to the human  
essence, hence,  
producing the  
God-man of  
two natures—  
divinity and  
humanity.*

When the God-man died on the cross, He died not only as man but also as God. The One who died on the cross was the One who had been conceived of God and born with God. Because He was a God-man, the very element of God was in Him. The divine element was mingled with His humanity.

In the conception of the Lord Jesus, the God-man, the divine essence out of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:18-20; Luke 1:35) was generated in Mary's womb. Such a conception of the Holy Spirit in the human virgin, accomplished with both the divine and human essences, constituted a mingling of the divine nature with the human nature and produced the God-man, One who is both the complete God and a perfect man, possessing the divine nature and the human nature distinctively, without a third nature being produced. This is the most wonderful and excellent person of Jesus.

The conception and birth of the Lord Jesus was God's incarnation (John 1:14), constituted of the divine essence added to the human essence, hence, producing the God-man of two natures—divinity and humanity. Through this, God joined Himself to humanity that He might be manifested in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16) and might be the Savior (Luke 2:11) who died and shed His blood for us.

### **The Blood of Jesus, the Son of God**

The blood that has redeemed fallen human beings is the blood of Jesus, the Son of God. As human beings, we need genuine human blood for our redemption. Because He was a man, the Lord Jesus could fulfill this requirement. As a man, He shed human blood to redeem fallen human beings. The Lord is also the Son of God, even God Himself. Therefore, with His blood there is the element of eternity, and this element ensures the eternal efficacy of His blood. Therefore, as a man He had genuine human blood, and as God He has the element that gives to His blood eternal efficacy.

First John 1:7 says that "the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin." The name *Jesus* denotes the Lord's humanity, which is needed for the shedding of the redeeming blood, and the title *His Son* denotes the Lord's divinity, which is needed for the eternal efficacy of the redeeming blood. Thus, *the blood of Jesus His Son* indicates that this blood is the proper blood of a genuine man for redeeming God's fallen creatures with the divine surety for its eternal efficacy, an efficacy which is all-prevailing in space and everlasting in time. The blood the Lord shed on the cross was the blood of Jesus, the Son of God. It was not only the blood of Jesus; it was also the blood of the Son of God. For this reason, the redemption accomplished by the God-man, by the One mingled with God, is eternal.

**I**f the redemption accomplished on the cross was accomplished merely by a man, that redemption could not be eternally effective. Although it might be effective for the redemption of one person, it would not be effective for the redemption of millions of believers. Since a man is limited, a particular man cannot die for millions of others. However, although man is limited, God is not limited. Likewise, although man is temporal, God is eternal. Therefore, in Christ's redemption there is the eternal and unlimited element of God. This is the reason that in Hebrews 9:12 this redemption is called an eternal redemption.

We need to see that the blood shed by the Lord Jesus on the cross is eternal blood. It is the blood not merely of a man but of a man mingled with the divine element. Hence, this blood, the blood of Jesus, the Son of God, is eternal. In Acts 20:28 Paul had the boldness to speak of this blood as being God's own blood.

### **The God Revealed in the New Testament**

Some of today's Christians have a concept of God that is very similar to the Jewish concept. The Jewish concept of God is that God is God and that there is no human element in

---

Him. But according to the Bible, the very God in the Old Testament has become the God revealed in the New Testament. In the Old Testament God was merely God, without any human element. But in the New Testament we see the God-man. Through incarnation the God in the Old Testament put on human nature and became the God-man. As such, He became God manifested in the flesh.

**G**od became the God-man by being conceived in the womb of a human virgin and then being born of that virgin. In this way the human element was added to His divine element. However, this does not mean that as the God-man the Savior has two persons. No, the Lord Jesus, the Savior, has one person with two natures—the divine nature and the human nature. Although this is very difficult to understand, it is nevertheless a fact revealed in the Bible.

Now we can see that our God is the God revealed in the New Testament and not merely the God as He is revealed in the Old Testament. The Jews, however, have God only as He is seen in the Old Testament. What is the difference between the Jewish God and our God? The difference is that the Jewish God is merely God without a human element, whereas, according to the New Testament, our God is no longer merely God—He is a God-man. Our God has two natures, the divine nature and the human nature. This means that our God, the God-man, is both the complete God and a perfect man. However, He is not two persons; rather, the God-man is one person. Through incarnation neither the divine nature nor the human nature is lost. On the contrary, although the divine and human natures are mingled to form the God-man, both the divine nature and the human nature remain, and a third nature is by no means produced. According to the Scriptures, we believe that our Savior, who shed His blood for our redemption, died on the cross as the God-man.

### **Forsaken by God Economically**

Since we have pointed out that the Lord Jesus died on the cross as the God-man, some may wonder about Mark 15:34: “At the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is interpreted, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” This was the Lord’s cry during the time He was bearing our sins (1 Pet. 2:24), being made sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21), and taking the place of sinners (1 Pet. 3:18). This means that God judged Him as our Substitute for our sins. In the sight of God, Christ became a great sinner. Because Christ was our Substitute and was made sin in the sight of God, God judged Him and even forsook Him.

According to Matthew 1 and Luke 1, the Lord Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit. Later, for His ministry, He was anointed with the Holy Spirit, who descended upon Him (Luke 3:22). Before the anointing Spirit descended upon the Lord Jesus economically, He already had, essentially, the begetting Spirit as the divine essence within Him as one of the two essences of His being. The begetting Spirit as the divine essence never left Him essentially. Even when He was on the cross crying out, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” He still had the begetting Spirit as the divine essence. Then who left Him? It was the anointing Spirit through whom He offered Himself to God (Heb. 9:14) who left Him economically. After God accepted Christ as the all-inclusive offering, the anointing Spirit left Him. But although the anointing Spirit left Him economically, He still had the begetting Spirit essentially.

When the Lord Jesus, the God-man, died on the cross under God’s judgment, He had God within Him essentially as His divine being. Nevertheless, He was forsaken by the righteous and judging God economically. He was conceived and born of the Holy Spirit essentially and therefore the Holy Spirit was one of the essences of His being. As the Lord Jesus grew up and lived on earth, He had the Holy Spirit within Him essentially. Later, when He was baptized, He already had the Holy Spirit as an essential part of His being. However, at the time of His baptism the Holy Spirit descended upon Him economically. This means that the Lord Jesus had the Holy Spirit as one of the essences of His being essentially and also

---

*He died  
on the cross  
as the God-man,  
and the blood  
He shed there for  
our redemption  
was the blood  
not only of the  
man Jesus, but  
also the blood of  
the God-man.  
Therefore, this  
blood, through  
which God  
obtained the  
church, is  
God's own blood.*

that the Holy Spirit descended upon Him economically. This does not mean, of course, that there are two Holy Spirits. It means that the one Holy Spirit has two aspects—the essential and the economical. The essential aspect was for the being, the existence, of the Lord Jesus, and the economical aspect was for His work, His ministry. We need to be impressed with the fact that when the Lord Jesus was on the cross dying for our sins, God was in Him essentially. Therefore, the One who died for our sins was the God-man. But at a certain point the righteous God, while judging this God-man, left Him economically. God's forsaking of Christ was an economical matter related to the carrying out of God's judgment.

Because the Lord Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit and was born of God and with God, He had the Holy Spirit as the intrinsic essence of His divine being. Therefore, it was not possible for God to leave, to forsake, Him essentially. Nevertheless, He was forsaken by God economically when the Spirit, who had descended upon Him as the economical power for the carrying out of His ministry, left Him. But the essence of God remained in His being. Therefore, He died on the cross as the God-man, and the blood He shed there for our redemption was the blood not only of the man Jesus, but also the blood of the God-man. Therefore, this blood, through which God obtained the church, is God's own blood. As the God-man the Lord Jesus also died on the cross with a sevenfold status.

#### *The Lamb of God*

In John 1:29 we see that in redemption Christ is the Lamb of God: "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" This verse indicates that Christ as the Lamb of God takes away sin from the human race. The phrase *of the world* in this verse actually means from mankind. Through Satan sin entered into man, for Satan injected sin, his poisonous nature, into the human race. But the Lamb of God has come to take away this sin from the world, from mankind.

Christ died on the cross as the Lamb of God to deal with sin and sins. From 1 Corinthians 15:3, 1 Peter 2:24, and Hebrews 9:28 we see that as the Lamb of God the Lord Jesus died for our sins. Furthermore, according to 2 Corinthians 5:21 and Hebrews 9:26, His death dealt with sin. Therefore, both sin and sins were dealt with by the Lamb of God, who was under God's judgment on the cross. In redemption Christ as the Lamb of God satisfied God's requirements, the requirements of His righteousness, holiness, and glory. No fallen human being could ever fulfill these requirements. Hence, there was the need of a Redeemer, the Lamb of God, designated by God to fulfill His righteous, holy, and glorious requirements.

**I**n the Gospel of John the Lamb of God signifies the Word in the flesh (John 1:1, 14) as the fulfillment of all the Old Testament offerings to accomplish God's full redemption. Christ is the totality of all the offerings. He is not only the sin offering but also the trespass offering, the burnt offering, the meal offering, the peace offering, the wave offering, the heave offering, the free-will offering, and the drink offering. With Christ as all the offerings we have God's full redemption. Through Christ as the Lamb of God fulfilling all the offerings, we may enter into God and participate in the divine life and nature (John 3:14-15; 2 Pet. 1:4). Because of Christ as the Lamb of God, we are well able, even enabled, to enter into God. We may boldly come into God, knowing that He does not have the right to reject us, because we come through His Lamb. We have full redemption in Christ, and therefore we are enabled to enter into God to enjoy all that He is.

According to 1 Peter 1:20, Christ as the redeeming Lamb was foreknown by God before the foundation of the world, that is, before the creation of the universe. "Who was foreknown before the foundation of the world but has been manifested in the last of times for your sake." Christ was foreordained, prepared, by God to be His redeeming Lamb according to His foreknowledge before the foundation of the world. This was done according to God's eternal purpose and plan; it did not happen accidentally.

---

The Greek root for the word *foreknown* includes the meaning of appreciation, approval, and possession. And to be foreknown by God means to be foreordained by God. In his expanded translation of the New Testament Kenneth S. Wuest uses the word *foreordained* in 1 Peter 1:20, saying, “Christ...was foreordained before the foundation of the universe was laid.” This means that in eternity past God approved Christ and appreciated Him. God also ordained Christ to be His anointed One, the One commissioned to fulfill in time all that had been planned by God for the accomplishment of His eternal purpose. In particular, Christ was foreknown, foreordained, to be the Lamb of God to accomplish redemption.

Revelation 13:8 speaks of Christ as “the Lamb who was slain from the foundation of the world.” In the eternal view of God, Christ as the Lamb of God was slain from the time creation came into being. This means that in the sight of God Christ was slain not two thousand years ago, but from the time creation came into existence, that is, since the fall of man as a part of the world. God foreknew the fall of creation. Therefore, from the existence of creation Christ, the Lamb of God, was slain.

### *A Man in the Flesh*

When Christ died on the cross, He also died as a man in the flesh. As the Word who was with God and who was God, He became flesh (John 1:1, 14). First Peter 3:18 says that Christ was “put to death in the flesh.” As a man in the flesh, Christ had only the likeness, the form, of a fallen man; He did not have the sinful nature of a fallen man. This means that He was in the likeness of the flesh of sin (Rom. 8:3), but He did not have the actual nature of sin. Because the Lord Jesus died as a man in the flesh, His death dealt with the fallen flesh. Sin and the fallen flesh were all dealt with by the death of Christ.

Romans 8:3 reveals that when Christ died as a man in the flesh, God condemned sin in the flesh. The phrase *sin in the flesh* refers to the source of sin, the devil. For this reason, in Romans 6, 7, and 8 sin is personified as a living one. This living sin was condemned by God when Christ died on the cross as a man in the likeness of the flesh of sin. When the flesh that Christ put on through incarnation was crucified, God condemned the sin in the flesh of fallen mankind.

Christ was sent only in the likeness of the flesh of sin. He did not actually have the flesh of sin, but only the form, the likeness, of the flesh of sin. This is portrayed by the type of the brass serpent: The brass serpent had the form of a serpent, but it did not have the poisonous nature of a serpent. Likewise, when Christ died on the cross, He was in the likeness of the flesh of sin, but He did not have the nature of the flesh of sin. Nevertheless, because He died as a man in the flesh, God could condemn sin in the flesh. As a man in the flesh He died so that sin in the flesh might be condemned by God.

### *The Last Adam—the Man in the Old Creation*

In redemption Christ was also the last Adam, a man in the old creation (1 Cor. 15:45b). This is the reason Romans 6:6 says that our old man has been crucified with Him. Because the Lord died on the cross as a man, the last Adam in the old creation, our old man was dealt with through His death. As the last Adam, Christ was the conclusion of the old man. Therefore, when He was crucified, our old man was crucified with Him. His death as the last Adam was for God’s dealing with our old man. When Christ was incarnated, He took us upon Himself. He put on blood and flesh. Therefore, when He was crucified, we were crucified with Him (Gal. 2:20). From God’s viewpoint, before we were born we were crucified in Christ. When Christ was crucified, not only were sins and sin dealt with; we ourselves were crucified with Him.

### *A Creature*

When Christ died on the cross for our redemption, He died not only as a man in the flesh,

---

*It was necessary for Christ to be the first of all creation in order for Him to redeem all creation, just as it was necessary for Him to be the last Adam in order to be qualified to be the Redeemer of mankind.*

the last Adam, but also as a creature. Christ is both the Creator and a creature, for as God He is the Creator and as a man He is a creature. Christ with respect to His humanity is a creature. Christ is a man, a typical man with flesh and blood, which are created things. It is ridiculous to say that Christ is a man but deny that regarding His humanity He is a creature.

Colossians 1:15 reveals that Christ is the Firstborn of all creation. For Christ to be the Firstborn of all creation means that He is the first of all the creatures. The preposition *of* in the phrase *the Firstborn of all creation* indicates that Christ is one of the creatures, not someone who is apart from the creatures. As the Firstborn, He is one of the many items of the creatures. The redemption accomplished by Christ is not only for man but also for all creation. Through His redemption all created things in heaven and on earth have been reconciled to God (Col. 1:20). Thus, Christ's redemption is for all things. Hebrews 2:9 says clearly that Christ tasted death not only on behalf of every man but also on behalf of everything.

**I**f Christ were only a man and not the Firstborn of all creation, the first of all the creatures, how could He have accomplished redemption for all the creatures? In the same way that it was necessary for Him to be a man to accomplish redemption for man, it was necessary for Him to be a creature to accomplish redemption for all the creatures. It was necessary for Christ to be the first of all creation in order for Him to redeem all creation, just as it was necessary for Him to be the last Adam in order to be qualified to be the Redeemer of mankind. When the Lord Jesus died on the cross, He died also as the Firstborn of all creation. Hence, through His death on the cross the entire old creation was dealt with.

The fact that Christ's death as a creature terminated the entire old creation is indicated by the rending of the veil in the temple from top to bottom. Concerning this, Luke 23:44 and 45 say, "It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, the sun's light failing; and the veil of the temple was split down the middle." The darkness here is related to sin, and the veil is a type of the flesh of the Lord Jesus. Hebrews 10:20 speaks of "a new and living way through the veil, that is, His flesh." On the veil that was rent when Christ died cherubim were embroidered (Exo. 26:31). According to Ezekiel 1:5, 10 and 10:14-15, cherubim were living creatures. The cherubim on the veil, then, represent the living creatures. Upon the humanity of Christ were all the creatures. This means that in His flesh Christ bore all the creatures. When the veil in the temple was torn, the cherubim embroidered on it were also torn. This indicates that when the flesh of Christ was crucified, all the creatures borne by Him were crucified as well. Through the death of Christ, sin, sins, the flesh, the old man, and all the creatures were dealt with. His death truly was all-inclusive.

#### *A Serpent in Form*

Some may be very surprised to hear that Christ died on the cross even as a serpent in form. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that every one who believes into Him may have eternal life" (John 3:14-15). Here the Lord Jesus applies to Himself the type of the brass serpent lifted up by Moses in the wilderness (Num. 21:4-9). Because the children of Israel complained and were rebellious, "the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died" (v. 6, KJV). Then the people came to Moses and confessed that they had sinned in speaking against the Lord and against him. They asked Moses to pray that the Lord would take away the serpents. When Moses prayed for the people, the Lord said to him, "Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live" (v. 8, KJV). We are told that Moses made a serpent of brass and put it upon a pole. Then "it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived" (v. 9, KJV).

The incident in Numbers 21 was sovereignly prepared by God to reveal a particular type of

---

Christ. The brass serpent lifted up on a pole is a type of Christ lifted up on the cross for us as a serpent in form according to John 3:14. As fallen human beings, we all have been “bitten” by the serpent, the devil. We were bitten in the garden of Eden when Adam was “bitten” by the serpent and poisoned by him. Therefore, we are all serpentine beings with the poison of the serpent in our nature. In the sight of God, the entire fallen human race consists of poisonous serpents. As such serpents we needed a substitute; we needed Christ to die for us in the form of a serpent but without the poisonous element of the serpent.

**W**e need to be very clear that Christ was a serpent in form but that He did not have the poisonous nature of a serpent. We, however, actually are serpentine, for in our fallen nature we are children of the old serpent, the devil (1 John 3:10). For this reason, in Matthew 12:34 the Lord Jesus called the Pharisees the “offspring of vipers.” In Matthew 23:33 He called them “Serpents! Brood of vipers!” the offspring of the most poisonous kind of serpents. Because the devil is the father of sinners (John 8:44), sinners are children of the devil. Sinners also are serpents, the offspring of vipers. Therefore, in the sight of God, in our fallen nature we are not only sinful—we are serpentine.

The serpent is a symbol of the devil, who is called “the ancient serpent” (Rev. 12:9). No doubt, the Lord Jesus was crucified as a serpent in form in order to deal with Satan, the devil, the old serpent. It was through being crucified as a serpent in form that the Lord Jesus crushed the head of the old serpent, the devil (Gen. 3:15). In this way He judged the ruler of this world: “Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the ruler of this world be cast out” (John 12:31). By His death on the cross Christ destroyed the devil, who has the might of death (Heb. 2:14). Therefore, as the One who died as a serpent in form under God’s judgment, the Lord Jesus dealt with the devil and with his world, the satanic system.

Through the death of Christ, sins, sin, the old man, the entire creation, the devil, and the world have all been dealt with. This was possible only because Christ was crucified as the Lamb of God, a man in the flesh, the last Adam, a creature, and a serpent in form. As the Lamb of God, Christ took away sin. As a man in the flesh, He made it possible for God to condemn sin in the flesh. As the last Adam He terminated the old man. As a creature, He crucified the entire creation. And as a serpent in form, He destroyed the devil and the satanic world.

### *Our Peace and Peacemaker*

Around 1935 I heard a message given by Brother Watchman Nee in Shanghai. He said that if you went to a young believer and asked him who died on the cross, he would say that his Redeemer died on the cross for his sins and his sin. If you went to another one who was more advanced and asked him who died on the cross, he would say that Christ died there, bearing his sins, sin, and himself. Someone still more advanced in the Christian life would tell you that Christ died on the cross for his sins, sin, and himself with all of creation. Another category of Christians would say that Christ died on the cross not only for their sins, sin, and themselves with all of creation, but also in order to destroy Satan and judge the world. Later I began to see that there was the need for even further advancement in realizing the death of Christ, that there was the need to see that through the death of Christ all the ordinances were abolished. All the ordinances—the habits, customs, traditions, and practices among the human race—were abolished on the cross. Concerning this aspect of His death, Christ is our peace and Peacemaker (Eph. 2:14-16).

Christ died as the Peacemaker, as the One who makes peace: “He Himself is our peace, He who has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of partition, the enmity, abolishing in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances, that He might create the two in Himself into one new man, so making peace” (vv. 14-15). Christ died on the cross to abolish all the ordinances among mankind. In particular, He died to take away the partition between the Jews and the Gentiles. Not only was there a partition between Jews

---

*Christ's  
all-inclusive  
death released  
the divine life  
that was within  
Him. As a grain  
of wheat He died  
to release the  
divine life and  
to enliven God's  
redeemed ones,  
to produce many  
grains that can  
be blended  
together in a  
loaf to be  
offered to God.  
This loaf is  
the church, the  
Body of Christ.*

and Gentiles; there were also partitions between every nationality and race. Without the removal of these partitions, there would be no way for us to be one in Christ as His Body. Praise the Lord that all the ordinances were abolished by Christ on the cross! Now in the church life we have people of all races, colors, and nationalities. Christ is our peace. Christ, who has accomplished full redemption for both Jewish and Gentile believers, is Himself our peace, our harmony. Due to the fall of mankind and the call of the chosen race, Israel, there was a separation between Israel and the Gentiles. Through Christ's redemption this separation has been removed. Now, in the redeeming Christ, who is the bond of oneness, both are one.

Christ has broken down the middle wall of partition, the enmity. The middle wall of partition is "the law of the commandments in ordinances," which was given because of man's flesh. The first of these ordinances is circumcision to cut off man's flesh. This became the middle wall of partition between the circumcision and the uncircumcision, the enmity between the Jews and the Gentiles. Christ broke down this middle wall of partition by abolishing the law of the commandments in ordinances, the law of the ritual commandments, such as the ordinances of circumcision, keeping the Sabbath, and dietary regulations. When Christ was crucified, all the ordinances were nailed to the cross. Because the middle wall of partition has been torn down through Christ's abolishing in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances, the Jews and the Gentiles can be built up together as the Body of Christ.

Christ's death was all-inclusive and was accomplished once for all. There is no need for Him to die again. The Lord's all-inclusive death is eternal. If we see this, we shall praise the Lord that sin, sins, the flesh, the old man, the old creation, Satan, the world, and the ordinances have all been dealt with through the death of Christ.

*As the Grain of Wheat Falling into Death for the Release of the Divine Life*

On the cross the Lord Jesus died as a grain of wheat falling into death for the release of the divine life. "Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24). Christ's all-inclusive death released the divine life that was within Him. As a grain of wheat He died to release the divine life and to enliven God's redeemed ones, to produce many grains that can be blended together in a loaf to be offered to God. This loaf is the church, the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 10:17).

**T**he Lord Jesus fell into the ground and died so that His divine element, His divine life, might be released from within the shell of His humanity to produce many believers in resurrection (1 Pet. 1:3), just as a grain of wheat has its life element released by falling into the ground and growing up out of the ground to bear much fruit, that is, to bring forth many grains. The Lord Jesus, as a grain of wheat falling into the ground, lost His soulful life through death so that He might release His divine life in resurrection to the many grains.

On the negative side, Christ's all-inclusive death has solved the problems of sins, sin, the old man, the old creation, Satan, the world, and the ordinances. On the positive side, Christ's death has released the divine life from within Him. He was a grain of wheat, and there was no other way for that grain to increase except to fall into the ground and die. This is the way to have the multiplication of life. Therefore, in His death Christ was sown into the earth as a grain of wheat to produce a multiplication through the release of the divine life.

Furthermore, it was by dying to release the divine life that the Lord Jesus was glorified and glorified the Father. In John 12:23 the Lord said, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified," and in verse 28 He prayed, "Father, glorify Your name." The Lord was glorified through death and resurrection because it was through death and resurrection that His divine element was released and manifested. God the Father was glorified by the



---

Son's being glorified. When the Son's divine element was released and manifested through His death and resurrection, the Father's divine life was released and manifested. Thus, the Father was glorified in the Son's glorification through His death and resurrection. The death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus glorified God the Father because Christ's death released the divine element from within Him. This element was confined in His flesh, just as the life element of a grain of wheat is confined within its shell. In order for the life element of a grain of wheat to be glorified, the grain must die so that the element within it can be released. It is the same with the divine element within the Lord Jesus.

To glorify the name of the Father is to cause the Father's element to be manifested. This element, which is the eternal life, was in the incarnated Son. The shell of the Son's incarnation, His flesh, had to be broken through death so that the Father's element might be released and manifested in resurrection, just as the life element of a grain of wheat is released by its shell being broken and manifested by its blossom. This is the glorification of God the Father in the Son's glorification through His dying as a grain of wheat to release the divine life.

### **The Two Aspects of Christ's Death**

John 19:34 says, "One of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water." Here we see that two substances came out of the Lord's pierced side: blood and water. Blood is for redemption, dealing with sins (John 1:29; Heb. 9:22) for the purchase of the church (Acts 20:28), and water is for imparting life, dealing with death (John 12:24; 3:14-15) for the producing of the church (Eph. 5:29-31). We were sinners fallen away from God, but through the blood of Jesus we have been brought back. Moreover, we were dead. Therefore, the Lord released His divine life to enliven us, to make us alive. In this way the problem of death is solved, and the church as the new creation is produced. On the one hand, the church was bought by the Lord's blood; on the other hand, the church was produced by His divine life, which He released and imparted to us.

On the negative side, Christ's death takes away our sins; on the positive side, it releases the divine life. Hence, His death has two aspects—the redemptive aspect and the life-releasing aspect. The redemptive aspect is for the life-releasing aspect, which is even more wonderful than the redemptive aspect. God's purpose is that redemption be followed by the imparting of life, for God's intention is to dispense Himself into us as life. Therefore, redemption prepares the way for the release of the divine life so that this life may be dispensed into us for the producing of the church.

The water that flowed out of the Lord's side signifies the life-releasing aspect of His death. This is typified by the water flowing out of the smitten rock (Exo. 17:6; 1 Cor. 10:4). This aspect of Christ's death is the life-releasing, life-propagating, life-multiplying death, the generating and reproducing death. When the Lord Jesus said that He was the grain of wheat falling into the ground to die so that many grains might be produced (John 12:24), He was referring to the life-releasing aspect of His death. The dying of this grain of wheat was not for redemption; it was for releasing the divine life so that it may be imparted into the many grains. On the negative side, Christ's death dealt with our sins; on the positive side, it released the divine life. As we believe in Him today, our sins are forgiven through His redemptive death, and eternal life is imparted into us through His life-releasing death.

**T**hrough His death on the cross Christ's divine life was released. Hence, His death was a life-releasing death. Because His divine life has not only been released out of Him but also imparted into us, His death was a life-imparting death. On His side it was the life-releasing death; on our side it is the life-imparting death. Moreover, it is the life-propagating death, for by it life is spread in many directions. Furthermore, it is the life-multiplying death, causing the multiplication of life. It is also the life-producing death, for the one grain has been reproduced in the many grains. Praise the Lord for the wonderful life-releasing aspect of His all-inclusive death!

**AFG**

## The Redemption of Christ Opening the Way to the Tree of Life

It is very meaningful to consider the manner in which God barred the way to the tree of life in Genesis 3. In figure, God closed the way by means of cherubim and a flaming sword. Here we see three items: the cherubim, the flame, and the sword.

If we read Ezekiel 9 and 10 and Hebrews 9, we will see that the cherubim are symbols of God's glory. Ezekiel 9:3 reveals that glory of God was with the cherub, and Hebrews 9:5 even speaks of "cherubim of glory," because they were used by God to signify, express, and indicate His glory. Therefore, the way to the tree of life was closed by the cherubim, meaning that it was closed by God's glory. God's glory did not allow sinful man to touch Him before the actual redemption had been accomplished. In Romans 3:23 Paul says that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. So it was God's glory which closed the way to the tree of life. God's glory would not allow any sinful person who was short of His glory to contact Him.

The flame means fire, and fire in typology signifies the holiness of God. God is a consuming fire (Deut. 4:24; 9:3; Heb. 12:29). Anything common, unclean, or sinful is consumed by Him. This consuming fire signifies God's holiness, and without holiness no man shall see Him (Heb. 12:14). Thus, the second item which closed the way to the tree of life was God's holiness.

The sword signifies killing. In Genesis 3 the killing of the sword indicates God's righteousness (cf. Lam. 3:42-43; Rom. 2:5). If God would kill someone without sin being involved, He could be condemned for acting unjustly. However, since sin was involved, there is, according to the righteous God, the need for killing. Hence, the sword for killing signifies the requirements of God's righteousness. Therefore, God's glory, holiness, and righteousness closed the way to the tree of life, indicating that man, as long as he was sinful, was not permitted to contact God as the tree of life.

The way to the tree of life was closed during the period of time preceding the accomplishment of redemption by the Lord Jesus. By His all-inclusive death on the cross Christ fulfilled all the requirements of God's glory, holiness, and righteousness. His redeeming death satisfied the requirements of God's glory. When He died, the veil in which were embroidered the

cherubim of glory was split from top to bottom (Matt. 27:50-51). The fact that it was rent from top to bottom proves that it was a work accomplished by God and that the barrier between God and man had been removed. Man was short of God's glory, but now through the redemption that is in Christ man can be justified by God (Rom. 3:23-24).

In the death of Christ on the cross God's holiness was satisfied. We are sanctified, made holy, through the offering of Christ once for all (Heb. 10:10). By His one offering Christ has perfected us in sanctification, in holiness (v. 14). He has sanctified us with His blood (v. 12). Through the death of Christ God's holiness is ours, and the requirement of His holiness is a problem to us no longer.

The death of Christ has also honored God's righteousness. God made Christ sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21). As the righteous One, He suffered for sins on behalf of the unrighteous (1 Pet. 3:18). Through the death of Christ the righteousness of God has become ours and it cannot keep us from the righteous God who is the tree of life. Thus, the way to the tree of life has been completely opened to us once again through the accomplishment of Christ's redemption.

Since Christ has fulfilled the requirements of God's righteousness, holiness, and glory, His blood has opened for us a new and living way (Heb. 10:19-20, 22). The word *new* in Hebrews 10:20 means "fresh," "recently made." We have such a fresh way, a way just recently made. By this new, fresh, and living way we have boldness to enter into the secret place where the tree of life is.

Now we can draw near to God (James 4:8; Heb. 4:16; 10:19, 22). Through Christ's redemption God has come into our spirit. We need to turn to our spirit and through the blood of Jesus enter into the Holiest of all where we can touch the tree of life. This is wonderful. Today we are enjoying the accomplished redemption. This redemption has opened a new and living way for us to enter into the Holiest of all. This way was not present in the garden, but it is now in our spirit. Therefore, we now have boldness to contact the living God who is the very tree of life. Because our robes have been washed we have the right to come to the tree of life and to enjoy its riches (Rev. 22:14).