

The Mystery of God

CHRIST

by Witness Lee

Of all the mysteries in God's New Testament economy, the first of them is the mystery of God. The second half of Colossians 2:2 says, "The mystery of God, Christ." We can see that Jesus Christ is a mystery; He is not simple at all. I do not believe that we have exhausted all that the Bible speaks concerning Him. I believe that we have covered only a part. There are still many things which we do not understand. In spite of that, when we come together to fellowship and to talk about them, we will gradually be brought into understanding them.

Concerning God's mystery, Christ, I have listed six points. First, Christ is the mysterious Word of God. Second, the Word became flesh. Third, He passed through human living. Fourth, He was crucified. Fifth, He resurrected. Sixth, He ascended. All these items that Christ has passed through are the mystery of God. Christ is the Word of God, and the Word is God Himself. As the Word, God became flesh and stayed with us. His living was God's living. When men saw Him, they saw God. Then He died in the flesh and resurrected. He lived in His death. He was the grain of wheat that fell into the ground and died to produce many grains (John 12:24). He died and He lived. He lived through His dying, for He is life and He is God. Finally, He ascended. Concerning Christ, we have these six points: the Word of God, His becoming flesh, His passing through human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. Christ in these mysterious aspects is the mystery of God.

Christ Being the Mysterious Word of God

He was the mysterious Word of God in eternity past. John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." In eternity past, before time began, Christ was the Word of God. The Word here is *logos* in Greek. It means an expression

constituted by a thought, which is understood by man. Although our God cannot be seen in the universe, He is the Word that can be understood by man. By this Word His mysterious being is explained and expressed.

The Word Becoming Visible Flesh

The invisible Word of God became the visible flesh, which is Jesus Christ. His whole person is the embodiment of the Word of God. This is why the first Epistle of John begins with the Word of life which was from the beginning and which was with the Father. It is what the apostles heard, what they saw with their own eyes, what they beheld, and what they touched with their own hands. By becoming flesh, this Word became tangible and touchable. He is the mysterious God who was conceived of His Spirit and begotten in the womb of a human virgin (Matt. 1:20). Then from this virgin's womb He was born with humanity to be the mysterious God-man, in whom both divinity and humanity are mingled. Originally, He was the mysterious God in eternity. Through His Spirit, He was first begotten in the virgin's womb. Then He was born with humanity as a God-man in whom divinity and humanity are mingled. What was conceived was God. What came out was the God-man. The baby Jesus who was in the manger was the mysterious God-man in whom both divinity and humanity are mingled as one. This Jesus is Jehovah the Savior. Men shall call His name Emmanuel, which means God with us (v. 23). He is Jehovah God as our Savior and is also God with us.

When Christ was incarnated, He put on human flesh (Heb. 2:14) and partook of all that man is. Through this He brought His mysterious divinity into humanity; that is, He brought God into man. In this way, the mysterious fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily in this mysterious God-man (Col. 2:9). What is in Christ, the

mysterious God-man, is not only divinity but also all the fullness of the Godhead, which is the expression of the riches of all that God is.

The Mysterious God-man Passing through Human Living

This mysterious God-man passed through human living in His humanity with His mysterious divinity. When the Lord Jesus was living on earth, outwardly He was a man and a carpenter. Actually, God was working in His humanity. This kind of realization has much to do with our living. Our living on earth today should be as that of the Lord Jesus, a living of divinity through humanity. We are not just human beings. We are God-men. We are those with God in us. When we live by Him, it makes us different. If we realize this matter, it will become more useful to us than if we understand many messages. Once the son of a king realizes his own status, he will become more dignified and will be different from others in his speech and conduct. Today, many Christians do not live like God-men, because they are not clear about their status. I can never forget that I am a God-man. If I remember my status, I will never lose my temper or criticize others easily, thus losing my own status. The Lord Jesus never sold Himself this way when He was on the earth. All the time He was living a life in the dignified status of a God-man.

Moreover, while the Lord was on earth, He experienced all the sufferings of human life for us. He was tried in all respects so that He might be able to sympathize with our weaknesses and help and rescue us (Heb. 2:17-18; 4:15). At the same time, He expressed the divine virtues in His humanity by the mysterious attributes of God (Luke 7:13-14). Today, we should live the same way on earth. We are no longer sinners. Rather, we are God-men. We should express the divine virtues in our humanity by God's mysterious attributes such as love, light, holiness, righteousness, and power. This is the life of the Lord Jesus on earth. It is also the life that we should live today. What is expressed in our living should not merely be our virtuous acts but should be the divine virtues of God expressed in our humanity. Our living should be filled with the mysterious attributes of God that express the divine virtues.

This Mysterious God-man Being Crucified to Accomplish His All-inclusive Death

This mysterious God-man was crucified in His humanity

with His mysterious divinity, dying an all-inclusive, mysterious death, thus accomplishing the eternal redemption of God (Heb. 9:12). When Christ the God-man was on the cross, He accomplished His all-inclusive death in seven statuses. First, as the mysterious Lamb, He took away the sin of man (John 1:29). Not only did He deal with the outward sins of man, but also He dealt with the nature of sin in man. Second, as a mysterious man of flesh, He condemned sin in the likeness of the flesh of sin, that is, in the form of fallen man, and dealt with the flesh of sin (Rom. 8:3). Through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ in the flesh, God judged sin together with the flesh in which sin dwells. Third, as the mysterious last Adam, He terminated the man of the old creation (6:6). The first Adam was the beginning of the human race. The last Adam is the termination of the human race. When Christ, the last Adam, was crucified on the cross, the old man created by God, who had become fallen because of sin, was terminated.

Fourth, as the mysterious Firstborn of all creation in the old creation, He terminated the entire old creation and reconciled all the creation to God (Col. 1:15, 20). Christ as the Firstborn of all creation takes preeminence in all creation. When this Christ was crucified on the cross, the whole old creation was terminated so that all the creation of God could be reconciled to Him. Fifth, as the mysterious brass serpent, He bruised the ancient serpent and destroyed Satan and his world

(Gen. 3:15; Heb. 2:14; John 12:31). Sixth, as the mysterious Peacemaker, He abolished all the separating ordinances in the law (including all the different kinds of living, customs, and habits that cause divisions among mankind) through His mysterious death, thus making peace for all His Jewish and Gentile believers (Eph. 2:14-16). Seventh, as a mysterious grain of wheat, He released the divine life in Him through His death, thus making us many grains of wheat of life, like Him (John 12:24). This is the eternal redemption that Christ, the mysterious God-man, has accomplished through His all-inclusive death.

This Mysterious God-man, Who Was Crucified, Being Resurrected from the Dead

This mysterious God-man, who was crucified, was resurrected from the dead with His crucified humanity by His eternal and immortal divinity (Acts 2:23-24; 3:15). The resurrection of Christ is truly a mystery. In His mysterious resurrection, He brought the humanity that He had

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put on into His mysterious divinity. When He became flesh, He brought divinity into humanity. When He resurrected from the dead, He brought humanity into divinity. This caused God and man to be mingled as one. Hence, today we are living in His divinity, and God is living in our humanity. God and we have the same life and the same living.

Moreover, as the mysterious only begotten Son of God, in His mysterious resurrection He was begotten with His humanity as the Son of Man to be the mysterious firstborn Son of God (Acts 13:33; Rom. 8:29), causing all His believers to be resurrected with Him and to be brought forth as the sons of God to be His brothers, who constitute the church of God (1 Pet. 1:3; Rom. 8:19; Heb. 2:11-12), which is His Body. This is indeed a mysterious birth. Every one of us was included in this birth. Furthermore, in Christ's mysterious resurrection, this last Adam became the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45) and is now ready to be received by those who believe in Him. Once we believe in Him, this life-giving Spirit enters into our spirit so that we become one spirit with Him. We must see this truth. This is a most important item in our Christian experience. Only by being the Spirit can He enter into us to be our life and our living. If Christ cannot live in us, salvation will be objective. But now that Christ has become the life-giving Spirit in resurrection and is living in us, God's salvation is subjective to us.

This Mysterious God-man Ascending to the Height

This mysterious God-man, in His mysterious resurrection, ascended to the height with all the ones whom He resurrected (Eph. 4:8; 2:6). This was accomplished in Christ's resurrection before we were born. We have to realize that we human beings are limited by time, but with God there is no time element. With Him there are only the facts; with Him there is no element of time. After Christ resurrected, He brought all the ones whom He had resurrected, that is, those who believe in Him, to the height. In His mysterious ascension, there are sixteen items of what He has obtained and attained, what He is doing in this age, and what He will accomplish in the future.

First, He offered to God the ones whom He had resurrected. God in turn gave these ones back to Him, and He gave these ones as gifts to the church (Eph. 4:8).

Second, He mysteriously filled all in all (4:10; 1:23). Third, He mysteriously sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb. 1:3). Fourth, He mysteriously was enthroned and crowned with glory and honor (Rev. 3:21; Heb. 2:9). Glory is the splendor into which Christ's person, with divinity and humanity, entered, and honor is the preciousness which the worth of Christ attained and the dignity which the position of Christ reached. Fifth, He mysteriously became the Head over all things (Eph. 1:22), that all things may be subjected under His feet. All of this is to the church. Sixth, He mysteriously became the Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36). To be Lord denotes Christ's being Lord of all men and all things in His divinity with His humanity (10:36). To be Christ denotes Christ's being anointed by God to accomplish God's eternal economy. Now this mysterious God-man is not only the Lord of all but also the Christ of God, bearing the commission to fulfill God's eternal economy. Seventh, He mysteriously became the Leader and Savior (5:31). He is the Ruler of the kings of the earth for the arranging of the world situation in order that He can be the Savior of all kinds of men.

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Eighth, in such a mysterious ascension, He poured out Himself, the One who had entered into glory and attained honor, as the consummated, essential, and economical, compound Spirit upon all His believers, baptizing them into His mysterious Body, the church of God (Acts 2:17-18; 1 Cor. 12:13). Ninth, He

mysteriously became the Surety of a better covenant, that is the new covenant (Heb. 7:22), to be a guarantee to man. He shed His blood and died to enact the covenant, and became the Surety of such a covenant in resurrection. Tenth, He mysteriously became the Mediator, that is, the Executor, of the new covenant as a testament (9:15). When Christ was on the earth, He enacted the new covenant through His death (Matt. 26:28) and left this new covenant as a testament, or a will, to His believers. Then He resurrected and ascended to the heavens to be the Executor of the testament that He enacted and left to His believers (Heb. 8:6), executing upon us all the bequests of the new covenant, such as the effectiveness of His all-inclusive death, His resurrection in power, His divine life, and the law of life to be our supply and enjoyment. Eleventh, He mysteriously became the Minister of the true tabernacle in the heavens, ministering heaven into us (8:1-2). In other words, He ministers the heavenly life and the divine and rich heavenly supply to all the believers. Twelfth, He mysteriously became our Advocate with the Father, pleading for us

(1 John 2:1). Before the righteous God, He became our Advocate, pleading for us, that the interrupted fellowship between God and us may be recovered. Thirteenth, He mysteriously became the High Priest, interceding for us and saving us to the uttermost (Heb. 4:14-16; 7:25-26). Fourteenth, He mysteriously became the Son of Man as the High Priest walking in the midst of the golden lampstands, the churches (Rev. 1:13-16; 2:1). He is our High Priest, caring for the churches in His humanity.

Fifteenth, heaven will retain Him until He comes to be the Bridegroom to marry His bride, His overcomers, and to set up His kingdom and reign with His overcomers (Acts 3:21; Rev. 19:7-9; 11:15; 20:4, 6). Sixteenth, He became the mysterious Lamb of God as the center of the New Jerusalem in eternity (22:1-3). In the new heaven and new earth in eternity, the New Jerusalem is the eternal habitation of the Triune God with us the redeemed people. Its center is the Lamb on the throne.

God is a mystery, and the mystery of God is Christ. This Christ is the mysterious Word of God, taking on the form of flesh and passing through human living in His humanity with His mysterious divinity. Then He was crucified, accomplishing the all-inclusive and mysterious death. He was resurrected, and He ascended to the heavens. The totality of what Christ is, what He has done, all that He has passed through, and all that He has attained, obtained, and established constitute the story of the mystery of God. May this mysterious story of God become our subjective knowledge and our practical living.

The Mystery of Christ Being Our Daily Life

If we want to know about the life that a Christian should live, we have to know about the mystery of Christ. The mystery of Christ should be our daily life. Without this mystery, our life would just be the life of a human being; it would not be the life of a Christian. The Christian life is a mystery, and this mystery has to do with Christ. This Christ is already in us as our life. He lives in us daily. In our daily life, everything whether positive or negative, enjoyable or bitter, should be the expression of this mystery. The reason for this is that we are not the ones who are living, but the mysterious One is living within us. Everyone in the world lives unto himself. Whether he is happy or sorrowful, there is no mystery at all. But a Christian is different. In smooth circumstances he would give thanks.

In adverse circumstances he would offer up praise. Others are bewildered by him. This is the mysterious story of Christ.

Our Christian life is a mysterious story. Without this mystery, we would fail. No matter how ill-treated we are, we can behave as if nothing has happened; we can be at ease. By this Christ the mystery is expressed. We are crucified with Christ. It is no longer we who live, but it is Christ living in us. When we love, it is Christ loving. When we are humble, it is Christ who is humble. When we are patient, it is Christ who is patient. This is the mystery. Individually speaking, this mystery is our personal life. Corporately speaking, this mystery is the Body of Christ.

The Mystery of Christ—the Church

There are nine main points related to the church, which is the mystery of Christ. The first three points form one group. The first point is concerning the church being chosen and predestinated by God the Father before the foundation of the world. The second point is concerning its being redeemed by God the Son after the foundation of the world. The third point is concerning its being sealed with God the Spirit and receiving the Spirit as the pledge at the time of its redemption. First, there is the selection of God the Father, then there is the redemption of God the Son, after which is the sealing and pledging of God the Spirit. The sealing is for us to become God's possession. The pledge is a guarantee and a foretaste of God becoming our full possession. This is the full salvation that the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—has accomplished upon us.

In our experience of the full salvation of the Triune God, the fourth point is to participate in the resurrection and ascension of Christ, thus becoming the Body of Christ. Then in the fifth point, we become the universal new man to be God's kingdom and God's house, as well as the habitation of God. Following that, there are two more points. The sixth point is that we have the absolute ground and right to enjoy the unsearchable riches of Christ for the expression of the multifarious wisdom of God. The seventh point is that Christ makes His home in our hearts. Not only is He the life supply in us, but He is also working Himself fully into us, occupying every part of our heart, so that we may be filled with the breadth, the length, the height, and the depth of what He

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is, to become all the fullness of God. In this way, we have the eighth point, which is the life union of Christ and the church. This is the great mystery in the universe. The ninth point is that this great mystery will reach a final stage when it will ultimately be consummated in the New Jerusalem.

Being Mysteriously Chosen and Predestinated in Christ by God the Father before the Foundation of the World

Now let us consider the church as the mystery of Christ point by point. The church was mysteriously chosen and predestinated in Christ by God the Father before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:3-5). Ephesians 1:4 and 5 say that He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world that we should be holy, and that He predestinated us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself. We were God's creation; we were not His sons. But God chose us, predestinated us, and called us to sonship. Now through partaking of the life of God, we become the sons of God.

Being Mysteriously Redeemed in the Beloved after the Foundation of the World

After the foundation of the world, the church was mysteriously redeemed in the Beloved (vv. 6-12). The Beloved here is Christ. He is the One most loved by God. Christ is God's heart desire. All of God's heart is set on Him. We are redeemed in such a One. We were all chosen by God in eternity, but we were redeemed in time and even at different times. Our redemption is according to the riches of God's abounding grace with which He graced the church in the Beloved. It is also according to the dispensation of the mysterious economy of God's will, which is according to His good pleasure. Our salvation is not just according to the riches of God's grace but is prearranged according to the dispensation of God's economy. None of us was a believer when we were born. Even when we were saved, we were somewhat confused. Few were definite and assured. It was only afterward that we became clearer. That is why Peter said that though we have not seen Him, we love Him, and while believing in Him, we exult with unspeakable and glorified joy (1 Pet. 1:8). Just by believing and loving this way, we obtain great joy. Hence, a Christian is truly a mysterious person. From the very beginning, he is a mystery.

In the dispensation of God's economy, not only has He

brought us to Himself and caused us to believe and to be saved, but He has also headed up us, the church, together with all things under Christ the Head, that the church, according to God's counsel and predestination, which is according to His will, may be made a chosen possession under Christ the Head to become those who have before hoped in Christ. We are God's predestinated possession and have become those who have before hoped in Christ. Those in the world live on earth without hope and without God. But we, the saved ones, are in Christ and are the first group of people who have hope.

The Church Mysteriously Being Sealed with the Holy Spirit and Receiving the Holy Spirit as the Pledge at the Time of Its Redemption

At the time of our redemption, we were mysteriously sealed with the Holy Spirit, and we received the Holy Spirit as the pledge (Eph. 1:13-14). At the time we believed in the Lord, we received the Holy Spirit as the seal.

This seal of the Holy Spirit operates and works, reminding us and giving us the assurance that we have believed in the Lord Jesus and that we belong to God. I believe every one of us has had this experience. This tells us that we are the saved ones, and we have the Holy Spirit in us as the seal. This Holy Spirit is the pneumatic Christ (Rom. 8:9), who also is the Triune God (Matt. 28:19).

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To be sealed with the Holy Spirit means to be marked out by the Holy Spirit as the living seal. The redeemed church has become God's purchased possession. At the time of redemption, this possession was sealed by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of its eventually being fully redeemed. Since the seal of the Holy Spirit is living, it works within us, saturating and transforming us with the divine element, until we mature in the life of God. Eventually, even our bodies will be fully transformed and redeemed. Now we all have the seal of the Holy Spirit within us. This seal is daily sealing us and reminding us, so that we are continually rescued and delivered from our natural self. In the end, the image of God will be expressed from within us, and we will become like God. Moreover, the redeemed church not only is God's possession but also has obtained God as its possession, with the Holy Spirit as the pledge. God has given us the Holy Spirit not only as the pledge of our possession, assuring us of what we will possess, but also as the foretaste of our inheritance of God as our possession, that we may gain a foretaste of God as our full possession. Through the Holy

Spirit in us as the firstfruit, we have a foretaste of the sweetness of God. This foretaste is in us as the guarantee, assuring us that one day we will enter into the full and rich enjoyment of God. By then our body will be redeemed in glory and will be changed in its form. We will fully inherit God Himself as our enjoyment.

The Church Mysteriously Participating in the Resurrection Power of Christ and in Everything That He Has Attained and Obtained in Ascension, Thereby Becoming the Body of Christ

The church, the mystery of Christ, participates mysteriously in the resurrection power of Christ and in everything that He has attained and obtained in ascension, thereby becoming the Body of Christ (Eph. 1:19-23). We must participate in the resurrection of Christ and enter into His ascension before all that He has attained and obtained in ascension can become our enjoyment. It is then that the Body of Christ will be expressed. The Body of Christ is produced fully from the resurrection and ascension of Christ. After Christ resurrected, He became the life-giving Spirit. In His ascension He became the outpoured Spirit. In this way He becomes the essential, economical, and compound Spirit. As the essential Spirit, He gives us life. As the economical Spirit, He pours Himself out on us. He is also the compound Spirit. In Him is included not only divinity and humanity, but also human living, the effectiveness of death, and the power of resurrection. Such a compound Spirit is in us and also upon us, making us the Body of Christ. In this way the Body life of Christ is expressed.

This Body of Christ is the fullness of the One who fills all in all (v. 23) as the corporate expression of the embodiment of the processed Triune God. This Body was mysteriously made alive together with Christ (regenerated—John 3:5-6) and was raised up together (taking Christ as life and living together with Him—Col. 3:4; John 14:19) and seated in the heavenlies together to participate in all that Christ has attained and obtained in His ascension (Eph. 2:5-6). We are regenerated in the resurrection of Christ. We are made alive and are seated in the heavenlies also in His resurrection.

The Church Mysteriously Becoming the Universal New Man as God's Kingdom and God's House, and Being Built Up as the Habitation of God

The church mysteriously becomes the universal new man

as God's kingdom and God's house, and is built up as the habitation of God (vv. 15, 19-22). The church is the new man. It is God's kingdom, God's house, and God's habitation. This is indeed a mystery. The church, the mystery of Christ, as the universal new man, is replacing the old man in God's creation for the expression of God and the accomplishing of God's economy. It is God's kingdom to be ruled by God and to rule for God (Rom. 5:17). It is also God's house to enjoy God's riches and to express the glory of God's riches (1 Tim. 3:15-16). Furthermore, it is built up as the habitation of God. This is the result of submitting to the authority in God's kingdom and enjoying the riches in God's house (Eph. 4:16).

In the organic Body of Christ, in the living in the universal new man, which is constituted of God as life, and in the living in God's house of life and in God's kingdom of life, there are no lifeless organizations such as a universal federation or local autonomies. There is obviously the need in the churches in all the localities to have some administrative arrangements for the business affairs. Seemingly, these administrative arrangements are non-organic. Actually, the administrative arrangements for these business affairs also have to be under the ruling of the Holy Spirit and according to His leading. For example, when the apostles set up elders in a locality, they must do so under the Holy Spirit's leading (Acts 20:28). This shows us that in the

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church, even in the arrangements of business affairs, there is the need for the ruling and the leading of the Holy Spirit. This is different from worldly business organizations, workers' unions, or ethnic associations. They do not have the Holy Spirit. They only have human beings. We who are the church have the Holy Spirit in each one of us. Even arrangements in business affairs, which may seem organizational outwardly, must also be done under the leading of the mysterious Holy Spirit within us. Actually, there is not much administrative work in the church. The main work is the shepherding, the teaching, and the leading. These are the three things that local elders should do.

The Church Mysteriously Enjoying the Unsearchable Riches of Christ

Since the church as the Body of Christ is the universal new man, the kingdom of God, the house of God, and the habitation of God, it mysteriously enjoys the unsearchable riches of Christ (Eph. 3:2, 7-11). This is

through the stewardship of grace given by God and is according to the dispensation of the mysterious economy of God. The purpose of this is to make known through the church the multifarious wisdom of God.

*Christ Mysteriously Making Home
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to Become All the Fullness of God*

The church, being strengthened in its members into the inner man with power by God through His Spirit, has Christ mysteriously making home in the believers' hearts, with the result that it is filled with the breadth, the length, the height, and the depth of what Christ is, to become all the fullness of God (vv. 15-19). Not only do we have Christ in us as the rich supply, this Christ is also making home and living in our hearts. For this reason, we need the Holy Spirit to strengthen our whole being into our spirit. In this way, Christ will have the chance to occupy the different parts of our heart—our mind, emotion, will, and conscience. In addition to our spirit, Christ will spread and occupy our whole soul step by step. Hence, for Christ to make home in our heart is for Him to be constituted in the hearts of the believers in the church and to spread within them. Then we will gradually experience the boundless dimensions of what Christ is—His breadth, length, height, and depth. This points to the boundless and immeasurable riches of Christ. In the end, we will be filled to become all the fullness of God as the full expression of God.

*The Mysterious Life Union of Christ and the Church
Being the Great Mystery in the Universe*

We also have the mysterious life union of Christ and His Body, the church. This union is a great mystery in the universe (5:32). This mystery is the processed Triune God being joined and mingled with the regenerated and transformed tripartite man to become a universal couple. This is the ultimate point of the mingling of God and man. God is the principal character, and man is His counterpart. The two share the same nature; they live and walk together. In other words, divinity is living in humanity to become the reality of humanity, and the human virtues are living out the divine glory and beauty to become the expression of divinity. Divinity and humanity are mingled as one. Divinity is the content and the

reality within, and humanity is the manifestation and beauty without. The virtues manifested by us Christians should be the manifestation of the glory and beauty in the divine attributes. This is different from the morality of the world, which is only proper human behavior. But a Christian is one who has divinity as his element and reality, from which the divine glory and beauty are expressed through the human virtues. This is the expression of God.

*The Mysterious Ultimate Consummation
in God's Economy—the New Jerusalem*

Finally, there is the mysterious ultimate consummation in God's economy, the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2). This is the peak, the climax, of the union and mingling of the processed Triune God with the transformed tripartite man, resulting in the tabernacle where God dwells and lives with man, and the temple where man dwells and serves God. The two become the mutual habitation of the redeeming God and the redeemed man (vv. 3, 22).

On the one hand, the New Jerusalem is the habitation of God. On the other hand, it is also our habitation. God dwells in it and lives with man. Man dwells in it and serves God. In such a place, the Triune God is the life supply, and the tripartite man is the outward appearance for the expression of God (vv. 12, 14). The Triune God on the throne is the center of the holy city from which flows the

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river of life with the tree of life growing alongside to be the supply of the whole city (22:1-2). This is the inward condition of the New Jerusalem. Outwardly, the redeemed nation of Israel, indicated by the names of the twelve tribes, is the gates of the city. The redeemed church, indicated by the names of the twelve apostles, is the wall of the city. The two are the outward appearance of the city, expressing the effulgence of God's glory (21:11-14). Because the gates are pearl and the wall is jasper, they are transparent and shining, and the effulgence of God's glory is expressed this way.

Today, the church, which is joined and mingled mysteriously with the Triune God, is a miniature of this New Jerusalem. Everything should have this holy city as its highest standard and its matchless hope. If we have such a profound and transcendent realization concerning the mystery of Christ, the church, our goal and hope will be uplifted. We will see and identify with the New Jerusalem as the highest standard of everything in our lives, and also our ultimate hope will be the New Jerusalem. 