

THE REVELATION AND EXPERIENCE OF THE “JOURNEYING” TRIUNE GOD

by Ed Marks



The entire Bible is the autobiography and history of the “journeying” Triune God, and the destination of the journeying Triune God is the human spirit of His chosen and redeemed people (John 1:14; 20:22; 3:6; 4:24; Eph. 2:22). We use the word *journeying* as a descriptor of the Triune God in His economical aspect, that is, in His move and work to accomplish His eternal plan. The Bible portrays the Triune God as the Word in eternity past (John 1:1) moving across the bridge of time into eternity future to accomplish the desire of His heart. Psalm 90:2 says, “From eternity to eternity, You are God.” The eternal Triune God, the One whom His seekers love, worship, and adore, is the One “from eternity to eternity,” from eternity past to eternity future. Between these two sections of eternity, on the span of the bridge of time, we see God as the Word moving through a process to accomplish His purpose. The moving, journeying Triune God is the processed Triune God, the God who passed through a marvelous process to impart Himself as life into His chosen people (John 10:10).

In the Gospel of John, this process may be summed up in three words: the *Word*, the *flesh*, and the *breath*. The Word is God, the flesh is man, and the breath is the Spirit. The Word became flesh (1:1, 14), and the flesh became the breath to be breathed into man (20:22) to make him a regenerated man of God with the breath of God. “The Word became flesh” (1:14), and the “last Adam [the Word become flesh] became a life-giving Spirit” (1 Cor. 15:45). These two great “becomings” were the journeying Triune God’s major processes of His move in man to accomplish His plan. The Word, who was God, journeyed out of eternity past into time and with His divinity into humanity. He had nothing to do with the flesh in eternity past, but He *became* flesh. This was a great process! Kenneth Wuest’s expanded translation of the New Testament says in John 1:14 that “the Word, entering a new mode of existence, became flesh.” The infinite God became a finite man, and this wonderful God-man passed through human living and crucifixion to enter into resurrection. In resurrection this God-man, who was the last Adam, “became a life-giving Spirit”

(1 Cor. 15:45). *Spirit* here is the Greek word *pneuma*, which also means *breath*. The Gospel of John records that in resurrection the Lord came as the Spirit to be breathed into His believers: “He breathed into them and said to them, Receive the Holy Breath” (20:22—lit.). The Word, who had become flesh, resurrected to become the life-giving Breath to impart Himself as the divine life into man, thus fulfilling His commission that His chosen ones would not only possess Him as their life but also be filled and overflowing with Him as life in abundance (10:10).

God’s move is centered on man. The Old Testament reveals God’s indirect move *with* man, whereas the New Testament reveals God’s direct move *in* man. God’s move with man in the Old Testament was a typological preparation for His ultimate move in man in the reality of the New Testament. God’s move in man is to deify man, making man the same as He is in life, nature, and appearance but not in the Godhead for the glory of God, the expression of God (Gal. 1:15-16; 2:20; 4:19; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 John 3:2). This move to deify man, making man the corporate expression of the Triune God, is seen in a panoramic way in chapter 1 of the Gospel of John. This chapter, as a prologue to the entire book of John, is an abstract of the history of the Triune God as the Word in eternity past ultimately becoming the New Jerusalem in eternity future (v. 1, 51). John 1 shows us in a crystallized way the eternal Word in His creating work and in His journeying across the bridge of time to become flesh for accomplishing His judicial redemption, to become the life-giving, transforming Spirit for carrying out His organic salvation, and ultimately to become fully united, mingled, and incorporated with His regenerated, transformed, and glorified bride to be the New Jerusalem, the ultimate Bethel, the mutual abode of God and man. John 1 gives us a glimpse into eternity past and eternity future with the connecting bridge of time on which five great historical events in the Triune God’s journey are summarized as follows: creation (v. 3), incarnation (v. 14), the Lamb (v. 29), the Spirit (v. 32), and the ladder (v. 51). As the Word, the Triune God speaks forth who He is for His explanation and expression in all of these great events.

We will see that these events in the history of God are not only in the past, present, and future, but involve aspects of God that we can experience day by day. This is because with Him there is no element of time. He is the great "I Am," the eternal present tense (8:58), and as the I Am, He is the self-existing and ever-existing God who was in the past, is in the present, and will be in the future (Rev. 1:4).

The Word in Eternity Past

John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." *God* here is the Triune God, and He is seen in the beginning in eternity past. He is the eternal Word as the eternal origin and eternal start of all things, the perpetual and everlasting present tense, the "I Am" of the universe (8:58). Christ as the eternal God is the Word of God, the speaking of God. As the speaking of God, He is God defined, God explained, and God expressed. In eternity past He was preparing to come forth out of eternity into time to be born into humanity as foretold by the prophet Micah: "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, / So little to be among the thousands of Judah, / From you there will come forth to Me / He who is to be Ruler in Israel; / And His goings forth are from ancient times, / From the days of eternity" (5:2). The journeying Triune God began "His goings forth" from the days of eternity, preparing to be born in Bethlehem as a man, to accomplish His eternal purpose. In eternity past God the Father, because of His great love with which He loved us, chose us in Christ as the sphere for us to be holy, and He predestinated us through Christ as the means for us to be His sons (Eph. 2:4; 1:4-5). To be holy is to be partakers of Christ as the divine nature of God (2 Pet. 1:4), and to be sons is to be partakers of Christ as the embodiment of the divine life, the life of God (1 John 5:11-13). In eternity past our destiny was predetermined by God that in eternity future we would be the wife of Christ (fully possessing His holy nature to be the holy city) and the sons of God (fully possessing His divine life to be the city of life).

For us to become His bridal city, the holy city, and the city of life (Rev. 21:2, 9-10; 22:1-2), the divine God had to travel out of eternity across the bridge of time to reach us on the level of humanity. Hosea 11:4 predicted that God would visit His chosen ones "with cords of a man, / With bands of love." This indicates that although God's love is divine, it reaches us from eternity through the humanity of Christ. God in Christ came into humanity, passing through the processes of incarnation, human

living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. These processes in His journey on the bridge of time were the "cords of a man" to bind us to Himself in His humanity and the "bands of love" to draw us to Himself in His divinity. Through all the processes of Christ in His humanity, God's love in Christ reaches us to redeem us judicially and prevails in us to save us organically to be His bride. Through the love of God in Christ, we are justified in His blood and saved in His life (Rom. 5:8-10).

Before the foundation of the world in eternity past, not only did God choose and predestinate us to be His sons, possessing His life, but He also foreknew that we would fall and need to be redeemed. First Peter tells us that along with our being "chosen according to the foreknowledge of God" (1:2), Christ as the Lamb of God with His precious blood was also "foreknown before the foundation of the world" (v. 20). In Peter's first gospel message he said that Christ's going to die on the cross was His being "delivered up by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23).

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This counsel must have been determined in a council held by the Divine Trinity before the foundation of the world (1 Pet. 1:20; Rev. 13:8), indicating that the Lord's crucifixion was not an accident in human history but a purposeful fulfillment of the divine counsel determined by the Triune God. (Recovery Version, Acts 2:23, note 1)



It is truly a wonder that God decided in a council to create a sinless man (as indicated by "Let Us make man" in Genesis 1:26) and decided in a council in eternity past to die on the cross for sinful man. God foreknew that this sinless man would become a sinful man. His ultimate and original intention, however, was not to have merely a sinless man or a good man but a God-man, a man filled with Him to express Him in His image and represent Him with His dominion. Thus, in eternity past, He prepared to go forth onto the bridge of time to reach fallen man as the Lamb of God to take away man's sin and as the tree of life to impart Himself as life into man so that man could be redeemed and deified. God's creation of a pristine universe with a man in His image was according to

His eternal will to redeem and deify His chosen ones that they might become a corporate God-man for the manifestation of God (Rev. 4:11; 1 Tim. 3:15-16).

All Things Coming into Being through Him

John 1:3 says, “All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him not one thing came into being which has come into being.” Hebrews 11:3 says that the universe was framed by the word of God. God spoke things into being through Christ as the Word. In His creating work “He spoke, and it was; / He commanded, and it stood” (Psa. 33:9). All things were created in and through Christ as the speaking of God. Because the universe was spoken into existence by God, it displays His divine characteristics. Romans 1:20 says, “For the invisible things of Him, both His eternal power and divine characteristics, have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, being perceived by the things made, so that they would be without excuse.” Man has no excuse for not believing in God, because all of His invisible characteristics are perceived by all the positive items in His created universe. As a result of rejecting God, man “exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshipped and served the creation rather than the Creator” (v. 25). The result of man’s giving up God was his being given up by God (vv. 24, 26, 28). Man’s godless and fallen state became progressively worse in his sinking deeper and deeper into darkness, corruption, self-degradation, and self-annihilation (vv. 21-32). Romans 1 indicates that the way for us to be saved from the abyss of man’s fall is to give our Creator God the preeminence in our lives by glorifying Him, thanking Him, worshipping Him, and serving Him (vv. 21, 25).

Paul pointed to God as the Creator with His creation in preaching the gospel to the idol worshippers in the region of Lycaonia (Acts 14:15-17) and the wisdom-seekers in Athens (17:19-34). Paul exhorted those in Lycaonia to turn from their idolatry to the living God by considering the creation. In creating the heaven and earth and the sea and all the things in them, God “did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good by giving you rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness” (14:17). In his announcing the gospel to the idolatrous Athenians, Paul said, “I even found an altar on which was inscribed, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore you worship without knowing, this I announce to you” (17:23). He proceeded to share with them that God can be known through His creation, which shows that He does not dwell in temples made with hands and that He is not served by human hands. His creation of men and His predetermination of their appointed seasons and the boundaries of their dwelling are so that they might seek God (vv. 24-27). Psalm 19:1-3 says,

The heavens declare the glory of God, / And the expanse

proclaims the work of His hands. / Day to day pours forth speech, / And night to night tells out knowledge. / There is no speech and there are no words; / Their voice is not heard.

The universe declares, proclaims, pours forth speech, and tells out the knowledge of God to every man in a universal language. This language is Christ Himself as the Word of God, the definition, explanation, and expression of God. God’s language is Christ, as Hebrews 1:2 says literally that God has spoken “in Son.” “Son” is God’s language. The universe speaks “Son,” Christ, in many aspects as the divine characteristics of God to satisfy man’s innate and unconscious desire and quest for reality, meaning, and fulfillment. This is why Haggai 2:7 says that Christ will come again as “the Desire of all the nations.” The creation, in expressing Christ as the divine characteristics, speaks forth what man innately desires.

The greatness and immeasurable dimensions of the universe manifest the greatness of the immeasurable God. The wonder of the universe with its unfathomable galaxies and mysterious creatures displays the wonder of God. When God unveiled Himself to Job, He spoke concerning the created universe with the animals in order to humble Job and show him that the universe and God were a mystery that was far beyond his capacity to understand (Job 38:4—39:30; 40:15—41:34). Augustine once said, “Since it is God we are speaking of, you do not understand it. If you could understand it, it would not be God” (Wills xii). The order of the universe with the arrangement of the galaxies, suns, and orbits of the planets displays the God of order with His eternal plan. The brightness of the sun, the moon, and the stars declares that God is a God of light. The beauty of the universe with the inspiring scenery of the sky, sunrises, sunsets, oceans, mountains, rivers, flowers, grass, and trees displays the beauty of God. God’s arrangement and preparation of the universe with His provision for man’s every need display the goodness and lovingkindness of God. The terrible and unexpected calamities of nature, what many call “acts of God” or “disasters of biblical proportion,” show the awesome power, fearfulness, and coming judgment of God.

God’s creation even shows that He is the God of resurrection. In John 12:24 the Lord Jesus as the incarnated God likened Himself to a grain of wheat. Just as a grain of wheat contains the germ of the wheat life, so Christ contained the germ of the God-life. “In Him was life” (John 1:4), but He came “that [we] may have life” (10:10). Thus, as a grain of wheat, He had to fall into the ground to die in the “shell” of His humanity to release the life of His divinity. As the grain of wheat resurrects to become a stalk of wheat with many grains, so Christ resurrected to become the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45) with many brothers for His glorification. His death as a grain of wheat was a life-releasing

death, and His resurrection as a stalk of wheat was a life-dispensing resurrection. God's creation of a grain of wheat with its death and resurrection for its multiplication wonderfully displays the incarnated Christ with His death and resurrection for God's glorification (John 12:23-24).

The Word Becoming Flesh to Tabernacle among Us

God's creation at the beginning of time to display His eternal power and divine characteristics set the stage for His incarnation on the bridge of time for the declaration of God as life, light, grace, and reality (1:4, 14, 17). Life is God imparted, light is God expressed, grace is God enjoyed, and reality is God realized by us. John 1:14 says, "The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality." What a wonder it is that the eternal God as the Word became flesh, that the incarnate Christ is "God infinite, in eternity, / Yet man in time, finite to be!" (*Hymns*, #501). This is why Isaiah 9:6 calls Him "Wonderful," which also means "incomprehensible." The Word becoming flesh made God contactable, touchable, receivable, experienceable, and enjoyable. Even more, God's becoming flesh made Him enterable. This God-man was the reality of the tabernacle in the Old Testament; He "tabernacled" among men as the dwelling place of God, the building of God. God's building is a God-man—the building of God into man and of man into God. The building together of God and man was first the Lord Jesus as the prototype in His incarnation (John 2:19-22), then His mystical Body, His church, as His duplication in His resurrection (1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:21-22), and finally the New Jerusalem, as His wife, in His finalization (Rev. 21:2-3, 22). God's desire is for us to have Him as our dwelling place so that He may have us as His dwelling place. "Abide in Me and I in you" is the Lord's charge to us (John 15:4).

Three words can be used to describe the history of God in His relationship with man: *union*, *mingling*, and *incorporation*. God's desire is to have the uniting of the divine life with the human life, the mingling of the divine nature with the human nature, and the incorporation of the divine person with the human person. The Word becoming flesh was the union of the divine life with the human life. "Just as the Father has life in Himself, so He gave the Son to also have life in Himself" (5:26). Christ the Son denied His human life that He might live by the divine life, allowing the attributes of God to be expressed in the virtues of man (vv. 19, 30). This prototypical union is duplicated in the believers, who have

Christ as their life (Col. 3:4). Christ is to be revealed in them, to live in them, and to be formed in them (Gal. 1:15-16; 2:20; 4:19). Christ is the vine and they are the branches, having one life and one living with Him to grow Christ and propagate Christ (John 15:1-5; Phil. 1:21).

The Word becoming flesh was also the mingling of divinity with humanity as typified by the meal offering in Leviticus 2:4-5, composed of fine flour mingled with oil. The divine nature and the human nature were mingled together as one entity in Christ without producing a third substance; the two natures of Christ, while being mingled together as one entity, remain distinguishable in their organic combination. The meal offering signifies the individual Christ, the individual Christian, and the corporate Christ, the Body of Christ. All genuine Christians have the divine Spirit mingled with their human spirit to be one spirit (Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17). Furthermore, to sustain their spiritual life, all the believers must eat Christ daily as their spiritual food for them to live by Christ (John 6:57). Just as the food that we eat is

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digested and assimilated by us to be mingled with us, so the Christ that we eat spiritually is organically digested and assimilated by our inner man to be mingled with us and transform us into His image. Christ's being mingled with us issues in the church life as a corporate meal offering, which Paul makes reference to in 1 Corinthians 10:17 in saying that the church as the one Body is symbolized by the one loaf, or one bread. The Word becoming flesh was enlarged in resurrection and is reproduced in the believers' God-man living to become the corporate manifestation of God in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:15-16).

Furthermore, through the Triune God's incarnation, God was incorporated with man, meaning that God dwelt in man and man dwelt in God. "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me" (John 14:11). This mutual indwelling of God and man was enlarged on the day of Christ's resurrection to include all of His believers. "In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you" (v. 20). In our Christian experience we are to remain in this incorporation by loving Him. The Lord Jesus

said in verse 23, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him.” The abode here is the mutual abode of the Father and the Son dwelling in us and us dwelling in the Father and the Son. This mutual abode is the incorporation of the Triune God with His chosen and redeemed people, which consummates in us, together with Him, becoming the New Jerusalem as the ultimate consummation of the tabernacle of God (Rev. 21:3).

Christ is not only the tabernacle of God for us to enter into God but also the way for us enter into God (John 14:6). The way for us to be incorporated into God so that we may become the New Jerusalem as the ultimate tabernacle of God can be seen in the type of the tabernacle in the Old Testament. The priestly service involved entering into the depths of the tabernacle according to the prescribed way of God. He first had to offer the offerings at the bronze altar and wash in the laver of the outer court. Then he was to enter into the Holy Place to feed on the Bread of the Presence, light the lamps of the golden lampstand, and burn the incense on the golden incense altar. The final destination of the priest’s service was for him to enter into the Holy of Holies, in which was the Ark of God, in order for him to contact God and receive the speaking of God to be infused with God and enjoy the riches contained in God. Each station of the priest’s service typifies in detail how we can experience Christ to enter into the depths of Christ for us to be incorporated with Him. As we experience the reality of Christ typified by each aspect of the furniture in the tabernacle, we enter fully into Him so that He may enter fully into us. In this way we abide in Him and He abides in us in our daily life so that we can live Him for His magnification (Phil. 1:20-21).

In order to be incorporated with Christ as the real tabernacle of God, we first need to enjoy Him as the reality of all the offerings in the Old Testament, which were mainly offered at the bronze altar in the outer court. Bronze signifies God’s judgment, and the altar signifies the cross of Christ. God’s will was for Christ to be judged by God on the cross, in our place, as the reality of all the offerings in the Old Testament so that we might enjoy Him as our all in all (Heb. 10:5-10). The offerings typify Christ in many aspects for our supply. We can apply Christ every day by consecrating our lives to God in Christ as our burnt offering—the One whose being and living were absolutely and wholly for God’s satisfaction (Lev. 1; Phil. 2:5-8). In our personal fellowship with Him, we can be infused with Him as our absoluteness to God. He is also the reality of the meal offering to us. In our intimate fellowship with Him, His pure humanity as the fine flour mingled with the Spirit of God as the oil becomes our food for our supply and His expression (Lev. 2; Matt. 11:29; 12:19-20; Heb. 4:15). As the peace offering, Christ is our peace toward God and our peace toward

man (Lev. 7:11-13; Col. 1:20-22; Rom. 5:1). As the sin offering, He deals with our sinful nature (Lev. 4; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 8:3), and as the trespass offering, He deals with the sins in our conduct through the application of His cleansing blood in our fellowship with Him as the divine light (Lev. 5; Isa. 53:5-6, 10-11; 1 John 1:5-9). As the wave offering, Christ is our resurrection life to swallow up all the death in our being (Lev. 10:15; John 11:25; 2 Cor. 5:4). As the heave offering, Christ is the ascended power of God to us, the One who is far above all (Exo. 29:27; Eph. 1:19-21), and the empowering One, in whom we can do all things and reign over all things (Phil. 4:13; Rom. 5:17). As the drink offering, Christ is the real wine producer, the One who sacrifices Himself to cheer both God and man (Num. 15:1-10; Judg. 9:13). In our fellowship with Him, we can be filled with Him as the new wine to make us wine to God for His joy and the joy of all His chosen ones (Phil. 2:17; 2 Tim. 4:6).

The experience of Christ as the reality of all the offerings continues with our experience of Him as the washing laver (Exo. 40:30-32). The apostle Paul said that Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her “that He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word” (Eph. 5:26). The Greek word for *washing* here is literally *laver*. In order to become Christ’s glorious church, we need to be sanctified by the laver of the water in the word. Before entering into the Holy Place of the tabernacle, the priests were required to wash away their earthly defilement at the laver, which was made from the bronze mirrors of the women who served at the entrance of the tabernacle (Exo. 38:8). The laver is a type of the written and constant Word of God, and the washing water in the laver is a type of Christ as the living Word of God becoming the instant and applied word of God to us. Christ is the living Word of God embodied in the written Word of God (John 5:39-40). When we contact Him as the living Word of God in His written Word, He becomes the applied word to us. This applied instant word is the speaking Spirit, cleansing us of all impurity and adding the God of purity to our being to make us His pure and glorious church (Rev. 2:7; Eph. 5:26-27).

We have seen from John 1 that in the beginning was the Word and that all things in the created universe came into being through Him. Just as all things in the created universe began with the Word, all things in our personal universe begin with the Word. To have a new beginning every day is to begin every day with the Word of God. The source of man’s degradation is his leaving the Word of God, whereas the source of man’s vitalization is his returning to the Word of God. Leaving the Word of God is the decaying and ultimate ending of everything positive in our Christian life, whereas returning to the Word of God is the renewing and fresh beginning of everything positive in our Christian life.

Through the experience of Christ as the sanctifying, cleansing, and washing water in the word of God, we enter deeper into Him to enjoy Him as the reality of the bread of the Presence in the Holy Place. The Hebrew word for *presence* is literally *face*. “*The bread of the Presence, the face-bread, means that God’s presence, God’s face, is the life supply to the serving priests*” (Exo. 25:30, Recovery Version, note 2). The presence of God means everything to us in our Christian life and church life. Actually, Christ as the Spirit in our spirit is the presence of God. In 2 Corinthians 2:10 Paul said that he forgave a brother “in the person of Christ.” The Greek word for *person* here is literally *face*, or *presence*, meaning that Paul did all things in the face of Christ, the presence of Christ. In our experience, to have the Lord’s presence is to have His “smile.” The Lord’s shining face and His uplifted countenance upon His people is their unique blessing (Num. 6:23-27). Whereas the face is the person, the countenance is the expression of the person. For the Lord to lift up His countenance upon us means that we have His “smile.” It means that He is well-pleased in us and that we have Him flowing within us to cause us to have the inward consciousness of life and peace (Rom. 8:6).

Two commands in the New Testament are significant to keeping ourselves in the supply of God’s presence: (1) do not grieve the Spirit (Eph. 4:30), and (2) do not quench the Spirit (1 Thes. 5:19). Not grieving the

Spirit is related to our living in the Body of Christ, and not quenching the Spirit is related to our functioning in the Body of Christ. If we live according to our former manner of life, we will grieve the Spirit, which means to make the indwelling Spirit unhappy or displeased. Not grieving the Spirit is particularly related to our speaking and forgiving one another. Ephesians 4:31-32 says, “Let all bitterness and anger and wrath and clamor and evil speaking be removed from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ also forgave you.” The words that come out of our mouth are what has been stored up in our heart, for as the Lord said, “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man, out of his good treasure, brings forth good things, and the evil man, out of his evil treasure, brings forth evil things” (Matt. 12:34-35). We need to daily pray that God the Father would strengthen us through His Spirit into the inner man that Christ may make His home in our hearts (Eph. 3:16-17). Furthermore, we need to follow the psalmist’s pattern by making daily deposits of God’s word in our heart: “In my heart I have treasured up Your word / That I might not sin against You” (Psa. 119:11). If our heart

has Christ and God’s word as its treasure in abundance, what comes out of our mouth will not grieve the Spirit but will dispense Christ as the Spirit of grace to others for their building up (Eph. 4:29). Furthermore, we should not quench the Spirit, who causes us to be burning in spirit to function for the building up of Christ’s Body (Rom. 12:11). The Spirit in our spirit is always prompting us to function by contacting people in preaching the gospel, ministering life, teaching the truth, and shepherding in love. If we disobey these inner promptings to dispense Christ into others, we will lose the supply, the bread of His presence. But when we go along with Him in His leading to contact people to cherish and nourish them in Christ, His presence becomes our bread, our serving supply.

After displaying and eating the bread of the Presence in the Holy Place, the priest was led to care for the golden lampstand by trimming its charred wicks and by adding the supply of oil for it to burn purely and brightly (Exo. 25:31-39; 30:7). In the reality of the New Testa-

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ment, we need to be one with Christ in His heavenly ministry as He cares for God’s testimony in the same way. The golden lampstand ultimately signifies the church as the expression of the Triune God (Rev. 1:11-12). Gold signifies God the Father in His divine nature; the shape, form, and image of the lampstand signifies God the Son as the image of the invisible God; and the lamps of the lampstand signify the sevenfold intensified Spirit as the ultimate application, reaching, and expression of the Triune God (4:5). The church in its pure and heavenly reality is the pure constitution and manifestation of the Triune God, the testimony of Jesus (1:2). This testimony must be maintained by our being one with Christ in His priestly ministry of caring for the church (v. 13; 2:1). In His heavenly care, He trims away the charred wicks of everything related to Satan, sin, death, and darkness—things such as our flesh and our natural life with our worldliness, divisiveness, deadness, lukewarmness, ambition, vainglory, and rivalry. Furthermore, He dispenses Himself as the fresh oil of the Spirit, the golden oil, into us so that we may gain more of God to glow with God and shine forth

God. Christ trims the charred wicks by cherishing us in His humanity as the Son of Man (v. 13), and He dispenses the Spirit as the oil into our being by nourishing us in His divinity as the Son of God (Eph. 5:29). To enter into Christ as the tabernacle is to care for the lampstand by being one with Christ to cherish and nourish His members. To cherish them is to make them glad by ushering them into the heavenly condition, situation, and atmosphere of His presence. To nourish them is to minister to them the healthy teaching of God's economy concerning Christ as the mystery of God and the church as the mystery of Christ (Col. 2:2; Eph. 3:4; 5:32). To cherish others we must be daily infused with God in His attributes of love, kindness, and mercy; to nourish others we must be daily supplied with the God-breathed Scriptures and the healthy teaching of God's economy. Then we will flow out this fresh infusion and supply to maintain the testimony of Jesus as the golden lampstand.

The enjoyment and experience of Christ in His care for the church as the lampstand continues with the experience of Him at the golden incense altar (Exo. 40:26-27), which ushers us into the Holy of Holies to enjoy Christ as the Ark with its contents (vv. 20-21). This is to enter into His depths as the incarnated Triune God, the reality of the tabernacle of God. The incense signifies Christ as the substance of our prayer to God (Rev. 8:3-5). Although the incense altar is in the Holy Place, Hebrews reveals that it belongs to the Holy of Holies—"the Holy of Holies, having a golden altar" (9:3-4). This shows that our genuine prayer ushers us into the Holy of Holies; real prayer with Christ as the incense is to pray ourselves fully into our spirit, the place where Christ dwells (2 Tim. 4:22; Eph. 2:22). In our spirit we can contact Christ as the real Ark of God, which was constituted of acacia wood overlaid with gold and contained the hidden manna in the golden pot, the law as the testimony of God, and the budding rod of Aaron (Heb. 9:3-4).

The hidden manna in the golden pot was the focal point of the tabernacle. The tabernacle was the center of God's move and of His people, the Holy of Holies was the center of the tabernacle, the Ark was the center of the Holy of Holies, the golden pot was the center of the Ark, and the hidden manna was the center of the golden pot. Thus, to enjoy Christ as the hidden manna is to be in the intrinsic center and heart of God for His move on earth to build up the church. The daily manna that God's people enjoyed in the Old Testament was a type of Christ as the daily, heavenly food of God's people to enable them to be reconstituted with Him for His corporate expression. A portion of this manna was preserved in a golden pot within the Ark in the Holy of Holies (Exo. 16:32-34). The reality of this hidden manna is the hidden Christ eaten, digested, and assimilated by us to be our life, our person, and our everything for our transformation into precious

material for God's building (John 6:57, 63). We can eat Christ as the hidden manna by having hidden time with Him in His Word and in prayer to feed on Him in secret (Jer. 15:16; Matt. 4:4; 6:6).

By eating Christ as the hidden manna we are incorporated into Him as the tabernacle of God. The hidden manna signifies Christ, the golden pot signifies the Father in His divine nature, the Ark signifies Christ as the embodiment of the Triune God, and the Holy of Holies signifies our spirit as the dwelling place of God. Based on this realization, we can see the incorporation, the mutual indwelling, of God and man. The hidden manna in the golden pot signifies that Christ is in the Father, the golden pot being in the Ark signifies that the Father is in Christ, and the Ark being in the Holy of Holies signifies that Christ as the Spirit is in our spirit. Thus, the Father is in the Son, the Son is in the Father, and the Son with the Father as the Spirit is in our spirit for the mutual abode of the Triune God with the tripartite man (John 14:10-11, 20; 2 Tim. 4:22; John 14:23). By eating Christ as the hidden manna, we enter into the Son, who is in the Father, who is in the Son, who is the Spirit in our spirit (2 Cor. 3:17; Rom. 8:16). The deepest experience of Christ as the tabernacle of God is for us to enjoy Him as the hidden manna in the golden pot so that He may operate within us as the law of the Spirit of life for God's expression and as the resurrection life for God's rule (Rom. 8:2; 5:17). This is to fulfill God's original intention in Genesis 1:26 to have a corporate man in His image for His expression and with His dominion for His kingdom.

The Lamb of God Taking Away the Sin of the World

The first chapter of John reveals not only that Christ, the incarnated Triune God, is the tabernacle of God for us to enter into Him and enjoy His riches but also that He is the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world for our judicial redemption (v. 29). We use the word *judicial* in the sense of God legally forgiving our sins by satisfying the demands of His righteousness. According to God's righteousness, the penalty, the wages, of sin is death, but Christ paid the price of these wages by dying on the cross for all of sinful mankind that we might receive Him as the free gift of eternal life (Rom. 6:23). The meaning of *redemption* is clearly defined by Scofield in his original study Bible in a note on Romans 3:24. He points out that three words in the New Testament are translated as *redemption*:

(1) *agorazo*, "to purchase in the market." The underlying thought is of a slave-market. The subjects of redemption are "sold under sin" (Rom. 7:14), but are, moreover, under sentence of death (Ezk. 18:4; John 3:18, 19; Rom. 3:19; Gal. 3:10), and the purchase price is the blood of the Redeemer who dies in their stead (Gal. 3:13; 2 Cor. 5:21; Mt. 20:28; Mk. 10:45; 1 Tim. 2:6; 1 Pet. 1:18).

(2) *exagorazo*, “to buy out of the market.” The redeemed are never again to be exposed to sale; (3) *lutroo*, “to loose,” “to set free by paying a price” (John 8. 32; Gal. 4. 4, 5, 31; 5. 13; Rom. 8. 21). Redemption is by sacrifice and by power (Ex. 14. 30, *note*); Christ paid the price, the Holy Spirit makes deliverance actual in experience (Rom. 8. 2).

Christ came as the fulfillment of the Passover lamb in the Old Testament to redeem His chosen people by saving them from the righteous judgment and condemnation of God on the world, which is signified by Egypt, and from the usurpation and slavery of Satan, who is signified by Pharaoh. In order to be fully redeemed and saved, the children of Israel were required to kill a lamb without spot or blemish and apply the blood of that lamb to the lintel and doorposts of their houses (Exo. 12:6-7). God promised that when He was executing His judgment on Egypt, He would not destroy the Israelites who were covered by the blood: “When I see the blood, I will pass over you” (v. 13). Furthermore, they were to eat the meat of the lamb according to God’s instructions: “This is how you shall eat it: with your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste. It is Jehovah’s passover” (v. 11). The application of the blood of Christ as the Lamb of God saves us from the guilt of sin, whereas the eating of Christ as the Lamb of God saves us from the power of sin. The blood of the Lamb is for our judicial redemption, whereas the dispensing of the Lamb into us to be our life and life supply is for our organic salvation. The goal of redemption is that Christ, as the Lamb of God, would be dispensed into us to be our life and our everything. Just as the children of Israel’s eating of the lamb strengthened, supplied, and energized them to move out of the iron furnace of Egypt (Deut. 4:20), our eating of Christ as the Lamb to enjoy Him as our life supply strengthens, supplies, and energizes us to move out of the fallen, satanic world.

The application of the blood of the Lamb for us to be filled with the life of the Lamb is not merely a once-for-all act for our eternal redemption and security. Every day we need to enjoy the constant cleansing of the precious blood of Christ for our continual enjoyment of the divine life of Christ.

Before God, the redeeming blood of the Lord has cleansed us once for all eternally (Heb. 9:12, 14), and the efficacy of that cleansing lasts forever before God, so that that cleansing need not be repeated. However, in our conscience we need the instant application of the constant

cleansing of the Lord’s blood again and again whenever our conscience is enlightened by the divine light in our fellowship with God. (Recovery Version, 1 John 1:7, note 5)

When we confess our sins in our fellowship with God, who is light, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (vv. 5, 7, 9). Through our confession and the cleansing of His precious blood, we can keep ourselves in the most intimate fellowship with Him and continue to maintain a situation in which there is nothing between us and Him. Furthermore, the application of the blood of Christ purifies our conscience from dead works to serve the living God (Heb. 9:14). The apostle Paul testified that he always exercised to have a good conscience without offense toward God and men (Acts 23:1; 24:16) and that he served God in a pure conscience (2 Tim. 1:3). A pure conscience is a conscience without mixture, a conscience that testifies that we are seeking only God Himself and His perfect will for His glory. The application of the Lord’s precious blood to our conscience in our fellowship

The blood of the Lamb is for our judicial redemption, whereas the dispensing of the Lamb into us to be our life and life supply is for our organic salvation.



with Him cleanses and purifies our conscience to give Christ the preeminence in every part of our being and in every aspect of our living in order for us to maintain our oneness and fellowship in the Body of Christ.

Ezekiel 1 reveals such a pure spiritual condition with the picture of the coordination of the four living creatures, signifying the coordination of the believers as members of the Body of Christ for God’s move (vv. 5-14). Above the four living creatures, there is a clear sky “like the sight of awesome crystal,” and above this clear sky is a sapphire throne, on which is sitting the God-man, Christ Jesus (vv. 22, 26). The highest point in our spiritual experience is to have a clear sky with the throne above it. Our clear sky is the clear condition of our conscience with nothing between us and the Lord. When we have such a clear sky, Christ is enthroned in our entire being to have the preeminence in every aspect of our living and serving in the Body of Christ (Col. 1:18). The reigning God-man with His sapphire throne of grace is infused into our being to rule and reign in us so that we may reign in Him over Satan,

sin, and death (Heb. 4:16; Rom. 5:17, 21). Actually, the blue sapphire throne of God in our experience is the heavenly, ruling presence of God. When we give Christ as the life-giving Spirit the freedom to rule within us, we are filled with the heavenly situation, condition, and atmosphere of His pure presence. Through the constant cleansing of the blood of the Lamb of God, our sky is kept clear, Christ is enthroned in our being, we are swallowed up by God's presence, and we have a clear fellowship and oneness with all the members in Christ's Body for our coordination together in one accord for the move of God.

The cleansing blood of the Lamb of God is also the overcoming blood that enables us to overcome Satan, the accuser of the brothers. We overcome him, not by anything of our goodness, success, or merit, but by the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 12:11). Concerning our overcoming and dealing with Satan's accusations, Watchman Nee said that although we may not realize the immense value of the blood of Christ, we can still pray, "O Lord, apply the blood on my behalf according to Your evaluation of it" (Nee 90). The blood of Jesus cleanses us from *every* sin, great sin or small sin, past sin or present sin, recollected sin or unrecollected sin, sin we think can be forgiven and sin we think cannot be forgiven. The Word of God says that *every* sin is cleansed by the blood (1 John 1:7). Once we confess our sins, He forgives us our sins, He cleanses us from our unrighteousness, and He forgets our sins (Heb. 8:12). Any condemnation that does not stop after we have confessed and applied the blood is from Satan as the accuser of the brothers (Rev. 12:10-11). When we are being accused, we need to apply the blood of Christ and declare to the enemy that although we are not perfect, we are under the perfect blood of Christ. This sinless blood is our perfection.

The Lord Jesus referred to His shed blood as the "blood of the covenant" (Matt. 26:28; Luke 22:20). His blood ushers us into all the bequests of the new covenant, in which God gives His people the forgiveness of sins with a new heart to love Him, a new spirit to contact Him, His Spirit to know Him, and the inner law of life to become Him in life and nature but not in the Godhead (Ezek. 36:26-27; Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:8-12). His blood ushers us into His presence in the Holy of Holies so that we may behold His beauty, enjoy Him, and be infused with Him as the reality of the new covenant (Psa. 27:4; Isa. 42:6). Because of the blood of Jesus, we have boldness for entering the Holy of Holies to contact God (Heb. 10:19; Lev. 16:11-16). Revelation 22:14 says, "Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city." Washing our robes in the blood of the Lamb gives us the right to enjoy Christ as the tree of life and to enter through Him into the reality of the New Jerusalem as the ultimate union, mingling, and incorporation of the Triune God with the tripartite man.

The Life-giving Spirit as the Dove to Transform and Unite God's People into One for God's Building

John the Baptist not only recommended Christ as the Lamb of God but also as the Lamb with the dove (John 1:32-33). The Word became flesh to die on the cross as the Lamb for our redemption, and in resurrection He became the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45), signified by the dove for transforming the believers into living and precious stones (John 1:42) and uniting the believers into one entity for the building of the church as the house of God, the real Bethel (v. 51). In the first chapter of John, the Word becoming flesh to be the Lamb of God reveals the incarnated Christ carrying out the procedure of His judicial redemption (v. 14). The symbol of the Holy Spirit as a dove, the renaming of Simon to be Peter (meaning *a stone*), and the revelation of heaven being opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man (the reality of the house of God) reveal the resurrected Christ accomplishing the purpose of His organic salvation (vv. 32, 42, 51). Christ's redemption brings us back to God's original intention to be life to us for His building (1 Cor. 3:9). Christ is the life of God, the tree of life, and He came that we might have this life in abundance (John 14:6; Gen. 2:9; John 10:10). Romans 5:10 says that having been reconciled to God through the redeeming death of Christ, "much more we will be saved in His life." Through Christ's judicial redemption by His blood, we have the forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:47), the washing away of sins (Heb. 1:3), justification (Rom. 3:24-25), reconciliation (5:10), and positional sanctification (Heb. 13:12). Through Christ's organic salvation by His life, we pass through the processes of regeneration (John 1:12-13; 3:5-6), dispositional sanctification (Eph. 5:26), renewing (4:23), transformation (2 Cor. 3:18), conformation (Rom. 8:29), and glorification (v. 30) to be built up as the Body of Christ and prepared to be the bride of Christ. By being regenerated we participate in God's life (John 3:15), by being sanctified we participate in God's nature (Eph. 1:4; 2 Pet. 1:4), by being renewed we participate in God's mind (Eph. 4:23), by being transformed we participate in God's riches (2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 3:8), by being conformed we participate in God's image (Rom. 8:29), and by being glorified we participate in God's glory (v. 30; Heb. 2:10).

All of these steps of our organic salvation are carried out by Christ as the life-giving Spirit in our spirit (Rom. 8:16). He is the life-dispensing "dove" to make us the same as He is for His expression. Song of Songs reveals that in our progressive experience of Christ in our divine romance with Him, we are transformed to have dove's eyes (1:15), having the view of the Spirit, and eventually to become a "dove," having the constitution of the Spirit (2:14). As we are being transformed by the Spirit, signified by the dove,

we no longer have our natural sight and earthly view of things. By being infused with the Spirit, we are being transformed to have the insight of the Spirit, the view of the Spirit, the realization of the Spirit, the apprehension of the Spirit, and the thoughts and considerations of the Spirit to speak with words taught by the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:12-13). A dove's eyes can see only one thing at a time. This shows that in order to have the insight of the Spirit, we must focus on only one thing—Christ Himself. Christ must be the unique goal of our pursuit and the one object of our desire (Phil. 3:13-14; Psa. 27:4). Eventually, as Christ continues to grow in us through our loving Him, we become fully constituted with the Spirit as the dove to become a dove (S. S. 2:14; 5:2; 6:9). This means that we are transformed into spiritual men, those who live and walk by the Spirit to be constituted with the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:15; Gal. 5:25) and those who work and serve by the Spirit to flow out the Spirit (Zech. 4:6; 2 Cor. 3:6; John 7:37-39). We are being transformed by the life-giving Spirit as the dove into living stones for God's building. Christ as the living stone is the foundation stone (1 Cor. 3:11), the precious stone, the cornerstone (1 Pet. 2:4-7), and the topstone of God's building (Zech. 4:7). We are being transformed with His stone nature to be "Christified" to become living and precious stones of God's spiritual house as a pure constitution and duplication of Christ (1 Pet. 2:5).

The transforming Spirit is also the uniting Spirit as the actual oneness of God's people to build and join them together into God's spiritual house (Eph. 4:3-4). The boards of the tabernacle in Exodus 26:15-30 provide the best picture of this oneness by the transforming and uniting Spirit. The forty-eight boards of the tabernacle typify the believers built together to be the dwelling place of God in the oneness in the Triune God (John 17:21-23). God instructed Moses to build the tabernacle according to His plan as follows:

You shall make the boards for the tabernacle of acacia wood, standing up...And you shall make bars of acacia wood...And you shall overlay the boards with gold, and make their rings of gold as holders for the bars; and you shall overlay the bars with gold. (Exo. 26:15, 26, 29)

The gold rings were the holders, the receptacles, for the linking of the gold bars of acacia wood that joined the boards into one, and all the boards were completely overlaid with gold. Thus, the boards of acacia wood were linked together into one by gold, overlaid together into one by gold, and joined together into one by gold. Acacia wood signifies the transformed and uplifted humanity of

Christ, and gold signifies the Triune God Himself embodied in Christ and realized as the Spirit in three aspects: the initial Spirit, the sealing Spirit, and the uniting Spirit. The initial Spirit links us with God into one, the sealing Spirit overlays us with God into one, and the uniting Spirit joins us with God into one.

On each board there were three gold rings, which were the holders for the connecting bars. The number three signifies the Triune God in resurrection, and a ring in ancient times was used as a seal, or a signet (Luke 15:22). Thus, the three rings signify the initial Spirit, the regenerating Spirit, as the living seal of the resurrecting Triune God, whom we received at the time of our believing into Christ (John 3:6; Eph. 1:13). The impress of a person's seal on an article, such as a book, bears with it the mark of ownership. Also the ink of the seal saturates the paper and is in the form of a particular image. Our being sealed by the Spirit was our being "marked" by God with the Spirit as a living seal to indicate that we belong to Christ. Furthermore, the ink of the sealing Spirit saturates

The seal of the Spirit spreads out from our spirit into our soul, eventually saturating our body, until our entire tripartite being is sealed with the Holy Spirit.



us and causes us to bear the image of Christ, the One to whom we belong (cf. 2 Cor. 3:3). Ephesians 1:13 says that when we believed, we were "sealed with the Holy Spirit of the promise," and 4:30 says that this sealing is "unto the day of redemption," which will be the redemption of our body at the time of our glorification (Rom. 8:23, 30). This indicates that the seal of the Spirit continues to spread out from our spirit into our soul, eventually to saturate our body, until our entire tripartite being is sealed with the Holy Spirit, and we are fully conformed to His image and glorified to be the same as He is for His full expression (v. 29; 1 John 3:2; Phil. 3:21).

The sealing of the Spirit to saturate our soul with God in His divine life and in His holy nature is the overlaying function of the Spirit as the gold. God in Christ as the Spirit is overlaying us with Himself. Because the Spirit Himself is the oneness of the Triune God in our spirit (Eph. 4:3-4), our being overlaid with gold, with the Spirit, is actually the spreading of this oneness in our being. The more we are overlaid with gold (the more the

Spirit is dispensed into and overlays our mind, emotion, and will), the more oneness we have. The more we have of the Spirit, the stronger our oneness is—more Spirit, more oneness; no Spirit, no oneness. This is why in the recovery of the building of God’s temple in the book of Zechariah, God’s word is, “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit” (4:6). This Spirit is the gold, the golden oil, which is dispensed into the golden lampstand by the “sons of oil” (vv. 12-14). Because these ones are filled with gold, filled with the Spirit, they can dispense this golden Spirit into God’s people so that they can grow with the growth of God, the increase of God as the Spirit in them, to make them God’s golden testimony in His divine oneness (Col. 2:19). In order to build up the church as God’s testimony, we need to give ourselves each day to be overlaid with the Spirit of the Triune God. As we are being overlaid with the Spirit in our inner being, we are being transformed with the divine attributes of God in the humanity of Jesus. The Spirit as the divine oneness is kept by us with “all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, bearing one another in love” (Eph. 4:2). These virtues are not found in our natural humanity but are found only in the sealing Spirit of Jesus who spreads into and overlays our mind, emotion, and will with the person of Jesus in His divinely enriched humanity for our transformation into His image. This transformation takes place through our loving the Lord, contacting Him, listening to His word, praying to Him, and living and walking by the Spirit.

The sealing, overlaying Spirit, who is the source of our transformation which maintains the oneness of the Body of Christ, is also the uniting Spirit, signified by the connecting bars for the boards of the tabernacle. These bars, made of acacia wood for connecting strength and overlaid with gold for uniting, held the forty-eight boards together and brought them into oneness. There were five bars for the boards on each side of the tabernacle (Exo. 26:26-27), and God told Moses that “the middle bar shall pass through in the center of the boards from end to end” (v. 28). These uniting bars, especially the middle bar, signify the Holy Spirit (the gold) mingled with our regenerated human spirit (the acacia wood). The divine Spirit dwells in our human spirit, and these two spirits have been united together organically and mingled into one spirit. “The Lord is the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:17), “the Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit” (Rom. 8:16), and “he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit” (1 Cor. 6:17). This one spirit, the mingled spirit, is “our spirit”—the collective mingled spirit of all of the believers. This collective spirit, “our spirit,” is one spirit, having the oneness of the Spirit. “Our spirit” is especially signified by the middle bar, which passes through the center of the boards from end to end. In the middle and center of our being is “our spirit,” and “our spirit” as the uniting bar passes through all our fellow believers “from end to end” as “the oneness

of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3). The divine Spirit mingled with our human spirit, the mingled spirit, is essential to the believers having the reality of the Body of Christ in the oneness of the Triune God. This is why every chapter of the book of Ephesians (a book on the church as the Body of Christ) speaks of the mingled spirit (1:17; 2:22; 3:5; 4:23; 5:18; 6:18).

The uniting of the boards of the tabernacle involved the passing of the bars through the rings on each board to cross all the boards and join them together. This reveals that we believers in Christ are united when we allow the uniting Spirit to pass through us to join us to other believers. We need to be fully open to the Lord in our fellowship with Him and fully open to the members of the Body in our fellowship with them. Then the Spirit has a free way to flow in us and out of us to unite us together in the Triune God. Furthermore, just as the uniting bars of the tabernacle connected the boards together by crossing them, the uniting Spirit who joins us into one is also the crossing Spirit. Whenever we cooperate with the Spirit by allowing Him to pass through us to other believers, this Spirit crosses out everything of our self, our way, our desire, and our preference to bring us into the presence of Christ and blend us together into one Body (1 Cor. 12:24). Everything we do in fellowship with our fellow believers should be through the cross and by the Spirit to minister Christ as the Spirit into them for the building up of the church as the house of God.

The Son of Man as the Heavenly Ladder to Bring Heaven to Earth and Join Earth to Heaven for the House of God

The ultimate conclusion and goal of the journeying Triune God is to have Bethel, the house of God. In this universe God is doing only one thing—He is building up His eternal dwelling place (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:21-22; Rev. 21:3). In the concluding verse of chapter 1 of the Gospel of John, the Lord Jesus said to Nathanael, “Truly, truly, I say to you, You shall see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man” (v. 51). This is the fulfillment of Jacob’s dream in Genesis 28. This dream was a dream of God’s goal, a dream of the house of God (vv. 10-22), which is the church as the house of the living God today (1 Tim. 3:15) and which will consummate in the New Jerusalem as the eternal tabernacle and temple of God (Rev. 21:3, 22). In Jacob’s dream “there was a ladder set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it” (Gen. 28:12). When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he declared, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And Jacob rose up early in the morning and took the stone that he had put under his head, and he set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel” (vv. 17-19). Then Jacob

said, “This stone, which I have set up as a pillar, will be God’s house” (v. 22). The crucial items in this dream are the ladder, the stone, the oil, the pillar, and the house of God. The ladder is Christ as the Son of Man, the stone signifies the transformed man (1 Pet. 2:4-5), the oil signifies the anointing and uniting Spirit (Isa. 61:1; Luke 4:18; Heb. 1:9), and the pillar signifies the overcoming church as the pillar and base of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15; Rev. 3:12), which becomes Bethel, the church as the house of the living God.

The center of this dream is Christ as the heavenly ladder to bring heaven to earth and join earth to heaven, to make the two as one for eternity. Heaven signifies God and earth signifies man. By His coming through incarnation, the Lord Jesus brought God into man (John 1:14), and by His going through death and resurrection, He brought man into God. On the day of His resurrection, He told His disciples that they would know that He was in the Father, that they were in Him, and that He was in them (14:20). The main principle of God’s building is that God is brought into us and we are brought into God. God became man through incarnation (bringing heaven to earth), and man becomes God in life and nature but not in the Godhead through transformation (joining earth to heaven). The God of Jacob is the God of transformation through the dispensing and discipline of the transforming Spirit—the God of the house of God (Gen. 28:19; 35:7), The transforming and uniting Spirit as the anointing oil is the resurrected Christ wrought into our being for our transformation into living stones to express Him as the foundation stone, the cornerstone, and the topstone of God’s building. The Spirit continually anoints us with all the elements of Christ’s person and processes to make us overcoming pillars in the temple of God (Rev. 3:12), and this temple is “the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb” (21:22). Thus, God in Christ as the living stone is built into us to make us pillars built into Him. The building of God, the house of God, is the mutual abode of God and man (John 14:23; 15:4-5). Man is God’s house (Isa. 66:1-2; 1 Cor. 3:16), and God is man’s house (Psa. 90:1; Rev. 21:22).

Our experience of being transformed by the transforming Spirit to become God’s spiritual house is fully realized in our spirit. According to Ephesians 2:22 our spirit is the dwelling place of God today. Christ as the heavenly ladder dwells in our spirit, making our spirit the house of God and the gate of heaven (2 Tim. 4:22; Gen. 28:17). When we contact God in our spirit and serve God in our spirit (John 4:24; Rom. 1:9), we enter into our spirit as the gate of heaven to contact and be infused with the God of heaven (Ezra 1:2), so that He can become the God of both heaven and earth (Gen. 14:19; Josh. 3:11). It is by doing everything in our spirit in fellowship with and through Christ as the heavenly ladder that God’s will

is done on earth as it is in heaven (Matt. 6:10). Whenever we turn to our spirit, we experience Christ as the ladder bringing God into us and us into God for the building of God into man and man into God, the mutual dwelling place of God and man.

The apostle John was carried away in his spirit onto a great and high mountain to see the New Jerusalem as the goal of the journeying Triune God in eternity future (Rev. 21:10-11). John also shows us that the Triune God’s journey began in eternity past as the Word of God and continued across the bridge of time through His creation and the processes of His incarnation, His redemption, and His becoming the Spirit for His organic salvation for the ultimate goal of His building. In order to hasten His coming, we need to consecrate ourselves to Him for this ultimate goal:

The Lord’s coming back needs a solid building of His seekers. This building will be a stepping stone, a beach-head, for Him to take the earth, and it will be a mutual abode for both God and man. It will be the mingling of divinity with humanity and of humanity with divinity forever. Christ once was only divine. In order for Him to be the Son of Man, He must have the human life and the human nature. We are human, but we can be born of God to become the children of God (1:12-13). In order for us to be the children of God, we must have the divine life and the divine nature. Eventually, He, the divine One, will have the human life and the human nature, and we, the human ones, will have the divine life and the divine nature. Thus, He and we, we and He, will be exactly the same. This is the mingling of divinity with humanity, and this is the mutual abode of God’s building. This building will be the ultimate fulfillment not only of Jacob’s dream, but of God’s eternal plan. It will terminate the bridge of time and usher in the blessed eternity in the future. We must be for that building and we must be that building! (*Life-study of John* 65-66) [AFC](#)

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