

PROPAGATING THE RESURRECTED CHRIST TO PRODUCE THE CORPORATE CHRIST

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“How great are Your works, O Jehovah! / So very deep are Your thoughts!” (Psa. 92:5). God’s thoughts are not our thoughts, for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so God’s thoughts are higher than our thoughts (Isa. 55:8-9). What the prophet Micah spoke of the people of Israel applies to both believers and unbelievers today: “They do not know / The thoughts of Jehovah, / And they do not understand His counsel” (4:12). We can know God’s thoughts and understand His counsel only by prayerfully reading and studying the Word of God under the shining of God as light.

Certain deep divine thoughts are related to God’s intention to produce the church as the corporate Christ (1 Cor. 12:12) composed of the many sons of God, who are, simultaneously, the many brothers of Christ (Heb. 2:10-12). In order to bring this corporate Christ into being, God in His economy has a plan and an arrangement for the only begotten Son to become the Son of Man through incarnation (John 1:14, 18; Rom. 8:3) and for the Son of Man to become the firstborn Son of God through resurrection (1:3-4). Those whom God foreknew, “He predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers” (Rom. 8:29; cf. Eph. 1:4-5). The divine thought is profound; the natural human mind cannot comprehend it, and the religious mind cannot fathom it. “Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and untraceable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord?” (Rom. 11:33-34).

We should echo Paul’s sense of awe and recognize that we can know God’s thoughts only through the divine revelation recorded in the written word and communicated by the Spirit of God. “To us God has revealed them through the Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God” (1 Cor. 2:10). The things of God “no one has known except the Spirit of God” (v. 11), and in God’s sovereign mercy we, the believers in Christ and the children of God, have received “the Spirit which is from God, that we may know the things which have been graciously given to us by God” (v. 12). Through a careful study of the Word of God under the enlightenment of the Spirit, we can learn how the only begotten Son can have brothers, as unveiled in the Gospel of John, and how the firstborn Son can be propagated by the resurrection life of Christ to produce the corporate Christ, as recorded in the book of Acts.

The Only Begotten Son and His Brothers

John 1:14, referring to the incarnated Word, who is God Himself, says, “We beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father.” Although the Gospel of John, in contrast to the synoptic Gospels, does not present a narrative of the Lord’s transfiguration, this verse is clearly an allusion to it. A second reference to the only begotten