

CHRIST AS WISDOM TO US FROM GOD: RIGHTEOUSNESS, SANCTIFICATION, AND REDEMPTION

BY DAVID YOON

On his second ministry journey the apostle Paul visited the city of Corinth, a center of culture and learning in ancient Greece that was inhabited by many highly educated and philosophically minded people. He remained there for one year and six months, announcing the gospel to the Corinthians and teaching the word of God among them (Acts 18:1, 11; 1 Cor. 1:17). Although the Corinthians honored rhetorical excellence and esteemed philosophical wisdom, Paul did not go to Corinth to exhibit superior speech or lofty human reasoning; instead, he proclaimed the mystery of God—Christ as the embodiment of God and the church as the expression of Christ—not in persuasive words of wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power (2:4), determining to not know anything among them except “Jesus Christ, and this One crucified” (v. 2). Through Paul’s faithful ministering of Christ, a number of philosophical Corinthians, being called into the fellowship of God’s Son, believed and were baptized into the name of Christ, and the church of God in Corinth was raised up (Acts 18:8; 1 Cor. 1:2-3, 6-7, 9, 13). However, in contrast to the apostle who desired to know only the all-inclusive Christ (and this One crucified), the believers in Corinth became distracted from the fellowship of God’s Son by the pursuit of worldly wisdom. Consequently, instead of growing unto maturity to be spiritual men blended together in the Body of Christ, the Corinthians remained soulish and even fleshly infants in Christ, being individualistic, self-centered, and divisive (2:14; 3:3; 11:18; 12:24; 14:20; 16:13). It was against such a backdrop that Paul wrote his first Epistle to the Corinthians to expose the vanity of the wisdom of this age and disclose the depths of the wisdom of God.

In order to recover the saints in Corinth from their distraction, Paul devotes much of the first four chapters of 1 Corinthians to contrasting the wisdom of men with the wisdom of God, belittling the former and uplifting the latter. He says that the wisdom of God so far surpasses the wisdom of men that even “the foolishness of God is wiser than men” (1:25). Furthermore, he quotes Isaiah 29:14 concerning God’s strong intention to annihilate worldly wisdom: “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the understanding of those who understand I will set aside” (1 Cor. 1:19). The apostle declares that God has purposefully made the wisdom of the world foolish (v. 20) and that in the eyes of God “the wisdom of the world is foolishness,” for in His unparalleled wisdom He “grasps the wise in their craftiness” (3:19). The apostles contrasted themselves with the “prudent” Corinthians by calling themselves “the foolish things of the world” whom God had chosen in order to shame the haughty boasters, “those who are wise” according to the flesh (4:10; 1:27).

Because they had abandoned their natural wisdom for the sake of Christ, the apostles were willing to appear foolish in the eyes of the wisdom-seeking Corinthians. Denouncing worldly wisdom as an impotent means of knowing God and as treacherous ground for the believers’ faith (1:21; 2:5), Paul proclaimed the gospel concerning

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the mystery of God not in wisdom of speech (1:17), and he spoke not in words taught by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit (2:13). In Paul's mind, the wisdom of God is incomparably profound, for it involves a mystery hidden from the furthest stretches of human apprehension, which only the lovers of God can know through the revelation of the Spirit of God within them (vv. 6-10). Though ostensibly negative, under God's wise sovereignty, the prevalence of worldly, fleshly, and human wisdom among the philosophizing Greek believers in Corinth afforded Paul an opportunity to unfold the revelation concerning Christ as true, spiritual, and divine wisdom and even as the unique way to accomplish the divine economy so that the Body of Christ might forsake the wisdom of the world and partake of Christ as the wisdom of God.

Seeking to understand Paul's repeated emphasis on wisdom in 1 Corinthians 1 through 4, many commentaries have focused on the source of the wisdom that the Greek believers in Corinth highly esteemed in place of the wisdom of God. Despite some interesting results, this angle of investigation is of limited value because, by treating as the main subject what Paul intended as only a rhetorical foil (the wisdom of this world), they neglect Paul's true focus: to minister Christ as God's wisdom for the believers' full salvation. Other commentaries offer varying interpretations of Paul's view of the wisdom of God in 1 Corinthians: a correct ordering of values in light of Christ's redemptive work on the cross, a proper understanding of "the eternal sagacity of Jesus' atoning sacrifice" (Lioy 35), or the way God "governs and directs the world" (Ellul 162).

Although they offer largely unobjectionable analyses, many of these commentaries treat Paul's understanding of the wisdom of God in a superficial way, failing to go beyond the narrow view that this wisdom is simply the cross of Christ as the means by which the believers obtain forgiveness of sins in the present age and an exalted status in the coming age. Consequently, these commentaries fall short of exploring the vast breadth and profound depth of wisdom as it relates to God's entire New Testament economy of full salvation, the center and content of which is the crucified and resurrected Christ.

While rejecting the wisdom of the world in favor of Christ as the wisdom of God, Paul reveals the profundity of the divine wisdom in 1 Corinthians 2, from which it becomes clear that wisdom is not a peripheral matter but an integral part of his ministry. God's wisdom, which the apostles speak, is "wisdom in a mystery, the wisdom which has been hidden, which God predestined before the ages for our glory" (v. 7), a wisdom that eludes the understanding of the infants in Christ, the rulers of the age, and those who live by the wisdom of this age (v. 6). This notion reflects Colossians 1:26-27, where, immediately after mentioning his stewardship to complete the word of God (v. 25), Paul speaks of "the mystery which has been hidden from the ages and from the generations" and explicitly reveals that "this mystery among the Gentiles" is nothing less than "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Together, these passages show that the hidden mystery concerning Christ as God's wisdom predestined for the believers' glory (1 Cor. 2:7) is equivalent to the hidden mystery concerning Christ dwelling in the believers as the seed of glory for their glorification (Col. 1:27). Since the very completion of the word of God rests upon the revelation of the mystery concerning Christ as the wisdom of God, Christ as God's wisdom should be regarded as a central component of Paul's completing ministry.

Similarly, in Ephesians 3:7-11 Paul states that his divine commission as a minister of the gospel and a steward of the grace of God was to

announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel and to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has

been hidden in God, who created all things, in order that now to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies the multifarious wisdom of God might be made known through the church, according to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord.

These verses reveal that the fulfillment of the eternal purpose of God, the mysterious economy of God, hinges on the unsearchably rich Christ as the multifarious wisdom of God wrought into and expressed through the believers as the church. The wisdom of God is thus closely tied to the economy of God. Since considerable wisdom is needed for a person to devise any plan of significance, with careful consideration given to the intricacies of its execution and potential pitfalls, how much more does the accomplishment of God's eternal economy require supreme wisdom! In accordance with this thought, Witness Lee suggests that since wisdom involves a way to carry out a plan and an economy "includes everything that is necessary for the execution of any given operation," *wisdom* in 1 Corinthians 1:30 (which identifies wisdom as Christ) "may be understood to mean economy" ("Various Lord's Day Meetings" 347). Therefore, to know Christ as the wisdom of God is tantamount to knowing the essential content of Paul's ministry to carry out God's eternal economy.

Most commentaries miss the intrinsic significance of wisdom in the accomplishment of the economy of God's salvation, neglecting Paul's primary emphasis in 1 Corinthians—that the mysterious wisdom of God is nothing less than Christ imparted into the tripartite being of the believers in their union with Him for their full salvation. This thought is marvelously uttered in 1 Corinthians 1:30: "But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption." This verse discloses the union of the believers with Christ and distills the divine economy to be the transmission of Christ, the divine wisdom, from God to the believers first into their spirit (as righteousness), then into their soul (as sanctification), and ultimately into their body (as redemption). No other verse in Paul's Epistles so clearly unveils the believers' union with Christ as the means of their experience of God's salvation in their tripartite being. And no other part of Paul's written ministry so succinctly summarizes the truth concerning the central role that Christ as God's wisdom plays in the execution of God's New Testament economy.

The economy of God revealed in 1:30 is not only an intrinsic revelation richly woven into the text of 1 Corinthians; it is also the central content of Paul's completing ministry. In particular, the economy of God is to impart Christ as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption into the believers' tripartite humanity for the building up of His Body. First Corinthians clearly shows the basic content of God's economy, that it is His plan and arrangement to progressively dispense Christ, the embodiment of the Triune God realized as the life-giving Spirit, into the believers' spirit, soul, and body in order to make the believers the same as He is in life and nature but not in the Godhead for the producing of the Body of Christ as His corporate enlargement and expression.

The Believers' Union with Christ as the Wisdom of God

The revelation in 1 Corinthians concerning the economy of God to dispense Christ as wisdom into the believers should be considered in light of Paul's Christ-centered introduction of this Epistle. Although ostensibly writing to address an array of problems in the church in Corinth (including division, sin, confusion, abusing of gifts, and heretical teaching), Paul begins the Epistle not by identifying these problems but by presenting the enjoyment of Christ as their unique solution. By addressing the believers as "those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus," he highlights their organic union with Christ, and by declaring Christ to be "theirs and ours," he emphasizes Christ as the portion common to all believers (1:2). It is into the fellowship of such a One that

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the believers have been called (v. 9). By opening the Epistle in this way, Paul establishes its intrinsic focus: the believers' participation in the all-inclusive Christ.

When he addresses the Corinthian believers' admiration of human wisdom as a main-spring of the problems among them, Paul maintains his single-minded focus on Christ. After speaking in 1:26-29 of God's choosing the believers as foolish things in the world to shame the wise and thereby preclude any boasting in the flesh, Paul says in verse 30, "But of Him [God] you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God." The word *but* at the beginning of this verse denotes a contrast with the preceding verses. Though the Corinthians had been born foolish, through faith they were "in Christ," who is the wisdom of God; that is, they were in a mystical union with Christ. In *The Interpretation of 1 Corinthians*, R. C. H. Lenski notes that the phrase *in Christ* in verse 30 refers to the believers' "saving union with him," "union and communion with him," and "vital, blessed connection with him" (81). In his *Commentary on First Corinthians*, Frederic Louis Godet similarly observes that the expression *in Christ* implies the "glorious effects of communion with Him," in which "the believer can appropriate all that Christ was, and thus become what he was not and what he could not become of himself" (115-116).

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The believers can be in Christ as the wisdom of God because God has transferred them out of Adam into Christ (2 Cor. 5:17, 21) through Christ's crucifixion and resurrection (Gal. 2:20) and by their believing and being baptized (John 3:15; Gal. 3:26-28). Later in 1 Corinthians Paul reveals that in the eyes of God there are only two men in the universe: Adam, "the first man" including all his descendants, and Christ, "the second man" comprising all His believers (15:45, 47). We believers were included in the first man by our first birth in Adam but became a part of the second man by our second birth in Christ, our regeneration. It is an indescribably wonderful fact that by God's operation we, the believers, have experienced an inward transfer of life out of Adam into Christ, and now of God we are in Christ Jesus.

In concert with God's operation, faith and baptism function to incorporate the believers into Christ, into a mystical union with Him. According to Acts 18:8, through Paul's ministry many Corinthians believed and were baptized. In Paul's mind, when these Corinthians believed, they did not just believe Christ, taking Him as an example to imitate as a moral standard; nor did they merely believe in Christ, acknowledging the factuality and historicity of Christ as their Savior and His redemptive work. Far more importantly, they believed *into* Christ; that is, their being was joined with His being in an organic union with Him, who has and is the divine life (Rom. 10:14; Phil. 1:29; John 1:4; 14:20; 1 John 5:11-12). Similarly, when the Corinthians were baptized, they were not initiated into a religious institution or a community of likeminded persons; instead, they were baptized into the name of Christ, that is, into the person of the crucified and resurrected Christ, issuing in an organic union with Him (1 Cor. 1:13-16; Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27-28).

The Mingled Spirit as the Means to Experience Christ as Wisdom

First Corinthians discloses that the believers' union with Christ, in which they enjoy the transmission of Christ as wisdom to them from God, is the mingling of Christ as the life-giving Spirit with the believers' human spirit. This thought is clearly indicated in 6:17, which says, "He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit." According to this verse, the resurrected Lord as the divine Spirit is joined with the regenerated believer's human spirit to produce one spirit, the mingled spirit. Mingling, which here denotes the blending of the divine Spirit with the human spirit, does not produce a third substance that is neither divine nor human. The divine Spirit and the human spirit remain distinct but nevertheless are made inseparably one (John 4:24; Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 2:11).

The Lord to whom the believers are joined to be one spirit is the resurrected Christ as the life-giving Spirit. This is unveiled by Paul's unequivocal declaration in 1 Corinthians 15:45 that "the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit." *The last Adam* is a clear reference to the incarnated and crucified Christ, who partook of humanity to be a God-man and whose death effected the termination of the Adamic race. Moreover, the context of 1 Corinthians 15, a chapter on resurrection, indicates that it was through resurrection that Christ, the last Adam, became the life-giving Spirit. Therefore, the Lord in 1 Corinthians 6:17 is not merely God or the physical Jesus but the processed Christ, the Christ who underwent the process of incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection to be consummated as the life-giving Spirit.

It is crucial to understand that Christ, who is the wisdom of God, is the last Adam who became the life-giving Spirit through resurrection. Many see that in 1 Corinthians 1:23-24 Paul speaks of "Christ crucified" as "the wisdom of God" and apply this superficially to the redemption of sins, but Paul's view is much higher. The crucified Christ as God's wisdom, whom he is presenting as the unique remedy to all the problems among the Corinthians, is the last Adam, who died as the last member of the race of Adam, thereby ending the Adamic race. Because the death of Christ as the last Adam terminated the Adamic race, Paul boldly declares to the Corinthians, "One died for all, therefore all died" (2 Cor. 5:14). When Christ as the last Adam died, all human beings as the constituents of the old man of the old creation died with Him (Eph. 4:22; Col. 2:20; 3:3).

Since Adam is not only the head of humankind but also the head of the old creation, when Christ died as the last Adam, He also terminated the old creation with all its involvements, including Satan, sin, the old man, the flesh, the law with its ordinances, and the world with its wisdom and elements (Heb. 2:14; John 1:29; Rom. 6:6; Gal. 5:24; 6:14; Eph. 2:14-15; John 12:31; 1 Cor. 3:19; Col. 2:8, 11, 14, 20). The crucified Christ as the last Adam, not rational mediation, was the potent solution to the Corinthians' problems. His death terminated the entire old creation with all its negative factors, including the Corinthians themselves as part of the old man and all their problems and entanglements resulting from their pursuit of worldly wisdom.

After accomplishing His all-terminating death, Christ resurrected to become the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit. Into this Spirit both His person and work have been compounded, including His all-problems-solving death and His life-imparting resurrection. Therefore, the wisdom of God denotes the crucified and resurrected Christ as the life-giving Spirit who applies to us not only the effectiveness of His death, which terminates the wisdom of the world and the Adamic elements within us, but also the power of His resurrection, which is able to make our tripartite being the same as He is in life and nature (though not in the Godhead). Sadly, however, though the crucified Christ is God's power to abolish all negative things in the church and in the universe, in the lives of countless believers the cross of Christ is made void, deprived of its mighty power (1 Cor. 1:17-18), for they do not realize that the efficacy of Christ's crucifixion is made available through the life-giving Spirit who dwells in their spirit and is mingled with their spirit as one spirit.

The Transmission of Christ as Wisdom to the Believers from God: Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption

According to the broader context both of 1 Corinthians and Paul's completing ministry, *wisdom* in 1 Corinthians 1:30 should be understood as an aggregate term that encompasses three main aspects of God's salvation, implied in *righteousness*, *sanctification*, and *redemption*. This thought is embedded in the grammatical structure of the verse; Paul states that Christ "became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and [τε καὶ] sanctification and [καὶ] redemption." Here the last clause may alternatively

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be translated “is made unto us wisdom, and [τε] righteousness, and [καὶ] sanctification, and [καὶ] redemption” (*King James Version*). The second rendering understands τε as a conjunction between *wisdom* and *righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*, grammatically coordinating the nouns to be equal members of a list of four. The first translation, on the other hand, places the three latter nouns in subordination to *wisdom* through apposition, as in the *New International Version*: “wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.”

Although some commentators, including F. B. Meyer, prefer the second translation (141), the first is nevertheless more faithful to the thought conveyed in the Greek. Paul clearly connects *wisdom* with the main verb of the relative clause—*became* (ἐγενήθη—and distances *wisdom* from the other three nouns with two adjuncts, *to us* and *from God*, which he would have no reason to do if he intended a list of four items of equal importance. Rather, since wisdom is a central topic of Paul’s discussion in 1 Corinthians 1 and 2, he has clear rhetorical reason to single it out and to not relegate it to a list with several other items. Godet offers a convincing analysis in support of this understanding:

Is it not obvious at a glance that the three last terms are in the closest relation to one another, so that it is impossible to separate them into two distinct groups, co-ordinate with the first? This is what has led a large number of commentators (Rückert, Neander, Heinrici, Edwards, etc.) to see in the three last terms the explanation and development of the first: Christ has become our *wisdom*, and that inasmuch as He has brought us the most necessary of blessings, salvation, consisting of *righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*. It is easy in this case to understand why the first term, which states the general notion, has been separated from the other three which are subordinate to it...Then, if it is remembered that the *salvation* described in the last three substantives is only the realization of the Divine *plan* designated by the first (*wisdom*), it will be seen that these may be placed there as a sort of grammatical apposition to the first. (118-119)

It is significant that in 1 Corinthians 1:30, instead of stating that Christ made us wise or that Christ became our wisdom, Paul states that Christ became wisdom to us from God. Paul’s careful formulation conveys the thought of transmission. Such an understanding hinges on the proper rendering of Paul’s grammatical construction, specifically concerning whether the prepositionless dative ἡμῖν functions as an indirect object (“to us”) or a so-called dative of advantage (“for us”). Although the meanings of the two phrases are not mutually exclusive, the first more accurately captures the essence of Paul’s thought. It was indisputably for our advantage, our benefit, that Christ became wisdom, which encompasses all the marvelous aspects of God’s salvation, but such an understanding implies that Christ is mainly an external agent working for our good and overlooks Christ as the divine element transmitted into our being.

The thought of transmission implied in the translation “Christ...became wisdom to us” better accords with Paul’s signature phrase mentioned previously in the same verse—in *Christ Jesus*—which implies our organic union with Christ as the means for us to enjoy His salvation. From eternity to eternity Christ as the second of the Divine Trinity, who is the Word of God and the mystery of God, is the wisdom of God (John 1:1; Col. 2:2; cf. Prov. 8:12-36), the One in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden (Col. 2:3). However, it was only when we believed into Christ, entering into a spiritual union with Him, that Christ became wisdom *to us*. This points to transmission.

The underlying notion of the transmission of Christ from God to the believers in Christ also illuminates Paul’s profound use of nouns in 1 Corinthians 1:30 to describe our salvation. Why does he not say that Christ made us wise, justified us, sanctified us, and redeemed us? If Christ were only an agent of God carrying out a salvific work on our behalf, certainly a verbal description of His operation would fit better.

However, Paul's emphasis in this verse is not on what Christ did *per se* but on the saving effect of Christ's being imparted into us. As Nigel Turner expounds,

Designedly, [Paul] chose substantives rather than verbs or adjectives to describe Christ's relationship with those who are *en Christo*, and delicately turned away from activity to existence, his idiom subconsciously following his theology. What was once activity and growth and movement has now become identification. Verb and adjective cease to be appropriate, supplanted by the substantive idiom. Christ no longer *gives* life. He *is* Life (Col. 3⁴). He *does* not sanctify or redeem. He *is* sanctification and redemption. Neither is he sanctifying, living, or redeeming; these attributive qualities are rejected in favour of equivalent substantives. He does not make us wise, but *is* to us wisdom. The unusual and unidiomatic parade of substantives is consistent with St. Paul's doctrine of the union and indwelling of the believer. Identification renders activity and attribution redundant, for they would represent a relationship between separate entities. Christ and the believer, like Christ and the Father, are one—a substantive whole. Predication alone is feasible and a new idiom is demanded where "Christification" has taken place—the predication of an abstract noun to a personal name. (119)

In God's complete salvation Christ becomes not only our Justifier, Sanctifier, and Redeemer in an objective way; more intrinsically, He as the life-giving Spirit is wrought into us to become our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption in a deeply subjective and experiential way through our organic union with Him, making us intrinsically the same as He is—indeed, filled with His very person and, therefore, truly His mystical Body.

Paul deliberately presents the transmission of Christ in the context of the introductory chapter of 1 Corinthians because only such an impartation is capable of addressing the deeply rooted problems in the believers in Corinth, whom the apostle bemoans as being fleshly (3:3), fleshy (v. 1), soulish (2:14), and spiritually childish (3:1-2). This diagnosis of their inward condition makes it clear that their fundamental problem was neither intellectual misaiming nor ethical misconduct but their own fallen being, that is, their unsanctified soul and corrupted body. The antidote to their fallen constitution could not be the rudimentary aspects of salvation (Heb. 6:1) but had to be the impartation of Christ into their entire being for the organic increase of Christ within them to issue in their growth in the divine life (1 Cor. 3:7). Hence, Paul presents the dispensing of Christ into their tripartite humanity as the wise and all-inclusive cure for their constitutional deficiencies.

Lacking such an understanding, some commentators interpret righteousness, sanctification, and redemption not as three stages but as three descriptors of the same event, concurrent and set in no particular sequence. In *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Gordon D. Fee advances this argument: righteousness, holiness (or sanctification), and redemption "are not three different steps in the saving process; they are rather three different *metaphors* for the *same* event (our salvation that was effected in Christ), each taken from a different sphere of our human existence and each emphasizing a different aspect of the one reality" (90). In *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner agree with Fee, believing that righteousness, sanctification, and redemption illustrate "different perspectives on the wisdom of God, which is salvation in Christ" (109): "*righteousness* recalls the law court and speaks of vindication and acquittal, *holiness* brings to mind the temple and being set apart for God, and *redemption* evokes the slave market and emancipation on the analogy of Israel's deliverance in the exodus" (109). According to this reading, 1 Corinthians 1:30 means mainly that in Christ the believer who was condemned before God, common in His eyes, and enslaved by sin is spared from God's judgment and justified before God, separated from the world unto the holy God to be His possession, and emancipated from the slavery of sin.

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This analysis is decidedly forensic and positional, construing salvation principally in terms of objective standing. But how could such an outward salvation solve the intrinsic problems in the Corinthians' fallen constitution, much less encompass the scope of God's wisdom as manifested in Christ's salvation? What remedy does a legal verdict of "righteous" provide for a fleshly believer? What curative to a proud and untransformed mind is an objective transfer from the common to the holy? Such a superficial interpretation strips 1 Corinthians 1:30 of its profound spiritual significance, organic reality, and dynamic implications concerning the progressive impartation of Christ as the life-giving Spirit into the believers' tripartite being. Given the comprehensive understanding of salvation laid out in Paul's ministry, one should not accept an analysis that relegates Christ as God's wisdom to being merely an objective Redeemer or leaves the believers in the initial stage of salvation. The Corinthians' deficiency was that because they were not growing in life, they were still infants in Christ. Only growth in life issuing from the divine transmission of Christ into their being could solve their many problems.

Some might raise the objection, as Ciampa and Rosner do, that a strictly temporal relationship does not exist between righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, wherein the experience of one ceases at the inception of the next. Undoubtedly, the New Testament usage of each of these three terms embraces a broad scope of the believers' participation in God's full salvation.¹ Surely then, the import of the sequence of righteousness, sanctification, redemption in 1 Corinthians 1:30 is not to limit their respective significances to three temporally discrete and separable steps. Rather, in the particular context of 1 Corinthians 1, where Paul's paramount concern is to exalt the wisdom of God over that of men in order to refocus the believers on their enjoyment of the all-inclusive Christ, these three items in their deliberate order must pertain to God's economy of complete salvation.

It is far too simplistic and shallow to assume that Paul's Spirit-inspired exposition of the profound wisdom of God consists of three disparate metaphors with no meaningful relationship or logical sequence. Such a superficial reading of terms laden with soteriological significance and placed together so strikingly at the climax of Paul's introductory chapter to his Epistle is irreconcilable with the unsearchable and untraceable depths of the wisdom and knowledge of God (Rom. 11:33). A much weightier interpretation of 1 Corinthians 1:30, one that comports with Paul's revelation of God's economy of salvation at large, is that righteousness, sanctification, and redemption exist in a definite sequence that points to God's threefold operation on the entirety of the believers' tripartite being to carry out His uttermost salvation within them (Heb. 7:25).

Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption Revealed in 1 Corinthians

First Corinthians is concerned with the application of God's full salvation experientially to the various situations besetting the believers in Corinth. Hence, although Paul does not doctrinally expound the terms *righteousness*, *sanctification*, and *redemption* after mentioning them in 1:30, the revelation concerning them is deeply embedded in the text of the Epistle. Indeed, they are repeatedly manifested in Paul's exhortations to the Corinthians that they no longer remain fleshly or soulish infants in Christ but aspire to become spiritual men full-grown in Christ, which can be accomplished only through their experience of God's great salvation to progressively impart Christ as life from their spirit through their soul into their body. For this reason Paul in 1:18 declares that the believers "are being saved" through the word of the cross as the power of God, and he tells the Corinthian believers that through his gospel they "are being saved" (15:2). This indicates that although the Corinthians were justified in Christ and regenerated by the Spirit in their spirit, they were in the process of being saved much more in the life of Christ (Rom. 5:10) through the sanctification of their soul, a process that would eventually consummate in the redemption of their body.

Righteousness

Though stereotypically encountered in a forensic context, righteousness in Paul's usage has a distinctly organic aspect. In Paul's words justification is "of life," that is, unto and for life, having life as its ultimate goal (v. 18). We are justified, declared righteous, by grace and through faith in Christ, having put on Christ, the righteous One, as our robe of righteousness in union with Him so that we may have Christ inwardly as our life (Gal. 2:16; 3:26-27; Rom. 10:4; Acts 22:14; Isa. 61:10; Col. 3:4). Righteousness is the immovable base and powerful means for God to impart Christ as the eternal life into our human spirit for our regeneration; hence, Paul declares that "because of righteousness" our spirit "is life" (Rom. 8:10). First Corinthians unveils the crucified and resurrected Christ as righteousness to the believers from God to deal with their sins and purchase them for God, issuing in the regeneration of their human spirit. Christ as our Passover was sacrificed for us on the cross, dying for our sins (5:7; 15:3), so that God may pass over us on account of Christ's blood shed for us through His redemptive death.

In the Old Testament type, Jehovah passed over the Israelites who were within the houses whose doorposts were covered by the blood of the passover lamb (Exo. 12:6-7, 13); today, by our being in Christ as our "house," His perfect vicarious sacrifice to God on our behalf as the spotless Lamb of God is applied to us for our redemption and reconciliation to God (John 1:29; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; 1 Cor. 15:3; Heb. 9:26, 28). Moreover, the precious blood of Christ was the ransom paid to repossess the believers so that we are not our own but belong to Christ as His slaves (1 Cor. 6:19-20; 7:22-23; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; Rev. 5:9). By our being in Christ through believing and being baptized into Him (1 Cor. 1:13, 21, 30), not only is His redemptive work applied to our sins, but also the Spirit of God is imparted into us to dwell in us, making us the temple of God (3:16). This indicates that through faith and baptism we are brought into a spiritual union with Christ (1:30; 6:15) in which He is our righteousness for our justification in order that we may receive the life-giving Spirit into our human spirit to become one spirit (v. 17). First Corinthians thus connects the transmission of Christ as righteousness through the application of His redemptive death to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believers' spirit.

Sanctification

In Greek, *sanctification* is the noun form of the word *holy* and certainly denotes positional separation unto God from every profane object through the redeeming blood of Christ; an illustration is that of a common animal being made holy to God when it is offered on the altar (Matt. 23:19). However, in Paul's New Testament understanding, *sanctification* further means to be saturated with God's holy element through the operation of the Holy Spirit dwelling in the believers so that their nature matches the nature of the Spirit. In 1 Corinthians Paul stresses that after the believers are justified and joined to the Lord in one spirit, they need to experience Christ as their sanctification, which is Christ as the life-giving Spirit dispensed into their soul for their transformation in life; Godet expounds this thought:

Justification is generally regarded as a gift of God; but sanctification as the work by which man ought to respond to the gift of righteousness. St. Paul, on the contrary, sees in holiness a Divine work no less than in righteousness: Christ Himself is the holiness of the believer as well as his righteousness. This new work is due to His exaltation to glory, whence He sends the Holy Spirit; and by Him He communicates His own life to the justified believer (John vii. 39, xvi. 14). If, then, our righteousness is Christ *for* us, our sanctification is Christ *in* us, Christ is our holiness as well as our righteousness. (120)

Sanctification therefore has an inward and dispositional aspect beyond a mere outward

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and positional separation unto God and denotes more than merely a sinless perfection in behavior. This dispositional sanctification involves a constitutional change in every faculty of the human soul by the dispensing of Christ as the Spirit of life from the human spirit into the believer's mind, emotion, and will. Christ as the Spirit continually gives to the believer the life of the Triune God, whose intrinsic holy nature works to sanctify his soul. This is the sanctification that the pneumatic Christ, Christ as the Spirit, became to us from God.

In 1 Corinthians 1:2 Paul refers to the believers in Corinth as "the called saints," for they were called by God out of the satanic world unto God for the fulfillment of His purpose. This is a positional sanctification—but with a view to dispositional sanctification. In the same verse Paul speaks of the Corinthians as "those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus," indicating that they were sanctified in Him as a sphere of holiness and with Him as the element of holiness by virtue of their organic union with Him. Such a union with the resurrected Christ as the Spirit is the means by which the believers can be sanctified dispositionally. This notion is emphatically supported by 1 Corinthians 6:11, where Paul says that the experience of being sanctified is "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God." Here *in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ* means "in the person of the Lord," that is, "in an organic union with the Lord through faith," and *in the Spirit of our God* means "in the power and realization of the Holy Spirit" (Lee, *Recovery Version*, v. 11. note 1).

Paul links the believers' union with the Lord to their enjoyment of the Spirit in order to underscore the crucial function of the Spirit in making their union with Christ a reality for their participation in dispositional sanctification. Therefore, we need to see that Christ is imparted into the believers through the operation of the indwelling Spirit to sanctify the believers (cf. Heb. 2:11; 2 Thes. 2:13). The "Holy Father," the source of holiness, is embodied in Christ, "the holy...One," the element of holiness, who is transmitted as the "Holy Spirit," the essence of holiness, into the believers for their dispositional sanctification (John 17:11; Acts 3:14; 16:6-7; cf. Heb. 2:11).

To the Corinthians Paul presents himself as an example of a person whose entire soul—mind, emotion, and will—has been thoroughly sanctified by the operation of the pneumatic Christ. Because the pneumatic Christ sanctified Paul's mind by spreading from his spirit to occupy, saturate, and possess his mind, he could declare that he had the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16). With such a Christ-filled mind, Paul could know the deep things of God concerning Christ as the wisdom of God (vv. 10-13). Furthermore, Paul's own opinion in his instructions and answers reflected Christ's mind and became part of the divine revelation (7:12, 25, 40), his charge was the Lord's (v. 10), and his teachings were "the commandment of the Lord" (14:37). Following Paul's pattern, if we allow Christ as the Spirit to sanctify our mind by dispensing Himself as life into it, the mind of Christ will be reproduced in us (Phil. 2:5). Consequently, we will not think, reason, or speak as a child but will be full-grown in our understanding, that is, mature in our evaluation of spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 14:12). We will have a fruitful mind (v. 14), a renewed mind set on and under the rule of our mingled spirit (cf. Rom. 8:6), with which we can pray in the meetings of the church clear and understandable words that express the God-given burden within our spirit (1 Cor. 14:15). With such a mind set on and mingled with the Spirit, we can also sing and bless in the church meetings, speak words to instruct others, and utter a word of wisdom or a word of knowledge for the edification of the saints and the building up of the church (vv. 15-16, 19; 12:8).

Furthermore, Paul's emotion was so fully sanctified, so completely pervaded, by Christ as the life-giving Spirit that it became the emotion of Christ; his emotion as a vessel was filled with Christ as its unique content. For this reason he concludes 1 Corinthians by proclaiming, "My love in Christ Jesus be with you all" (16:24). Here the expression

my love in Christ Jesus does not refer to Paul's natural human love but to the divine love in Christ wrought into Paul's love, that is, the love of God embodied in the grace of Christ and poured into Paul through the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:39; 5:5; 2 Cor. 13:14). If our emotion is similarly transformed by the Spirit, the emotion of Christ will be organically duplicated within us, and the desire of Christ's heart will become the desire of our heart (Eph. 3:17). We will care for the things of the Lord in order to please the Lord (1 Cor. 7:32). In union with the Christ who came into the world to save sinners and gave Himself as a ransom for all (1 Tim. 1:15; 2:6), we, like Paul, will seek to please all men in all things, not seeking our own advantage but that of the many, so that they may be saved (1 Cor. 10:33). Sharing the Lord's grief, we will mourn for fellow believers who are living in sin (5:2; cf. Matt. 5:4). Instead of claiming our legal rights in dealings with the brothers, we will be willing to be wronged or defrauded (1 Cor. 6:7-8). We will seek not our own profit but that of others in order to build them up to the glory of God (10:24, 31). We will pursue love as the most excellent way (12:31), and we will desire earnestly the greater gifts, especially prophecy, the most profitable gift for the building up of the church (14:1-6). Moreover, we will love God and thus be known by Him (8:3). Participating in love as the nature of God's essence (1 John 4:8; 2 Pet. 1:4), we will spontaneously express the excellent virtues of God as imperishable love: suffering long, being kind, not being jealous, not bragging, not being puffed up, not behaving unbecomingly, not seeking our own things, not being provoked, not taking account of evil, not rejoicing over unrighteousness, rejoicing with the truth, and covering, believing, hoping, and enduring all things (1 Cor. 13:4-8). We will let all our matters be done in the divine love and will be built up in this love (16:14; 8:1). Ultimately, we will love the Lord and His appearing, eagerly awaiting His imminent return (16:22; 2 Tim. 4:8).

Finally, Paul's will was sanctified by the pneumatic Christ and thus aligned with the will of Christ. In fulfilling his God-appointed ministry among the Corinthians, Paul made a resolute determination to know only Jesus Christ and this One crucified (1 Cor. 2:2). This caused him to forsake all things other than Christ, recognizing them to be idolatrous substitutes for Christ, including the excellent speech and philosophical wisdom promoted by the Corinthians (cf. Phil. 3:8). Since such a strong determination is a function of the will, Paul's testimony here indicates that his will was concentrated on, permeated with, and governed by Christ. Paul's union with the pneumatic Christ in his will is further seen in Paul's declarations to the church in Corinth in 1 Corinthians 4:19 ("I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills") and in 16:7 ("I am hoping to remain with you for some time, if the Lord permits"). Although Paul fully intended to visit the Corinthians and remain with them for a period of time, he demonstrated a subdued will by saying that he could come only if the Lord so willed. Paul's will was pliable and submissive to the Lord because it was saturated with the life-giving Spirit, who is the reality of the One who did not seek His own will but the will of the Father and who learned obedience from the things which He suffered and was obedient to the Father even unto the death of a cross (John 5:30; 6:38; Heb. 5:8; Phil. 2:8). We should follow Paul's pattern to allow the pneumatic Christ to sanctify our will dispositionally until it becomes the will of Christ, a will pervaded by Christ and submissive to the Father's command (cf. John 14:31).

Redemption

To the systematic theologian, redemption might seem an odd conclusion to a triad describing God's full salvation; most would place it first in that sequence. But in 1 Corinthians 1:30, *redemption* is used in the sense found in Romans 8:23, which speaks of the redemption of our body as the obtainment of full sonship and our manifestation as the glorified sons of God at the end of the present age (vv. 17-19), as well as in Ephesians 4:30, which says that we were sealed in the Holy Spirit of God "unto the day of redemption," referring to the time of Christ's return when we will enter

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into glory through the transfiguration of our body. In 1 Corinthians Paul repeatedly discloses that Christ as the life-giving Spirit is redemption to the believers' body, by which their corruptible and mortal frame will be transfigured from corruption and death into glory and life. As is characteristic of this Epistle, Paul uses practical situations among the believers to illustrate their need of the redemption of their body, such as the case of incest (5:1-13), the profaning of God's temple through fornication (6:19), and the abuse of freedom in stumbling weak believers by eating things sacrificed to idols (8:9-13). However, unlike the Gnostics, who regarded man's physical body as evil, Paul in 1 Corinthians 6 speaks concerning the positive purpose of the believers' body and God's intention to save their body. The body is for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body (v. 13). Today the believers' body is a member of Christ and the temple of the indwelling Holy Spirit, in which God is glorified, because the Spirit of the resurrected Christ, who is joined to them as one spirit and dwells in them, gives life to their body (vv. 15, 17, 19; Rom. 8:11). Eventually, at the time of Christ's return, the God who raised up the Lord bodily will also raise up the believers through His resurrecting power (1 Cor. 6:14; 2 Cor. 4:14; Eph. 1:19-20); this will be the culmination of their experience of Christ as the wisdom of God predestined before the ages for their glory (1 Cor. 2:7).

The believers' full experience of the redemption of their body is triumphantly shown in 1 Corinthians 15. At the end of the present age, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (v. 52), we believers will be changed from corruption, dishonor, and weakness to incorruption, glory, and power (vv. 42-43); our corruptible and mortal body will be transfigured into an incorruptible and immortal one (vv. 51-54). At that time every trace of death in our entire being will be swallowed up unto victory by Christ's resurrection life (v. 54; 2 Cor. 5:4), which alone can conquer death, the power of Satan and the last enemy of God (Acts 2:24; Rev. 1:18; Heb. 2:14; 1 Cor. 15:26). Hence, we should give thanks to God, who gives us the victory over sin and death "through our Lord Jesus Christ," that is, through Christ in His sin-condemning death and His death-conquering resurrection life (vv. 55-57; Rom. 5:12; 8:3).

First Corinthians 15 also reveals that the transfiguration of the believers' body is the issue of the work of Christ as the life-giving Spirit, the reality of resurrection, within them. "The Lord of glory," the One who suffered death and entered into glory as our Pioneer, will bring us into this same glory by transfiguring "the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of His glory" (1 Cor. 2:8; Luke 24:26, 46; Heb. 2:10; 6:19-20; Phil. 3:21). After describing Christ as the firstfruits of resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:20, Paul goes on to say in verses 21 and 22 that through Christ "came the resurrection of the dead" and that "in Christ all will be made alive." In the context of 1 Corinthians 15, Christ as the firstfruits of resurrection in whom all the believers will be *made alive* is none other than the resurrected Christ as the *life-giving Spirit* (v. 45). This indicates that in order for us to be enlivened in Christ throughout our entire tripartite being unto the redemption of our body, we need to enjoy the operation of Christ as the life-giving Spirit who imparts the resurrection life initially into our spirit, then into our soul, and ultimately into our body. As we eagerly await the day when our mortal body will be swallowed up by Christ's resurrection life, we are assured of this wonderful climax of God's complete salvation within us because He "has given to us the Spirit as a pledge," a guarantee and foretaste, of the eventual redemption of our body (2 Cor. 5:4-5; cf. Eph. 4:30). Therefore, the view of redemption in 1 Corinthians as a whole is that Christ Himself as the life-giving Spirit is imparted into the believers' tripartite being to make their spirit, soul, and body organically one with Him for the completion of God's glorious salvation in them.

In this light, Paul's use of the word *redemption* in 1 Corinthians 1:30 and elsewhere in his Epistles (notably Romans 8:23 and Ephesians 1:14 and 4:30) has a much wider scope and deeper significance than that of a mere repurchasing of humanity lost

through sin. Whereas the notion of redemption certainly does speak of repossession at tremendous cost (Gal. 3:13; 1 Pet. 3:18), its meaning extends to include a great part of God's economy. In *Life-study of Proverbs* Witness Lee provides a profound and comprehensive view of God's redemption as the great work of God to rescue humankind from every deleterious effect of the fall—principally, the acquiring of the Satan-injected nature of sin—and to restore them to His original intention in creation, which is to deify humanity for the purpose of gaining His corporate expression (Gen. 1:26) (54-58). Such a redemption is accomplished by Christ's death and resurrection. Through Christ's death on the cross God both terminated the fallen old man (Rom. 6:6) and recovered the humanity He had created for His own purpose, and in Christ's resurrection God uplifted the reclaimed God-created humanity through the impartation of His incorruptible life, thereby resurrecting and germinating man (1 Pet. 1:3; Eph. 2:5). That is to say, God uplifted this resurrected humanity by dispensing Himself into man, thus bringing forth the new man, a man not only restored from the fall but also indwelt by the very God in all that He is (v. 15; 4:24).

Although God has already accomplished such a redemption through the work of Christ, today He continually applies this redemption to the believers' tripartite being by the operation of the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit, in whom are contained the effectiveness of Christ's terminating death and the power of His germinating resurrection. As the believers progressively experience God's redemption through Christ's death and resurrection by being mingled with the Spirit in their daily fellowship with Him (Gal. 3:2-5; 1 Cor. 1:9), they are gradually redeemed to become the same as God in life and nature (but not in the Godhead) throughout their tripartite being. The completion of this process, which commenced with the regeneration of believers' spirit and continues with the sanctification of their soul, is called the redemption of their body. Therefore, in its highest sense, redemption embraces the entire span of God's full salvation of the lost and fallen humankind, by which He will gain a new humanity that is redeemed, regenerated, and uplifted, that is, fully indwelt by the very God for His glorious manifestation in Christ.

The Body of Christ—the Goal of the Believers' Enjoyment of Christ as Wisdom to Them from God

The goal of 1 Corinthians is that by the believers' enjoyment of Christ as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, they would grow into His corporate enlargement and expression. This thought is unfolded in 12:12: "Even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ." In this verse Paul does not refer to the Body of Christ in a metaphorical sense; on the contrary, he uses the physical body as a metaphor to illuminate certain attributes of the Body of Christ as an organic and spiritual reality. Immediately after stating that the human body has many members yet is one, Paul does not speak of the Body of Christ but of Christ, who is certainly not a metaphorical symbol but a divine reality (John 14:6).

This is because *the Christ* in 1 Corinthians 12:12 refers to the corporate Christ, Christ Himself as the Head in organic union with the believers as the many members of His one Body (v. 27). The Body of Christ is not, as many expositors suppose, merely a theological metaphor for the church as an assembly of believers; rather, it is a mystical reality—the corporate expression of Christ, who is wrought into, joined with, and lived out of the believers. In order for the believers to become the reality of such an organic Body of Christ, they need to be thoroughly mingled with Christ in their inward parts by continually receiving the dispensing of Christ as wisdom to them from God.

Though deeply personal, the full salvation in 1 Corinthians 1:30 is not primarily for individuals but for the Body of Christ as the goal of God's economy. When Paul

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declares in this verse that “you are in Christ Jesus,” *you* refers to the recipients of this Epistle, comprising not only the believers in the church in Corinth but also “all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place,” including all believers throughout time and space (1:2). Furthermore, in 12:27 Paul says, “You are the Body of Christ, and members individually.” This implies that the Christ in whom the believers are is the Head of the Body, and as such, He supplies the Body with the riches of the divine life so that the Body may grow with the growth of God (Col. 2:19). Moreover, as Lenski points out, *us* in 1 Corinthians 1:30 refers to “all [of Paul’s] fellow Christians” (81). Therefore, in Paul’s understanding, partaking of the transmission of Christ as wisdom from God is not individualistic but in, of, and for the Body; it is a corporate participation in Christ by all the members of the Body for the growth of the Body (Eph. 4:16).

That the believers’ enjoyment of the transmission of Christ as wisdom from God is for the growth of the Body of Christ is affirmed by a striking correspondence between 1 Corinthians 1:30 and 12:13, which says, “In one Spirit we were all baptized into one Body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit.” Since the life-giving Spirit is just the resurrected and transfigured Christ Himself, our baptism in one Spirit matches our being in Christ, both of which refer to our organic union with Him. Christ is the unique life, element, and constituent of His mystical Body (v. 12; Col. 3:4), and the Spirit as the realization of Christ is the sole essence and reality of the Body (Eph. 4:4). Therefore, in this Spirit we were baptized for the formation of the unique Body of Christ, the expression of Christ. Having thus been united with Christ, we need to drink the Spirit continually for the constitution, growth, and maturation of the Body of Christ. To drink the Spirit is nothing less than to partake of the dispensing of Christ as wisdom to us from God day by day.

A common adherence to a set of Christian beliefs does not suffice to cause miracle-seeking Jews and wisdom-pursuing Greeks to be the one Body of Christ; only the joint participation in the one Spirit can transform them into the same image, the image of the resurrected and glorified Christ, who is the constituent of the Body (2 Cor. 3:18). Our baptism in the Spirit, which marks the initiation of our being mingled with the Spirit, implies Christ as wisdom to us from God to be our righteousness for the regeneration of our spirit. Our drinking the Spirit mainly corresponds to Christ as wisdom to us from God to be the sanctification of our soul, which results in the redemption of our body. Through our enjoyment of the impartation of Christ as wisdom, we are constituted with Him as the element of the Body in our tripartite being and become the organic Body of Christ in reality. In brief, our being in Christ, which refers to our union with Him as the life-giving Spirit, is for the formation of the Body of Christ, and our daily participation in the pneumatic Christ as wisdom to us from God by our daily drinking of the Spirit is for the constitution of the Body.

Given that the Body is the goal and direction of Paul’s ministry, it is no surprise that the first problem he addresses in 1 Corinthians is division (1:10-15; 11:17). In Paul’s view, division is symptomatic of an unsanctified soul, a soul devoid of Christ, particularly in the mind and emotion. Like the Corinthians, we may be divided because of diverse opinions rooted in an unrenewed mind; we may even be factious due to preferences for certain ministers of Christ or due to different degrees of care for one another arising from an untransformed emotion. But if we allow Christ as the Spirit to sanctify our mind by saturating it with Himself, we will be attuned in the same mind, the mind of Christ, and in the same opinion, the Christ-expressing opinion, and will speak the same thing—Christ and His cross—so that there will be no division among us (1:10, 23; 2:2). Similarly, if we let the pneumatic Christ sanctify our emotion by permeating it with Himself, we will be saved from jealousy or a preference for a particular minister (3:3-4) and will have the same care for one another so that there will be no divisions in the Body of Christ (12:25).

With the same mind and the same care sourced in a Christ-saturated soul, we as the various members of Christ will be blended together into one Body and live in the consciousness of the Body, suffering with those who suffer and rejoicing with those who are glorified (vv. 24-27). Unlike the self-conscious and self-centered Corinthians, who cared mainly for their own individual benefit, we will be fully Body-conscious and Body-centered, caring for the unique goal of God in His divine economy: the building up of the church as the corporate Body of Christ in love (8:1; 10:23; 14:3-5, 12, 17, 26).

Conclusion


In the midst of an explosive proliferation of human knowledge, many of today's believers are no less preoccupied with the wisdom of this age than were the Corinthians and are similarly ignorant of the wisdom of God. It is not surprising, then, that although they may be genuine, blood-washed, and Spirit-regenerated Christians, they live a life mostly according to worldly wisdom—a life according to their philosophical concepts, ethical culture, or doctrinal knowledge—not a life of taking Christ as their unique center and their God-allotted portion. These believers stand in desperate need of the revelation in 1 Corinthians concerning the futility of human wisdom (3:20) and the preciousness of divine wisdom in the divine economy so that they too may be brought back to the fellowship of the beloved Son of God for their growth in life and the building up of the Body of Christ.

The wisdom in 1 Corinthians 1:30 is nothing less than God's New Testament economy to transmit the all-inclusive Christ into the believers' tripartite being so that He may be their righteousness, sanctification, and redemption for the producing of the Body of Christ. The believers' participation in this full salvation of God is based upon their experience of a great transfer out of Adam into Christ through their believing and being baptized into Christ, that is, into a union of life between Christ and them. This organic union with Christ is made real and experiential through the mingled spirit—the believers' human spirit mingled with the resurrected Christ as the life-giving Spirit, who alone knows the deep and hidden things of God concerning Christ as the wisdom of God and can guide the believers into the reality of this Christ (John 16:13). It is through their continual abiding in Christ by walking according to the mingled spirit that the believers may partake of God's complete salvation, which dispenses the pneumatic Christ as the saving element to meet their every inward need in any situation. The practical experience of the transmission of Christ is God's wise way to gain out of the devastation of the fall the goal of His eternal economy: a new humanity fully constituted with Christ to be His organic corporate expansion and expression.

The saving work of the Triune God as revealed in 1 Corinthians is much more than the rectifying of man's condemned position before God. By the progressive dispensing of the crucified and resurrected Christ into the very being of the believers, God makes Christ everything to them and meets their every need—past, present, and future. In order to deal with our sinful past, we need the application of Christ as righteousness. When we believed into Christ, we entered into an organic union with Him, and through this union we were not only justified in Him and forgiven of all our sins but also joined to Christ as the Spirit in one spirit so that we might be regenerated in our spirit with the divine life. For our present, day-to-day salvation, Christ is sanctification to us. After regenerating our spirit, He as the life-giving Spirit gradually sanctifies our soul by imparting Himself as the divine life into our mind, emotion, and will—until every faculty of our soul is, one day, saturated, possessed, and ruled by the pneumatic Christ to express His thoughts, feelings, and intentions. Ultimately, at His second coming, Christ will be full redemption to us. Through the continual dispensing of Christ as the life-giving Spirit from our spirit through our soul and into our body, our corruptible, dishonorable, and weak, mortal body will be transfigured into an

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incorruptible, glorious, and powerful immortal body, like the body of Christ's glory, at which point every vestige of death in our being will be swallowed up unto victory by Christ as the invincible resurrection life, and every part of our tripartite being will be permeated with the life and glory of Christ.

The organic issue of the believers' enjoyment of this threefold salvation of God in the all-inclusive Christ as the wisdom of God is the Body of Christ, the corporate enlargement and expression of Christ constituted into and lived out of the believers. May we receive mercy from the Lord to remain in our mingled spirit, continually partaking of the transmission of Christ as wisdom to us from God for the rest of our lives until we become organically one with Him throughout our tripartite being and express Him corporately as His mystical Body. 

Note

¹Righteousness pertains not only to the believers' justification by faith at the beginning of the Christian life; it also has a continuing aspect, in which the believers pursue to gain the subjective experience of Christ as their lived-out righteousness (Phil. 1:11; 3:9), and a consummate stage, in which righteousness is fully expressed in the matured bride of Christ (Rev. 19:8). Similarly, sanctification has an initial aspect, the positional sanctification that is through the redemptive blood of Christ and occurs upon our believing in Him (Heb. 10:29), and a continuing aspect, the ongoing and dispositional sanctification that is being carried out in us by Christ as the life-giving Spirit in His heavenly ministry (Eph. 5:26), as well as a consummation in the sanctification of our entire tripartite being, which will make us the holy city, New Jerusalem (1 Thes. 5:23; Rev. 21:2). Likewise, *redemption* refers not only to the believers' being ransomed by the Lord's precious blood (Rom. 3:24-25) but also to the completion of their divine sonship and their full entrance into the glory of God's new creation (8:23).

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