

BEING A PROPER PERSON IN LIFE TO CARE FOR THE CHURCH IN GOD'S ADMINISTRATION

(Saturday—Evening Session)

Message Nine

God's Intention, Satan's Strategy, and the Lord's Recovery

Scripture Reading: Prov. 29:18a; Eph. 3:8-10; Matt. 16:18; Col. 1:18b; Eph. 4:3; 1 Pet. 2:5

- Prov 29:18a Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint; ...
- Eph 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel
- Eph 3:9 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,
- Eph 3:10 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,
- Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
- Col 1:18b ... He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;
- Eph 4:3 Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:
- 1 Pet 2:5 You yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

I. God's intention in His economy is to dispense Christ with all His riches into His believers chosen by God for the constitution and building up of the Body of Christ, the church, to consummate the New Jerusalem for the full expression of the processed Triune God—Eph. 3:8-10; cf. Jer. 2:13.

- Eph 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel
- Eph 3:9 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,
- Eph 3:10 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,
- Jer 2:13 For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters, To hew out for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns, Which hold no water.

II. Because the church has become degraded through the many centuries of its history, it needs to be restored according to God's original intention and standard as revealed in the Scriptures—cf. 2 Kings 22:8; Ezra 1:3-11; Neh. 2:11, 17; Rev. 18:4.

- 2 Kings 22:8 Then Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of Jehovah. And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it.
- Ezra 1:3 Whoever there is among you of all His people, may his God be with him; and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and let him build the house of Jehovah the God of Israel—He is God—who is in Jerusalem.
- Ezra 1:4 And everyone who is left, in whatever place he sojourns, let the men of his place support him with silver and with gold and with goods and with cattle, besides the freewill offering for the house of God, which is in Jerusalem.
- Ezra 1:5 Then the heads of the fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin and the priests and the Levites rose up, even everyone whose spirit God had stirred up to go up to build the house of Jehovah, which is in Jerusalem.
- Ezra 1:6 And all those around them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with cattle and with precious things, besides all that was offered willingly.
- Ezra 1:7 Also King Cyrus brought out the vessels of the house of Jehovah, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought out from Jerusalem and had put in the house of his gods;
- Ezra 1:8 And Cyrus the king of Persia had them brought out by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer and had them enumerated to Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah.
- Ezra 1:9 And this was their number: thirty gold dishes, one thousand silver dishes, twenty-nine knives,

- Ezra 1:10 Thirty gold bowls, four hundred ten silver bowls of a different kind, and one thousand other vessels.
 Ezra 1:11 There were five thousand four hundred vessels of gold and silver in all. Sheshbazzar brought up all of them with those of the captivity who were brought up from Babylon to Jerusalem.
- Neh 2:11 Thus I came to Jerusalem and was there three days.
 Neh 2:17 Then I said to them, You see the bad state we are in, that Jerusalem lies in waste and its gates are burned with fire. Come and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem so that we will no longer be a reproach.
- Rev 18:4 And I heard another voice out of heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that you do not participate in her sins and that you do not receive her plagues;

III. The word *recovery* means the restoration or return to a normal condition after a damage or a loss has been incurred:

- A. After Satan's destruction, God came in to redo the things that He had done before; this redoing is His recovery, which is to bring back whatever has been lost and destroyed by God's enemy, Satan—1 John 3:8b.
 1 John 3:8b ... For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.
- B. In Matthew 19:8 we see the principle of recovery: "from the beginning it has not been so":
 Matt 19:8 He said to them, Moses, because of your hardness of heart, allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it has not been so.
1. Recovery means to go back to the beginning; we need to go back to the beginning, receiving the Lord's grace to go back to God's original intention, to what God ordained in the beginning.
 2. The word *recovery* means that something was there originally and then was damaged or lost; thus, there is a need to bring that thing back to its original state and to its normal condition—Dan. 1:1-2; Ezra 1:3-11; 6:3-5.
- Dan 1:1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim the king of Judah Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.
 Dan 1:2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim the king of Judah into his hand with some of the vessels of the house of God; and he brought them into the land of Shinar to the house of his god, and he brought the vessels into the treasury of his god.
- Ezra 1:3 Whoever there is among you of all His people, may his God be with him; and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and let him build the house of Jehovah the God of Israel—He is God—who is in Jerusalem.
- Ezra 1:4 And everyone who is left, in whatever place he sojourns, let the men of his place support him with silver and with gold and with goods and with cattle, besides the freewill offering for the house of God, which is in Jerusalem.
- Ezra 1:5 Then the heads of the fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin and the priests and the Levites rose up, even everyone whose spirit God had stirred up to go up to build the house of Jehovah, which is in Jerusalem.
- Ezra 1:6 And all those around them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with cattle and with precious things, besides all that was offered willingly.
- Ezra 1:7 Also King Cyrus brought out the vessels of the house of Jehovah, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought out from Jerusalem and had put in the house of his gods;
 Ezra 1:8 And Cyrus the king of Persia had them brought out by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer and had them enumerated to Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah.
 Ezra 1:9 And this was their number: thirty gold dishes, one thousand silver dishes, twenty-nine knives,
 Ezra 1:10 Thirty gold bowls, four hundred ten silver bowls of a different kind, and one thousand other vessels.
 Ezra 1:11 There were five thousand four hundred vessels of gold and silver in all. Sheshbazzar brought up all of them with those of the captivity who were brought up from Babylon to Jerusalem.
- Ezra 6:3 In the first year of King Cyrus, King Cyrus made a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem: Let the house be built, the place where they offer sacrifices; and let its foundations be raised, its height being sixty cubits, and its width sixty cubits,

Ezra 6:4 With three layers of large stones, and one layer of timber; and let the expenses be given out of the king's house.

Ezra 6:5 And also let the gold and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple which is in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, be returned and brought again to the temple which is in Jerusalem, to its place; and you shall put them in the house of God.

C. The words *recovery* and *economy* refer to one thing as seen from two different viewpoints—1 Tim. 1:4; Eph. 1:10; 3:9:

1 Tim 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.

Eph 1:10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;

Eph 3:9 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,

1. With God, it is a matter of economy; with us, it is a matter of recovery.

2. God's economy was unveiled through the apostles, but because the believers lost the proper understanding of God's economy, there is the need for it to be recovered—vv. 3-5; Acts 2:42.

Eph 3:3 That by revelation the mystery was made known to me, as I have written previously in brief,

Eph 3:4 By which, in reading *it*, you can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ,

Eph 3:5 Which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in spirit,

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

3. We in the Lord's recovery must have a clear vision of God's economy and then be governed, controlled, and directed by this vision, for we are here to carry out God's economy in His recovery—26:19; Prov. 29:18a.

Acts 26:19 Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,

Prov 29:18a Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint; ...

IV. Satan's strategy is versus the Lord's recovery—Isa. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:12-19; John 14:30; Matt. 16:18; Eph. 6:10-11:

Isa 14:12 How you have fallen from heaven, O Daystar, son of the dawn! How you have been hewn down to earth, You who made nations fall prostrate!

Isa 14:13 But you, you said in your heart: I will ascend to heaven; Above the stars of God I will exalt my throne. And I will sit upon the mount of assembly In the uttermost parts of the north.

Isa 14:14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.

Isa 14:15 But you will be brought down to Sheol, To the uttermost parts of the pit.

Ezek 28:12 Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, Thus says the Lord Jehovah, O you who sealed up perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty,

Ezek 28:13 You were in Eden, the garden of God. Every precious stone was your covering, sardius, topaz, diamond, chrysolite, onyx, jasper, sapphire, carbuncle, and emerald, with gold. The workmanship of your tambourines and your pipes was prepared with you on the day that you were created.

Ezek 28:14 You were the anointed cherub who covered the Ark; indeed I set you, so that you were upon the holy mountain of God; you walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

Ezek 28:15 You were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, until unrighteousness was found in you.

Ezek 28:16 By the abundance of your trading they filled your midst with violence, and you sinned. So I cast you out as profane from the mountain of God, and I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

Ezek 28:17 Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your brightness. I cast you to the ground; I presented you before kings that they may look at you.

Ezek 28:18 By the multitude of your iniquities in the unrighteousness of your trading you have profaned your sanctuaries. Therefore I sent forth fire from your midst; it consumed you, and I reduced you to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all those who look at you.

- Ezek **28:19** All who know you among the peoples are astonished at you. You have become a source of terror, and you will be no more forever.
- John **14:30** I will no longer speak much with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and in Me he has nothing;
- Matt **16:18** And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
- Eph **6:10** Finally, be empowered in the Lord and in the might of His strength.
- Eph **6:11** Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the stratagems of the devil,
- A. The first category of Satan's activity is to produce many substitutes for Christ:
1. In Colossae human philosophy was brought in as a substitute for Christ— Col. 2:8; 1:12.

Col **2:8** Beware that no one carries you off as spoil through his philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ;

Col **1:12** Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light;
 2. Hebrews reveals that Satan utilized Judaism to replace Christ—8:6; 9:23; 10:5-10.

Heb **8:6** But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry inasmuch as He is also the Mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted upon better promises.

Heb **9:23** It was necessary therefore for the examples of the things in the heavens to be purified by these, but the heavenly things themselves, by better sacrifices than these.

Heb **10:5** Therefore, coming into the world, He says, "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me.

Heb **10:6** In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin You did not delight.

Heb **10:7** Then I said, Behold, I have come (in the roll of the book it is written concerning Me) to do Your will, O God."

Heb **10:8** Saying above, "Sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin You did not desire nor delight in" (which are offered according to the law),

Heb **10:9** He then has said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will." He takes away the first that He may establish the second,

Heb **10:10** By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.
 3. Galatians reveals that the Judaizers were making the law a substitute for Christ—3:1-3, 24; 1:15-16a; 2:20; 4:19.

Gal **3:1** O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly portrayed crucified?

Gal **3:2** This only I wish to learn from you, Did you receive the Spirit out of the works of law or out of the hearing of faith?

Gal **3:3** Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?

Gal **3:24** So then the law has become our child-conductor unto Christ that we might be justified out of faith.

Gal **1:15** But when it pleased God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,

Gal **1:16a** To reveal His Son in me that I might announce Him as the gospel among the Gentiles, ...

Gal **2:20** I am crucified with Christ; and *it is* no longer I *who* live, but *it is* Christ *who* lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the *faith* of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Gal **4:19** My children, with whom I travail again in birth until Christ is formed in you,
 4. In Corinth the gifts, signs, and wisdom were used by the enemy to replace Christ—1 Cor. 1:22-23; 12:31.

1 Cor **1:22** For indeed Jews require signs and Greeks seek wisdom,

1 Cor **1:23** But we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness,

1 Cor **12:31** But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And moreover I show to you a most excellent way.
 5. Anything that replaces Christ or occupies the position of Christ is an idol that

becomes a burden to the worshipper—Isa. 46:1; 1 John 5:21.

Isa 46:1 Bel has bowed down; Nebo stoops; Their idols are on beasts and cattle; The things which you carry are a burden, A load for a weary beast.

1 John 5:21 Little children, guard yourselves from idols.

- B. The second category of Satan's work is to divide the Body of Christ; the sects, denominations, and divisions in the Body wipe out the corporate expression of Christ—1 Cor. 1:10-13a; Gal. 5:19-20.

1 Cor 1:10 Now I beseech you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be attuned in the same mind and in the same opinion.

1 Cor 1:11 For it has been made clear to me concerning you, my brothers, by those of *the household of* Chloe, that there are strifes among you.

1 Cor 1:12 Now I mean this, that each of you says, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ.

1 Cor 1:13a Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? ...

Gal 5:19 And the works of the flesh are manifest, which are such things as fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

Gal 5:20 Idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, factions, divisions, sects,

- C. The third category of Satan's work is to kill the function of all the members of Christ's Body by the clergy-laity system; we need to have the Lord's hate for the works of the Nicolaitans—Rev. 2:6; 1:5b-6; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9.

Rev 2:6 But this you have, that you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

Rev 1:5b ... To Him who loves us and has released us from our sins by His blood

Rev 1:6 And made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father, to Him be the glory and the might forever and ever. Amen.

1 Pet 2:5 You yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1 Pet 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people acquired for a possession, so that you may tell out the virtues of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

- V. The Lord's recovery is the recovery of Christ as our center, reality, life, and everything—Col. 1:18b; Rev. 2:4, 7, 17; 3:20:

Col 1:18b ... He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

Rev 2:4 But I have *one thing* against you, that you have left your first love.

Rev 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

Rev 2:17 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give of the hidden manna, and to him I will give a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no one knows except him who receives *it*.

Rev 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, then I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me.

- A. Christ is preeminent:

1. In the Triune Godhead—Phil. 2:9; John 15:26; Col. 1:18b-19; 2:9.

Phil 2:9 Therefore also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

John 15:26 But when the Comforter comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of reality, who proceeds from the Father, He will testify concerning Me;

Col 1:18b ... He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

Col 1:19 For in Him all the fullness was pleased to dwell

Col 2:9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,

2. In God's old creation—1:15b; Heb. 2:14a.

Col 1:15b ... the Firstborn of all creation,

- Heb 2:14a Since therefore the children have shared in blood and flesh, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same, ...
3. In God's new creation—Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 15:20; Rom. 8:29; Eph. 1:20-23.
- Col 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;
- 1 Cor 15:20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.
- Rom 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;
- Eph 1:20 Which He caused to operate in Christ in raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenlies,
- Eph 1:21 Far above all rule and authority and power and lordship and every name that is named not only in this age but also in that which is to come;
- Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him *to be* Head over all things to the church,
- Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
4. In God's exaltation—Acts 2:33a; Eph. 1:22b; Phil. 2:9b.
- Acts 2:33a Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God and having received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, ...
- Eph 1:22b ... gave Him *to be* Head over all things to the church,
- Phil 2:9b ... bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,
- B. Christ is the governing principle of all genuine wisdom and knowledge, the reality of all genuine teaching, and the only measure of all concepts acceptable to God; Christ is our everything—Col. 2:8.
- Col 2:8 Beware that no one carries you off as spoil through his philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ;
- C. Christ is everything to the believers:
1. He is the God-allotted portion to the saints—1:12; 1 Cor. 1:2.
- Col 1:12 Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light;
- 1 Cor 1:2 To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, *who is* theirs and ours:
2. He is our life—Col. 3:4a; Gal. 2:20a; Phil. 1:20-21a; Gal. 4:19; Col. 2:19b.
- Col 3:4a When Christ our life is manifested, ...
- Gal 2:20a I am crucified with Christ; and *it is* no longer I *who* live, but *it is* Christ *who* lives in me; ...
- Phil 1:20 According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death.
- Phil 1:21a For to me, to live is Christ ...
- Gal 4:19 My children, with whom I travail again in birth until Christ is formed in you,
- Col 2:19b ... out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.
3. He is the hope of glory—1:27.
- Col 1:27 To whom God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory,
4. He is our necessities and our enjoyment—John 8:12; 6:51, 57b; 1 Cor. 10:4; John 20:22; Gal. 3:27; John 15:7a; Col. 2:16-17; Matt. 11:28.
- John 8:12 Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall by no means walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.
- John 6:51 I am the living bread which came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; And the bread which I will give is My flesh, *given* for the life of the world.
- John 6:57b ... so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.

- 1 Cor 10:4 And all drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank of a spiritual rock which followed *them*, and the rock was Christ.
- John 20:22 And when He had said this, He breathed into *them* and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit.
- Gal 3:27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.
- John 15:7a If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ...
- Col 2:16 Let no one therefore judge you in eating and in drinking or in respect of a feast or of a new moon or of the Sabbath,
- Col 2:17 Which are a shadow of the things to come, but the body is of Christ.
- Matt 11:28 Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest.

D. Christ is the divine provision:

1. He is God's power to us—1 Cor. 1:24a.
1 Cor 1:24 But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God ...
2. He is wisdom to us from God as our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption—vv. 24b, 30.
1 Cor 1:24b ... the wisdom of God.
1 Cor 1:30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption,

E. Christ is everything to the church:

1. He is the Head of the Body—Col. 1:18a.
Col 1:18a And He is the Head of the Body, the church; ...
2. He is the Body of the Head—1 Cor. 12:12.
1 Cor 12:12 For 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.
3. He is the foundation—3:11.
1 Cor 3:11 For another foundation no one is able to lay besides that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.
4. He is the cornerstone—Eph. 2:20.
Eph 2:20 Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone;
5. He is all the members of the new man—Col. 3:10-11.
Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,
Col 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.

F. Christ is every part of God's New Testament economy in His full ministry of three stages (incarnation, inclusion, and intensification); the Lord's recovery is God becoming the flesh, the flesh becoming the life-giving Spirit, and the life-giving Spirit becoming the sevenfold intensified Spirit to build up the church that becomes the Body of Christ and that consummates the New Jerusalem— Ezek. 1:15; Col. 1:17; John 1:14; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rev. 4:5; 5:6.

- Ezek 1:15 And as I watched the living creatures, I saw a wheel upon the earth beside the living creatures, for each of their four faces.
- Col 1:17 And He is before all things, and all things cohere in Him;
- John 1:14 And 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.
- 1 Cor 15:45b ... the last Adam *became* a life-giving Spirit.
- Rev 4:5 And out of the throne come forth lightnings and voices and thunders. And *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;
- Rev 5:6 And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders a Lamb standing as having *just* been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

VI. The Lord's recovery is the recovery of the oneness of the Body of Christ— John 17:11b, 21;

Eph. 4:3-4a; Rev. 1:11:

John 17:11b ... Holy Father, keep them in Your name, which You have given to Me, that they may be one even as We are.

John 17:21 That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me.

Eph 4:3 Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:

Eph 4:4a One Body and one Spirit, ...

Rev 1:11 Saying, What you see write in a scroll and send *it* to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.

A. The oneness of the Lord's aspiration and prayer is the oneness of the Body, which is the enlarged oneness of the Divine Trinity—John 17:11b, 21; Eph. 4:4; Rom. 12:4-5:

John 17:11b ... Holy Father, keep them in Your name, which You have given to Me, that they may be one even as We are.

John 17:21 That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me.

Eph 4:4 One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling;

Rom 12:4 For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,

Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one Body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

1. This oneness is in the Father's name by His divine life—John 17:2, 6, 11.

John 17:2 Even as You have given Him authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all whom You have given Him.

John 17:6 I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world. They were Yours, and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.

John 17:11 And I am no longer in the world; yet they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, which You have given to Me, that they may be one even as We are.

2. This oneness is in the Triune God through sanctification by the holy word—vv. 14-21.

John 17:14 I have given them Your word, and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world even as I am not of the world.

John 17:15 I do not ask that You would take them out of the world, but that You would keep them out of *the hands of the evil one*.

John 17:16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

John 17:18 As You have sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

John 17:19 And for their sake I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.

John 17:20 And I do not ask concerning these only, but concerning those also who believe into Me through their word,

John 17:21 That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me.

3. This oneness is in the divine glory for the expression of the Triune God— vv. 22-24.

John 17:22 And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, even as We are one;

John 17:23 I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one, that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.

John 17:24 Father, *concerning* that which You have given Me, I desire that they also may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory, which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

B. The oneness of the Lord's aspiration became the oneness in actuality, the oneness of the Spirit—Eph. 4:3.

Eph 4:3 Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:

C. The practice of this oneness is the one accord—Matt. 18:19; Eph. 4:1-4; Acts 1:14; Phil.

1:27; 2:2; 4:2; 1 Cor. 1:10.

- Matt 18:19** Again, truly I say to you that if two of you are in harmony on earth concerning any matter for which they ask, it will be done for them from My Father who is in the heavens.
- Eph 4:1** I beseech you therefore, I, the prisoner in the Lord, to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called,
- Eph 4:2** With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, bearing one another in love,
- Eph 4:3** Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:
- Eph 4:4** One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling;
- Acts 1:14** These all continued steadfastly with one accord in prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.
- Phil 1:27** Only, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, that whether coming and seeing you or being absent, I may hear of the things concerning you, that you stand firm in one spirit, with one soul striving together *along* with the faith of the gospel,
- Phil 2:2** Make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the one thing,
- Phil 4:2** I exhort Euodias, and I exhort Syntyche, to think the same thing in the Lord.
- 1 Cor 1:10** Now I beseech you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be attuned in the same mind and in the same opinion.

D. The practice of this oneness is on the unique ground of the locality in which a local church is established and exists—Acts 8:1; 13:1; Rev. 1:11; Acts 14:23; cf. Titus 1:5.

- Acts 8:1** And Saul approved of his killing. And there occurred in that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and all were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.
- Acts 13:1** Now there were in Antioch, in the local church, prophets and teachers: Barnabas and Simeon, who was called Niger, and Lucius the Cyrenian, and Manaen, the foster brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.
- Rev 1:11** Saying, What you see write in a scroll and send *it* to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.
- Acts 14:23** And when they had appointed elders for them in every church and had prayed with fastings, they committed them to the Lord into whom they had believed.
- Titus 1:5** For this cause I left you in Crete, that you might set in order the things *which I have begun* that remain and appoint elders in every city, as I directed you:

E. The one accord is the master key to every blessing in the New Testament— Acts 1:14; Psa. 133.

- Acts 1:14** These all continued steadfastly with one accord in prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.
- Psa 133:1** Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brothers to dwell in unity!
- Psa 133:2** It is like the fine oil upon the head That ran down upon the beard, Upon Aaron's beard, That ran down upon the hem of his garments;
- Psa 133:3** Like the dew of Hermon That came down upon the mountains of Zion. For there Jehovah commanded the blessing: Life forever.

VII. The Lord's recovery is the recovery of the function of all the members of the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:15-16; 1 Cor. 14:4b, 26, 31:

- Eph 4:15** But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
- Eph 4:16** Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and *through* the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
- 1 Cor 14:4b** ... but he who prophesies builds up the church.
- 1 Cor 14:26** What then, brothers? Whenever you come together, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.
- 1 Cor 14:31** For you can all prophesy one by one that all may learn and all may be encouraged.

A. The gifts, the gifted persons, perfect the saints to do what they do for the organic building up of the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:11-16; Acts 20:20, 31:

Eph 4:11 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,
 Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,
 Eph 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,
 Eph 4:14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,
 Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
 Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and *through* the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
 Acts 20:20 How I did not withhold any of those things that are profitable by not declaring *them* to you and by *not* teaching you publicly and from house to house,
 Acts 20:31 Therefore watch, remembering that for three years, night and day, I did not cease admonishing each one with tears.

1. The gifted persons perfect the saints by nourishing them with the life supply for their growth in life—6:4; Eph. 4:15-16; 1 Cor. 3:2, 6; 1 Pet. 2:2.

Acts 6:4 But we will continue steadfastly in prayer and in the ministry of the word.
 Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
 Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and *through* the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
 1 Cor 3:2 I gave you milk to drink, not solid food, for you were not yet able *to receive it*. But neither yet now are you able,
 1 Cor 3:6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth.
 1 Pet 2:2 As newborn babes, long for the guileless milk of the word in order that by it you may grow unto salvation,

2. The gifted persons perfect the saints in the priesthood of the gospel for the carrying out of God's eternal economy—vv. 5, 9; Rev. 1:6; Rom. 15:16; 12:1; Col. 1:28-29.

1 Pet 2:5 You yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
 1 Pet 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people acquired for a possession, so that you may tell out the virtues of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;
 Rev 1:6 And made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father, to Him be the glory and the might forever and ever. Amen.
 Rom 15:16 That I might be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, a laboring priest of the gospel of God, in order that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, having been sanctified in the Holy Spirit.
 Rom 12:1 I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, *which is* your reasonable service.
 Col 1:28 Whom we announce, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man full-grown in Christ;
 Col 1:29 For which also I labor, struggling according to His operation which operates in me in power.

3. The Body is built directly by all the members of Christ functioning, each in his own measure—Eph. 4:16.

Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and *through* the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

B. The saints who are willing and ready to be perfected will be the overcomers who constitute the bride of Christ to end this age and usher in the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ—Rev. 11:15; 17:14; 19:7-9.

- Rev 11:15 And the seventh angel trumpeted; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of the world has become the *kingdom* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever.
- Rev 17:14 These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and they who are with Him, the called and chosen and faithful, *will also overcome them*.
- Rev 19:7 Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.
- Rev 19:8 And it was given to her that she should be clothed in fine linen, bright *and* clean; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints.
- Rev 19:9 And he said to me, Write, Blessed are they who are called to the marriage dinner of the Lamb. And he said to me, These are the true words of God.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

THE SAINTS' DIRECT BUILDING OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

We have seen that God's intention is to give the gifted persons—the apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers—to perfect the saints that all the saints may participate in the work of the building up of the Body of Christ. These gifted persons perfect the saints to be what they are. This is similar to the professors in a teachers' college who perfect their students to become teachers like they are. A local church may be likened to a teachers' college, and the gifted persons are like professors teaching different courses. They perfect the saints to be what they are—apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers. The gifts' perfecting of the saints results in a proper local church.

Perfected in the Priesthood

The New Testament tells us that all the believers are priests (1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6). In order to help us understand the perfecting of the saints, we need to look at the type of the priesthood in the Old Testament. To serve in the priesthood, a priest had to be of age. When a person was twenty-five, he could be an apprentice in the priesthood (Num. 8:24). This apprenticeship lasted for five years until he was thirty years of age (4:3). Then he was considered a full-grown man and was fully qualified to be a priest.

The priests were perfected to do mainly four things. First, they were perfected to offer the sacrifices (Lev. 6:8—7:38). They had to learn how to offer the burnt offering, the meal offering, the sin offering, the trespass offering, the peace offering, and the other offerings. They had to learn how to work at the altar. The altar typifies the cross. We must help people to offer Christ as their sacrifices at the cross. We may say that offering the offerings equals preaching the gospel.

Second, the priests also had to learn how to enter into the Holy Place to display the showbread (Lev. 24:5-8; Exo. 25:30). They had to take care of this every day. The showbread signifies Christ as our life supply. As the New Testament priests, we should learn how to display Christ as the showbread to all of God's worshippers. We have to help the saved ones by showing them how to enter into the Holy Place to enjoy Christ as their life supply. That means that we also have to learn how to dispense Christ into people as the life supply.

Third, the priests took care of the lampstand in the Holy Place (Lev. 24:1-4). They trimmed the wicks and filled the lamps with oil to make the lampstand shine brightly. As the New Testament priests, we should do the same thing. We have to learn to be filled with the Spirit as the oil, and we must minister Christ as the divine light with and in the Spirit to the saints. This is to make Christ as the light shine with the Spirit. We have to help the saints to realize and enjoy Christ as their divine light, shining within them with the sevenfold Spirit. To minister such a Christ with the sevenfold Spirit to the saints is to perfect them.

Fourth, the priests had to burn the incense (Exo. 30:6-8). Burning the incense signifies getting into the presence of God and talking to God. We converse with God to enjoy God's presence, the

Triune God Himself. As the New Testament priests, we must learn to fellowship with God in prayer, and we must be able to perfect the saints to do the same thing.

The priesthood perfects the saints to present Christ as the offerings, the sacrifices, at the brass altar, the cross. It perfects the saints in ministering Christ as the life supply and in displaying Christ as the shining light, as the lampstand with the seven lamps, the sevenfold Spirit. It also perfects the saints to present Christ to God at the golden incense altar as the all-inclusive incense that they may converse with God. The saints need to be perfected to fellowship with God in a conversational way to enjoy His presence, to enjoy the Triune God Himself. We need to be perfected to take care of these four major items of the priesthood, and we must perfect others to do the same thing. The gifted persons need to perfect the saints in these aspects. All the believers need to learn these four things.

The New Testament uses the word “priesthood” to refer to the priestly office (Heb. 7:12) and to the priestly body, the corporate body of priests (1 Pet. 2:5, 9). The Old Testament priesthood was a corporate body of priests with the high priest as their head. In the New Testament, we also are the priesthood in the sense of a priestly body. We are not separate, individual priests serving God. We serve God as priests in a corporate way. We believers are a corporate body of priests with the High Priest, Christ, as our Head. Christ as the Head of the church is the High Priest with all His saints as priests to form a priesthood. The corporate priesthood with Christ as the High Priest bearing all the people of God on His shoulders with strength and on His breast with love in the presence of God is the church life (Exo. 28:9-12, 15, 17, 21, 29-30; Heb. 7:24-26). The entire church is on the breast and on the shoulders of the Head of the priesthood.

Such a church life needs four classes of gifted persons—the apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers—to perfect all the saints to do the same thing that they do. Can we see such a scene in today’s church life? By the Lord’s mercy, we may have a little bit of perfecting work among us in each of the four major aspects typified in the priesthood, but we must admit that we are short of the perfected and perfecting priestly services. We do not have the reality of Ephesians 4:11-16 among us in a definite way. In the Lord’s recovery, we are short of the services of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers. This is why I have the burden to do my best to help all the saints in all the local churches realize where we should go. Ephesians 4:13 uses the phrase “until we all arrive.” Paul included himself and all the serving apostles and gifted ones in saying that we all have to go on to arrive. Our having to arrive indicates that we are traveling on the way. We need to be like the runners in an Olympic race. We have to strive, to struggle, to run the course until we arrive at the goal. By the Lord’s mercy, He has given us a vision of His desire to build up the Body of Christ. The Lord has brought us into His recovery and put us on the course. We are running this course. We are on the way, and we have a goal. The goal is the full expression of Christ on this earth.

We have seen that there is the need for the gifted persons to perfect all the saints. In this chapter we want to go further to see the saints’ direct building of the Body of Christ. The building up of the Body of Christ is through the gifted persons’ perfecting of the saints. Then the perfected saints do the direct building of the Body of Christ.

Being Willing and Ready to Be Perfected

The Lord desires all the saints to be perfected (Eph. 4:13), but the Bible shows us that the Lord is calling for overcomers. In the seven epistles to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3, the Lord is sounding the trumpet for overcomers. His call for the overcomers indicates that not all the saints will be perfected. Just some of them will be perfected. The ones who are willing to be perfected will be the overcomers. These overcomers will eventually constitute the bride of Christ, and this bride will be the fighting army, following Christ to fight against and defeat the Antichrist (Rev. 19:11-21). According to Revelation 17:14 the army of overcomers that follow the Lamb are “called and chosen and faithful.” The choosing of the Father in eternity past was for salvation, but the choosing in Revelation 17 at the end of this age is for overcoming. Thank God that we have been chosen by Him in eternity for

salvation, but now we are under the test to be approved. If we are faithful to follow the New Testament teaching to run the course, to pass the test to be approved, we will be chosen to be the overcomers who constitute the army and the bride of Christ. The army is formed in Revelation 17. These chosen ones constitute a ready to fight army. Then these ready to fight chosen overcomers will be the bride in Revelation 19 to attend the wedding feast of the Lamb (vv. 7-9). After the marriage feast, Antichrist will fight directly against the descending Christ. Christ will fight him with His bride, who is the chosen army.

I am concerned for some of the saints because they are still not willing or ready to be perfected. By the Lord's mercy and under the covering of His blood, I would ask you as you are reading this book—are you willing and ready to be perfected? If you are not willing and ready, you will make yourself a dropout. The door is open for everyone to be perfected. I hope that we all would have a hearing ear to hear the calling of the Lord. Everyone who is contented with the present situation of the church life is not ready to be perfected, to go on with the Lord. This means that they are in the risky situation of becoming a dropout. In these days, I believe that the Lord has given me a vision with a burden for His churches, His recovery. Our present situation is not something with which we should be contented. We should feel sorry for our present situation. The recovery has been in the United States for over twenty-five years. During this period of time, we may have heard many messages, yet our situation is not up to a level with which we can be satisfied. We have to realize that we are far off from the goal. We need to say, "Lord, I am ready and willing to be perfected by You. I will take the perfecting word through Your gifted persons."

All the members of the Body of Christ are parts of the one organism. What a privilege, what a mercy, and what an all-sufficient grace that we are now in the one organism of the Triune God! As living members of this organism, we need the organic perfecting. We need to be perfected to do what the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers do. We have to be perfected so that the entire Body of Christ functions in the same way that the gifted members do.

There is much hope that we can be perfected to do what the gifted members do. In a local church, some can do the apostles' work to preach the gospel, teach the truth, establish churches, and appoint elders. The Lord needs many apostles, not just one or two. God's intention is to perfect every saint to do what the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers do. Some saints will do the apostles' work. Some will be perfected to do the prophets' work to speak God, speak for God, and speak forth God, ministering Christ to all the people. They will be perfected not merely to give a testimony but to give a living word of revelation. Some of the saints who were not evangelists may be perfected to be evangelists. They will be those who are on fire and burdened for the preaching of the gospel. They will have the ability and the knowledge to talk to people about sin, the fall of man, the love of God, the person of Christ, redemption, forgiveness, and regeneration. Then there will be no need for the saints to bring their unbelieving contacts to a gifted person because the saints will have been perfected to do the work of an evangelist. Some of the saints also need to be perfected to shepherd. Today very few of the ones that we baptize are under the proper care because of a lack of shepherding. This is why we lose many of the ones that we baptize. But if the saints are perfected to be shepherds, every baptized one will have a nursing mother (1 Thes. 2:7). Immediately after the new ones are baptized, the saints will pick up the burden to care for them. They will care for the new ones as they would care for newborn babes, nourishing and cherishing them.

The saints in a local church must be perfected to do the same work that the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers do. Because the situation is not like this today, we have to strive and to struggle by fighting. There are many resistances that we have to fight through. We all should pray, "Lord, make me willing and ready to be perfected. I will receive the perfection from the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the shepherds and teachers. I am not content with my present situation." This is my intimate fellowship with you all. I hope that you are willing to accept my fellowship. (*The Building Up of the Body of Christ*, pp. 21-26)