



## **LESSON SIX**

### The Unique Work of God —Building Himself Into Our Being

Scripture Reading:

**2 Samuel 7:12-14a**

7:12 When your days are fulfilled and you sleep with your fathers, I will raise up your seed after you, which will come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.

7:13 It is he who will build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

7:14a I will be his Father, and he will be My son.

**Matthew 16:18**

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.

**Matthew 22:41-46**

22:41 Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus questioned them,

22:42 Saying, What do you think concerning the Christ? Whose son is He? They said to Him, David's.

22:43 He said to them, How then does David in spirit call Him Lord, saying,

22:44 "The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand until I put Your enemies underneath Your feet"?

22:45 If then David calls Him Lord, how is He his son?

22:46 And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone from that day dare to question Him anymore.

**Romans 1:3-4**

1:3 Concerning His Son, who came out of the seed of David according to the flesh,

1:4 Who was designated the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness out of the resurrection of the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord;

**Ephesians 3:17**

3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

**1 Corinthians 3:12**

3:12 But if anyone builds upon the foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, grass, stubble,

**Revelation 21:2, 9-12, 14**

21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

21:9 And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, Come here; I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.

21:10 And he carried me away in spirit onto a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,

21:11 Having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, as clear as crystal.

21:12 It had a great and high wall and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names inscribed, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel:

21:14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

**Revelation 21:18-21**

21:18 And the building work of its wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.

21:19 The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every precious stone: the first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald;

21:20 The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst.

21:21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was, respectively, of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

**QUESTIONS:****Section 1:**

1. What is God's unique work? How does God carry out His unique work?
2. What's the difference between the work of God's creation and God's building?
3. What is the spiritual principle in the parable of the sower in Matthew 13?

**Section 2:**

1. What are the requirements for God to make His home in our heart according to Ephesians?
2. What kind of building is New Jerusalem as described in Revelation?
3. What will happen to us after we have seen the vision of God's building?

**Section 3:**

1. Why is it not adequate for us to be a man according to God's heart?
2. What should be our work for the Lord today?

**Section 4:**

1. What is the 'diamond' in the 'box'?
2. What is the building revealed in the New Testament? How can we participate in this building today?

## **GOD'S RECOVERY AND GOD'S ECONOMY**

The words recovery and economy refer to one thing as seen from two viewpoints. With God, it is a matter of economy; with us, it is a matter of recovery. 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. Therefore, what is being recovered today is God's economy.

The Lord's recovery is also to recover the oneness of the Body. This means that in the recovery we must see the universal Body and do everything in the limitation, the regulation, of the one Body. We all need to learn how to practice the Lord's recovery of the one Body.

### **GOD'S UNIQUE WORK**

God's economy is centered on one thing—God's unique work. God's unique work in the universe and throughout all the ages and generations is to work Himself in Christ into His chosen people, making Himself one with them. This involves the mingling of divinity with humanity.

In order to work Himself into us, God became a man and lived a human life on earth. Then He passed through death and entered into resurrection and ascension, becoming the consummated, life-giving Spirit ready to come into us. When He came into us, He regenerated our spirit. Now He is working in us to increase Himself in us and to build Himself into us.

### **CHRIST MAKING HIS HOME IN OUR HEARTS**

The Bible tells us that God is working in us and that Christ is living in us. However, the Bible uses a very striking term—build—to denote God's work in us. In Ephesians 3:16-17 Paul prayed to the Father, saying, "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man, that Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith." To be sure, Christ's making His home in our hearts involves building. If we would make a home, we must first build a house. To make a home implies being settled in a particular place. However, if we would be settled, we must have a house. The

words "that Christ may make His home" are a strong indication that He is doing a work of building in us. Christ is building a home in our inner being.

## **THE MATERIALS FOR THE BUILDING**

### **Divinity and Humanity**

In building a house, it is necessary to have the proper material. When God created the universe, He did not use any material; He created simply by His speaking. For instance, He said, "Let there be light," and there was light. However, in order to build a home in us, Christ must have the material. On the one hand, this material is Christ Himself as the element; on the other hand, this material includes something from us with our humanity.

Another verse that speaks of the Triune God doing a building work in us is John 14:23. Here the Lord Jesus says, "If anyone loves Me, My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him." The words "make an abode" in this verse equal "make His home" in Ephesians 3:17. The Triune God has come into us to do a building work with Himself as the element and also with something from us as the material. The word concerning building in these verses implies that God's building Himself in Christ into us has very much to do with what we are.

### **The Seed and the Soil with Its Nutrients**

This is illustrated by the parable of the sower in Matthew 13. The seed is sown into the soil to grow with the nutrients in the soil. This seed, therefore, does not grow just with itself; it grows with itself and the nutrients in the soil. As a result, the produce is a composition of elements from both the seed and the soil. Here we see an important spiritual principle. In order to grow, the seed must be sown into good soil. If the seed were sown into sand or among stones, it would not grow, because neither sand nor stone can supply the necessary nutrients.

In Matthew 13 the seed is divinity, and the soil with its nutrients is humanity. We have within us certain nutrients created by God as a preparation for His coming into us to grow in us. God has created the human spirit with the human nutrients. For this reason, human beings can believe in the Lord and receive Him.

The seed that has been sown into us is Christ as the embodiment of the Triune God. The rate at which the seed grows within us depends on the nutrients afforded by us. The more nutrients we supply, the faster the seed will grow and the more it will flourish.

According to the Bible, growth equals building. The Lord Jesus declared, "I will build My church" (Matt. 16:18). This building takes place by the growth of the divine seed within us.

The Triune God, the source of life, has sown Himself in Christ as a seed into our being. Once this seed comes into us, it meets something within us—our spiritual nutrients—and it begins to grow. The degree of growth depends not on the divine seed but on how many nutrients we afford this seed. Matthew 13 indicates that only the good soil (vv. 8, 23) affords the adequate nutrients for the growth of the divine seed.

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### **Our Need to Be Strengthened into Our Inner Man**

Since God's building Himself in Christ into us depends not only on Himself as the element but also on the nutrients supplied by us, we need to be strengthened into our inner man. If we remain in our soul, in our natural man, there will not be any nutrients for the growth of the divine seed. But if we are strengthened into our inner man and if we pay attention to our spirit and exercise our spirit, the nutrients will be supplied. Then Christ will make His home in our inner being.

If Christ's making His home in our hearts did not need something from us, Paul would not have prayed for us as he did in Ephesians 3. Here Paul prayed that the Father would strengthen us with power through His Spirit into our inner man. This power, referred to in Ephesians 1:19-22, is the power that raised Christ from the dead, seated Christ at the right hand of God in the heavenlies, subjected all things under Christ's feet, and gave Christ to be Head over all things to the church. Such power operates in us (3:20), and with it God strengthens us for His building. The Spirit through whom God strengthens us is the consummation of the processed Triune God. On the one hand, God strengthens us with Himself as the element and, on the other hand, we afford the nutrients. Through these two God

in Christ carries out His intrinsic building—the building of His home—in our entire being.

### **THE NEW JERUSALEM—A COMPOSITION OF DIVINITY AND HUMANITY BLENDED AND MINGLED TOGETHER AS ONE ENTITY**

The conclusion of the divine revelation in the Bible is a building, the New Jerusalem. This building is a blending and mingling of divinity with humanity. This is proved by the description of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21. Verse 3 refers to the New Jerusalem as "the tabernacle of God," and verse 22 says, "I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple." The New Jerusalem as the tabernacle of God is for God to dwell in, and God and the Lamb as the temple are for the redeemed saints to dwell in. This indicates that the New Jerusalem will be a mutual dwelling place for God and man. Furthermore, this building is a composition of human beings. The gates are pearls inscribed with the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel (v. 12), and on the twelve foundations are the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb (v. 14). This indicates clearly that the New Jerusalem is a composition of the Triune God, who is the essence, center, and universality, and God's redeemed people.

The New Jerusalem is a composition of divinity and humanity blended and mingled together as one entity. All the components have the same life, nature, and constitution and thus are a corporate person. This is a matter of God becoming man and man becoming God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead. These two, God and man, man and God, are built up together by being blended and mingled together. This is the completion, the consummation, of God's building. We all need to see this vision.

### **THE EFFECT OF THE VISION OF GOD'S BUILDING ON OUR WORK TODAY**

#### **The Example of Job**

The vision of God's building will affect our work today. If we see God's building, we will not try to help others to be more humble or gentle. That is merely something of human virtue, and that is not what God wants. Concerning this, I would ask you to consider the case of Job, a person who had the highest attainment in building up himself

in integrity, uprightness, and perfection. Eventually, God stripped Job of all his attainments in order to show him that his only need was God Himself.

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### **Christ Living in Us to Enjoy Himself as the Good Land**

God went on from Job to Abraham, making promises to him regarding a seed and the good land. Who are the ones who enjoy the good land? This question is answered in the prophecy by typology given to David in 2 Samuel 7. The One who enjoys the good land is actually Christ Himself. This means that God in Christ becomes us to be the enjoyer of the good land. David was a man according to God's heart, but God knew that this was not adequate. Therefore, God revealed that He would build David a house with His Son, who would become David's seed. On the one hand, this seed is the good land; on the other hand, this seed is the One who enjoys the good land. Who, then, is enjoying Christ? The answer is that it is Christ in us who is enjoying Christ. It is no longer we who live, but it is Christ who lives in us (Gal. 2:20). Christ is living in us to enjoy Himself as the good land.

### **Our Need to Have God Wrought into Our Hearts**

As we will see in a later message, David, a man according to God's heart, had a great failure. This indicates that merely to be a person according to God's heart means nothing, for one may be according to God's heart but still be empty, not having God wrought into his heart. In 2 Samuel 7 God seemed to be saying, "David, you are a man according to My heart, but you need Me to be wrought into your heart. You need Me to be built into your being to make you Me in life and in nature. It is not adequate for you to be according to My heart. You must be able to say, 'To me to live is God.'" If David had been such a person, he would not have fallen.

A person may be according to the heart of God and yet be without God, not having God wrought into him. The fall of David illustrates the fact that even if we are a person according to God, if we do not have God wrought into us, we are no better than others. What is the value of being according to the heart of God if we do not have God wrought into our hearts? If we realize that

God desires to work Himself into His chosen people and if we realize that this is what we all need, then the goal of our work will be to minister Christ to others so that the Triune God may build Himself into their being.

### **Ministering the Building God and the Buildded God**

Our work...today is to minister God to people. Yes, we need to save sinners and to feed the saints and perfect them. The crucial matter, however, is that we minister God to others. The God whom we minister is not just the building God—He is also the buildded God. If we fail to minister God in this way, our work will be wood, grass, and stubble (1 Cor. 3:12).

I would ask you to reconsider the work you are doing for the Lord. Perhaps you have opened up a region or have brought many people to God. But I ask you this question: How much of Christ as the embodiment of the Triune God has been wrought into those whom you have brought to God? If we are sincere and genuine, we will humble ourselves and confess that not very much of the Triune God has been wrought into the ones we have brought to God. Therefore, we need to practice one thing—to minister the processed Triune God into others so that He may build Himself into their inner man. In every aspect of our work—preaching the gospel, feeding the believers, perfecting the saints—the intrinsic element must be that we minister the building and buildded God to others. I would urge you to pray that the Lord would teach you to work in this way.

### **The Processed Triune God Building Himself into His Redeemed People**

The processed Triune God is embodied in Christ and realized as the consummated Spirit. This is the God whom we worship, preach, and minister to others. Today He is building Himself into His redeemed people in order to produce a house with Himself as the element and also with something from their redeemed and uplifted humanity. This house is the church, the Body of Christ. This house is the enlargement, the expansion, of Christ, the embodiment of the Triune God realized as the Spirit. As we carry out the God-ordained way in the four steps of begetting, nourishing, perfecting, and building, our work must be based upon the processed

Triune God, who is building Himself into His chosen people.

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### **GOD MAKING HIMSELF MAN IN ORDER TO MAKE MAN GOD IN LIFE AND IN NATURE**

In verse 12 God speaks of David's seed, and in verse 14a He says, "I will be his Father, and he will be My son." Here we have something of very great significance—the seed of David becoming the Son of God. These verses clearly unveil that a seed of man, that is, a son of a man, can become the Son of God. This implies that God's intention is to make Himself man in order to make man God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead. Such an implication is exceedingly great. Eventually, the whole Bible consummates with this matter. The New Jerusalem, the ultimate consummation of the Bible, involves God becoming man and man becoming God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead, and God and man being mingled together to be one entity.

#### **The Diamond in the Box**

If we read the Bible without paying attention to this crucial point, then, in a very real sense, the Bible is to us an empty book. This means that although the Bible is real in itself, in our understanding of it the Bible is empty. As an illustration, let us suppose that a certain box, which is quite attractive, contains a large diamond. A child may be interested in the box but not in the diamond. An adult, however, would focus his attention on the diamond contained in the box. Today, many...care for the Bible as the "box," but they have not seen and do not appreciate the "diamond" which is the content of this box, and they may even condemn those who have a proper appreciation of the "diamond" in the "box." The "diamond" in the "box" of the Bible is the revelation that in Christ God has become man in order that man might become God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead.

#### **The Son of David Being Designated the Son of God**

The Bible reveals a wonderful, marvelous person—Jesus Christ, the God-man. This One is both the Son of God and the Son of man. On one

occasion when the Pharisees were gathered together, the Lord Jesus questioned them, saying, "What do you think concerning the Christ? Whose son is He?" (Matt. 22:41-42a). When they said to him "David's," He went on to say to them, "How then does David in spirit call Him Lord..? If then David calls Him Lord, how is He his son?" (vv. 43, 45). The Pharisees could not understand this, and they were not able to answer Him. Here the Lord Jesus was indicating that He, the son of David, was the Son of God—the very matter revealed in 2 Samuel 7:12-14a.

What is revealed in 2 Samuel 7 is expounded by Paul in Romans 1:3-4, where he tells us that Christ, a descendant of David, has been designated the Son of God. These verses say, "Concerning His Son, who came out of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was designated the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness out of the resurrection of the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord." Christ is a descendant of David, yet He has been designated to be the Son of God. This is the mystery of God becoming man to make man God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead. The two, God and man, are thus built together, constituted into each other. In Christ God has been constituted into man, man has been constituted into God, and God and man have been mingled together to be one entity, which is called the God-man.

### **GOD BUILDING HIMSELF IN CHRIST INTO MAN**

In these messages on 2 Samuel 7, we have emphasized the matter of God's building Himself in Christ into man. God is building Himself not in Himself but in man, and not only in man but also into man. This building is God's constituting of Himself in Christ into man.

God in Christ is constituting Himself into man, making Himself the element of man. Thus, we human beings are constituted with a divine element. This means that a divine element is built into our human element, and the two elements are mingled with each other. Not only is God's divine element constituted into us—the human element is constituted into God. As the divine element is constituted into our humanity, we become God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead. As the human element is constituted into God, God becomes man. This is the building revealed in the New Testament.

Such a revelation should become a principle that governs our understanding of God and of God's building. When we talk about the building up of the church or about the building up of the Body, we need to realize that this building is a constitution of the divine element into the human element and of the human element into the divine element. This building, therefore, is a constitution of the divine element and of the human element into each other. Such a constitution makes the divine element and the human element one entity. This is the building of the church, the building of the Body of Christ.

### **OUR WORK TODAY BEING PART OF A MUTUAL CONSTITUTION**

As we work for God today, we should participate in this building. This means that our work must be part of this mutual constitution. If our work is not related to this mutual constitution, then in the eyes of God our work is like wood, grass, and stubble (1 Cor. 3:12). But if our work is a part of this mutual constitution, God will regard our work as gold, silver, and precious stones, which will consummate in the New Jerusalem built with gold, pearl, and precious stones (Rev. 21:2, 11, 18-21).