

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

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OF THE
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TO PRODUCE
HIS ABODE

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THE DISPENSING OF THE TRIUNE GOD TO PRODUCE HIS ABODE

John 14 reveals mainly how the Triune God is dispensing Himself into us in order that He and we, we and He, might be built together in the mingling of divinity with humanity. This chapter unfolds that the Triune God—the Father, Son, and Spirit—is dispensing Himself into the believers in Jesus Christ; that this very God and the believers are being built together, a building of divinity with humanity; that eventually this building becomes a mutual abode; and that God dwells in man and man in God. This is the basis for the Lord's word in 15:4: "Abide in Me and I in you." This is a mutual abiding, for we abide in Him and He abides in us. For the sake of this mutual abiding, there is a mutual abode. How could we have the abiding without the abode? Although the mutual abiding is clearly revealed in chapter 15, where is the mutual abode? It is in chapter 14.

In chapter 15 we have the word *abide*, and in chapter 14 we have the word *abode*. I like these two words. In Greek, as in English, the verb *abide* is the verbal form of the noun *abode*. In Greek we have the noun *abode* in chapter 14 and the verb *abide* in chapter 15. The same Greek word for

abode is found in both the singular and plural forms in chapter 14. The singular form is in verse 23, where we are told that the Father and the Son will come and make an abode with the one who loves the Lord Jesus. The plural form is found in verse 2, where the Lord tells us that in His Father's house are many abodes. The King James Version translates the Greek word in verse 2 as "mansions" instead of "abodes." This translation has caused a great deal of misunderstanding among Christians.

THE FATHER'S HOUSE— THE MINGLING OF GOD AND MAN

According to the natural concept, many Christians think that the Father's house mentioned in verse 2 must refer to the third heaven where God the Father dwells. But we must not interpret the Bible according to our natural concepts. Rather, we must interpret the Scriptures with the Scriptures. We must understand the Bible according to and with the Bible. The phrase *My Father's house* is used twice in the Gospel of John. It is used the first time in John 2:16, where it clearly refers to the temple, the dwelling place of God on earth. The temple is a type, a figure, of the body of Jesus (v. 21), which has in resurrection been enlarged into the Body of Christ. We must pay our full attention to this point. In verse 16 "*My Father's house*" is the temple on earth. It does not denote a place in the heavens but God's temple on earth.

Since the temple is the type of the body of Jesus, the body of Jesus is the tabernacle (1:14), the temple, for God's dwelling place on earth. This interpretation of the phrase *My Father's house* is clearly shown in chapter 2. We must apply this definition to John 14:2, where we have the same phrase. We should not take this phrase in 14:2 to have a different meaning from the same phrase found in 2:16, for that would be illogical. The second time that this phrase is used in the same Gospel, it must have the same definition as the first time that it is used. Thus, the Father's house in chapter 14 must also mean God's dwelling place on earth. In chapter 2 the Father's house is eventually the Body of Christ. Now we have the proper interpretation of the phrase *My Father's house*: it is the Body of Christ, that is, the church. We need to adjust ourselves from the wrong teaching that says the Father's house here is heaven.

In the Epistles, the revelation that the Body of Christ is the church and that the church is the house of God is fully developed. First Timothy 3:15 discloses that the church is the house of the living God. Hence, the Father's house must mean the house of the living God on earth and not heaven. First Corinthians 3:16 tells us that the believers, as a whole entity, are the temple of God. First Peter 2:5 says that we, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house. This spiritual house certainly must be the Father's house, the house of God. Furthermore, Hebrews 3:6 says

that we are the house of God, and Ephesians 2:21-22 says that the believers are being built together as God's habitation, not in the heavens but in the spirit. Thus, the whole New Testament supports the interpretation that the Father's house is eventually the Body of Christ as found in the Gospel of John itself.

Do you believe that in this universe God has two buildings—a mansion in heaven and a church on earth? God has just one building. It is illogical to say that He has two. Although you may love heaven, God is not satisfied with it. If you read Isaiah 66, you will find that God desires to have a dwelling place in man; He does not love heaven as much as man to be His habitation. God wants to dwell in man (vv. 1-2). While so many Christians desire to go to heaven, God desires to come down from heaven and dwell with man on the earth. Many Christian teachers have told us that when the Lord said that He was going to prepare a place for us, He meant that He was going to prepare a heavenly mansion. But they all agree that the heaven about which they speak will be the city with foundations prepared by God, as mentioned in Hebrews 11:10, the city which will be the New Jerusalem mentioned in Revelation 21. But the New Jerusalem will not remain in heaven; it will come down out of heaven (v. 2). You may desire to go up to heaven, but God desires to come down out of heaven.

God has only one building in the entire uni-

verse. In Old Testament times God's building was with the children of Israel and was typified by the tabernacle and the temple. Both the tabernacle and the temple were symbols of God's people being His dwelling place on the earth. In the New Testament time the church is built. In a spiritual sense, the church is the continuation of the tabernacle and the temple. Today we are God's temple. Eventually, the building with the Old Testament saints and the New Testament saints will ultimately consummate in the New Jerusalem, which will be the eternal tabernacle, God's habitation among men for eternity. This is God's building. If you read Revelation 21 and 22 carefully, you will discover that the New Jerusalem is not a physical city. It is a living city composed of living persons. We know this because the names of the twelve tribes of Israel and the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb will be there (21:12, 14). We also will be there as the jasper stones that are built into the wall (vv. 11, 18). The New Jerusalem is a living composition of living persons built up together to be God's habitation forever.

Do you believe that now, in the church age, God does not have a habitation among men on the earth? He certainly has! This dwelling place is the church. Where is the church? It is on earth. Wherever we, the living believers, are built together, God has a habitation on earth. This is God's building on the earth today. By being redeemed, washed in the blood, and regenerated by the

divine life, we have been made a living part of this living building, which is the place that the Lord was going in order to prepare for us, as He said in John 14:2. He was not going to prepare a mansion in heaven, but He was going to cut the way and prepare the standing for us to get into God. We must be very clear about this. In verse 6 the Lord Jesus said that He was the way and that the Father was the destination. He was saying that He was the way for us to come to the Father. So the way is a living person, and the destination must also be a living person.

Beginning with John 14:7, the Lord Jesus goes on to tell us how we can get into the Father. In order to get into the Father, we need to get into the Son, because He is in the Father. Once we get into Him, spontaneously we are in the Father. The Lord said that He was going to prepare a place for us so that where He is, there we may be also. Where is He? He is in the Father (vv. 10-11). But when He spoke these words, we were not in the Father. Therefore, He was going to do all that was necessary to bring us to the very place where He is. That place is not a physical place; it is a person, the Father. He was in the Father, and He was going to bring us into Himself. Since He is in the Father, once we get into Him, we also will be in the Father. So, eventually, where He is, there we may be also. Now we are able to understand verse 20, which says, “In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.” This is the

mingling of divinity with humanity. This mingling of divinity with humanity is the mutual abode. God abides in man, and man abides in God. This is the mutual abode, the mutual abiding. This is the central thought of John 14.

In John 14 we see that the Father is the source, origin, essence, and element. The Son is the expression, manifestation, and embodiment of all that the Father is. Without the Son, the Father cannot be seen, but with the Son, the Father is embodied, manifested, expressed, and seen among men (Col. 2:9; John 1:18). Men can see the Son. As long as they see the Son, they see the Father, for the Father is embodied in the Son. But before His death and resurrection, the Son still could not get into man. He could be among men and be seen by them, but He could not enter into them. Therefore, the Son had to go to the cross and pass through the process of death and resurrection. By being processed through death and resurrection, the Son has been transfigured in His form. He has been transfigured from the form of the flesh into the form of the Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b).

This resembles the transfiguration of a large watermelon into juice through the process of cutting and pressing. As a result of this process, the juice can easily enter into anyone. Before the Lord was processed, the Spirit was “not yet” (John 7:39), but after the Lord’s resurrection, the Spirit of life is here.

What is the Spirit? He is the reality, the reali-

zation, of all that God the Father and God the Son are. Whatever the Father and the Son are is realized in the Spirit. This Spirit reaches us, enters into us, and abides in us. In this way the Triune God is dispensed into us (14:16-20). By this dispensing, we all can know that the Son is in the Father, that we are in the Son, and that the Son is in us. He and we, we and He, become a mingled entity. This mingled entity is the mutual abode of divinity and humanity. With this abode there is the mutual abiding. We abide in Him, and He abides in us. This is God's economy for the producing of the Father's house.

THE SON LIVING BY THE FATHER

The Son came and lived by the Father (5:43; 6:57) and did many things in the Father's name (10:25). The Father worked in Him (14:10) to have the Father glorified in the Son (v. 13). When the Son spoke, the Father worked. I mention this to show you that the Father is the source and that the Son is the expression. The Son came in the Father's name, and the Father worked through the Son.

THE BELIEVERS LIVING BY THE SON

Now the believers need to live by the Son. In 6:57 the Lord Jesus said, "He who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me." We need to eat Jesus in order to live by, or because of, Him.

In 14:12 the Lord said that those who believe in Him will do greater works than He did. In verses 13 and 14 He said that if we ask anything in His name, He will do it. To be in the Lord's name means to be one with the Lord, to live by the Lord, and to let the Lord live in us. The Lord came and did things in the Father's name, meaning that He was one with the Father (10:30), that He lived by the Father, and that the Father worked in Him. In the Gospels, the Lord as the expression of the Father did things in the Father's name. In the Acts, the disciples as the expression of the Lord did even greater things in His name. They needed to have the Son living in them (John 14:19) in order that the Son might be expressed as the Spirit.

THE SON LIVING AND SPEAKING IN THE BELIEVER

The Son lives and speaks in the believer. This is a crucial point. The living Christ within us speaks constantly. He will never stop speaking. Due to the fact that we are still in a situation with so many negative things, most of the time this living Christ speaks just one word—no. From morning until evening and from evening until morning, nearly the only thing that He says to us is no. A sister may say, “I’m going to the department store to buy a pair of shoes,” and the Lord says, “No.” A brother may desire to talk to a certain person, and the indwelling Christ says, “No.” Is this not your

experience? I know that the indwelling Christ speaks this word to you much of the time.

THE BELIEVERS LOVING THE SON AND KEEPING HIS COMMANDMENTS

If we love the Lord, we will keep His commandments (vv. 15, 21, 23). In verse 21 the Lord said, "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him." If we keep the Lord's commandments, we will be loved by the Father and the Son, and the Son will manifest Himself to us. Tell me, according to your experience, when the Lord spoke the word no to you and you obeyed Him, what was the result? You found yourself immediately in the presence of the Lord. But if we do not care for that little word no, we will lose His presence. Whenever we listen to His speaking and keep His commandments, His presence is immediately intensified and becomes so sweet, precious, watering, strengthening, enlightening, and nourishing. This is the manifestation of the indwelling Christ.

Does it sound illogical to say that the indwelling Christ will be manifested? You may ask, "Since He indwells me, He is already here. Why do you say that He will manifest Himself?" It is because the indwelling Christ quite often disappears. Although He indwells you, whether or not He

appears or disappears from your sensation depends on whether or not you listen to His words.

We all must learn one thing: that obeying the Lord's commandments depends upon our love toward Him. If you love the Lord, you will say Amen when He says no. If you mean business in saying Amen, you will have His manifestation. The Lord will manifest Himself to whoever loves Him and keeps His commandments. This does not mean that before the Lord manifests Himself to us He is in the third heaven. No, He is within us, but because of our disobedience, His presence disappears, light becomes darkness, strength becomes weakness, and life becomes death.

In the whole Gospel of John there are only two requirements: the first is to believe in Him, and the second is to love Him. To believe in Him is to receive Him, and to love Him is to enjoy Him. We all have believed in Him. This means that we all have received Him. But the problem today is whether we love Him or not. Although you have received the Lord Jesus and He is now within you, you may not love Him. We need to be a lover of the Lord Jesus all day long. This is why the most significant aspect of the miniature of the church life in chapter 12 is the love that poured the ointment upon the Lord. We all must love Him. His presence is always related to our love toward Him. The more we love Him, the more we enjoy His presence. What is His presence? It is simply the

enjoyment of Himself. The more we are in His presence, the more we will enjoy all that He is to us. We only need to love Him. Knowing means nothing; only loving counts. How we all need to love Him!

THE FATHER AND THE SON COMING AS THE SPIRIT

The Father and the Son as the Spirit come to the believer. You may ask, "Are They not here already?" Yes, They are here, but They are not appearing. Their coming is Their appearing. When the Lord says that the Father and Son will come to the believer, this does not mean that They are far away from the lover of Jesus. They are here with the lover of Jesus, but They have not appeared. Their coming is Their appearing.

THE TRIUNE GOD MAKING A MUTUAL ABODE WITH THE BELIEVERS

The Triune God makes a mutual abode with the believer. In verse 23 the Lord Jesus does not say, "The Father and I will abide with him," but He says, "We will come to him and make an abode with him." There is a difference between the two expressions *abide with* and *make an abode with*. The difference is more than mere idiom in language. To say "the Father and I will come to abide with him" is correct as far as language is concerned. But to say "the Father and I will come to him and make an abode with him" is more mean-

ingful. In what way is it more meaningful? It is more meaningful in the way that the Father and the Son will take the lover of Jesus as Their abode and that the believer will be an abode to Them. The Lord seemed to be saying, "We will make an abode with him so that he and We may have an abiding place. He will be Our abode and We will be his abode."

This verse is the basis of 15:4-5—"Abide in Me and I in you." Most Christians do not realize that the basis of 15:4-5 is 14:23, where we have the mutual abode made by the appearing of the Father and the Son as the Spirit to the believer who loves Him. In other words, this abode is prepared by the visitation of the Triune God. When the Triune God grants you a visit, His visitation makes you His abode, and it makes Him your abode. Eventually, you and He, He and you, become a mutual abode. You will abide in Him, and He will abide in you. This is marvelous. He will not only be the One who abides in you, but He will also be your abode. Although it is wonderful to have Him abide in us, I would rather have Him as my abode. We can abide in Him, and He can abide in us. In such a situation there is no place for sin, the world, Satan, the old man, or the flesh. All such things have been chased away.

I ask you to be honest and to consider your past experience. Have you not had this experience in the past? Deep within you there was a sweet appreciation toward the Lord Jesus, and you said,

“Lord, I love You.” Then the Lord said, “Since you love Me, My commandment is that you do not do this and that.” You said, “Amen, Lord Jesus.” Perhaps you said Amen with tears in your eyes. Immediately you had the sensation of His manifestation within you. You were so much in His presence. At that time you had the sensation that He was filling you up with Himself and that you were being drawn into Him. You were His abode, and He was yours. I believe that we all have had this kind of experience, either in a deep way or in a shallow way, either for a long time or just for a few minutes. We need to have this experience all day long.

This mutual abode is just one of the many such abodes. The abode mentioned in verse 23 is one of the many abodes found in verse 2. Do not forget that you are one of so many abodes.

THE BUILDING OF GOD'S HABITATION

The Triune God's making His abode with the believers is for the building of His habitation. Whenever you have had the sweet sensation that you were in the presence of the Lord and that the Lord was indwelling you to the fullest, you also had the feeling that you loved all the believers. According to your realization at the time, you had no problem with any believer, and you were ready to forgive every brother's or sister's fault. What is this? This is the desire to be one with the believers for God's building. Whenever you are in such a

situation with the Lord, you are desirous of being mingled with the saints. You will not want to be alone. The building of God's habitation among men on earth today is altogether dependent upon this experience. Perhaps two brothers have a problem with each other. What can solve it? It is not easy to do. One day they both begin to love the Lord, and they have a deep and sweet appreciation of Him. The Lord gives them a commandment, and they take it. Immediately, they are both in the Lord's presence, and the problem is over. This is the way in which the Lord does the divine work of building among us. It is not a matter of organization, regulation, or outward teaching. It is absolutely a matter of our loving the Lord and experiencing His manifestation and His abiding with us.

I believe that at this point we are clear about the meaning of this chapter. The Lord was going to die, to be resurrected, and to be transfigured into the Spirit as His other form, as another Comforter, so that He might come into us and bring us into God. By the resurrection life we are joined in oneness with God. Only by the Lord's death and resurrection could we be joined with God and be brought into Him. By His death, the Lord has taken away sin, sins, the self, the old man, the flesh, the world, the prince of the world, and death. The Lord has removed all of these distances through His death. By His resurrection He is now the Spirit, and as the Spirit He comes into us and

brings us into union with God. Now He is in the Father, we are in Him, and He is in us. Consequently, we are in the Father also. If we love Him and cooperate with Him, He will manifest Himself to us more and more. The more we love the Lord, the more the Triune God will come into us, make His home with us, and make a mutual abode with us. This mutual abode is the mingling of God with man. The oneness of this mingling is the spiritual abode, the divine abode, the mutual abode. We are an abode to God, and God is an abode to us. This is the real building. This is the proper and correct meaning of the Lord's word found in John 14.

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