

Crystallization-Study Outlines

Jeremiah and Lamentations

Living Stream Ministry
2431 W. La Palma Ave., Anaheim, CA 92801 U.S.A.
P. O. Box 2121, Anaheim, CA 92814 U.S.A.

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CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES JEREMIAH AND LAMENTATIONS

KEY STATEMENTS

Jehovah is the tenderhearted God, and in being tenderhearted,
Jeremiah was absolutely one with God;
thus, God could use the prophet Jeremiah, an overcomer,
to express Him, speak for Him, and represent Him, even in his weeping.

Jeremiah, a book full of speaking concerning Israel's sin
and God's wrath, chastisement, and punishment,
reveals that God's intention in His economy is to be the fountain,
the source, of living waters to dispense Himself into His chosen people
for their satisfaction and enjoyment with the goal of producing
the church, God's counterpart, as God's increase, God's enlargement,
to be God's fullness for His expression.

God is eternal and immutable, not subject to any change
due to the environment and circumstances, and
God's throne is the throne of His eternal and unchanging government;
in his speaking about God's eternal being and throne,
Jeremiah came out of his human feelings,
touched God's person and God's throne, and entered into God's divinity.

God as our Potter has sovereignly created us to be His vessels,
His containers, to contain Himself according to His predestination;
God's purpose in creating man was to make man His vessel,
His earthenware container, to contain and be filled
with Christ as life for the building up of the Body of Christ
as God's great corporate vessel for His expression.

As the Shepherd according to God's heart, Christ,
the great Shepherd of the sheep, is continuing His shepherding
by incorporating the apostolic ministry
with His heavenly ministry to shepherd God's flock;
in the Lord's recovery today, we need to realize that the shepherding
that builds up the Body of Christ is a mutual shepherding,
and we need to shepherd one another according to God,
taking all-inclusive, tender care of the flock.

In order to be one with God, we need Christ
as the Shoot of David to be our redemption and justification;
this ushers the Triune God into us to be our life,
our inner life law, our capacity, and our everything
to dispense Himself into our being to carry out His economy;
this is the new covenant, in which we can know God, live God, and
become God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead so that
we may become His corporate expression as the New Jerusalem.

Message One

**Jeremiah, the Tenderhearted Prophet
of the Tenderhearted God**

Scripture Reading: Jer. 1:1, 4-8, 10, 18-19; 4:19; 9:1, 10; 13:17

- I. Jeremiah was born a priest, but he was called by God to be a prophet not only to the nation of Israel but also to all the nations; hence, he was a priest-prophet—Jer. 1:1, 4-8.**
- II. Jehovah appointed Jeremiah to be over the nations and over the kingdoms to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to tear down, and to build up and to plant—v. 10:**
 - A. The plucking up, the breaking down, and the destroying are Jehovah's tearing down, whereas the building up and the planting are Jehovah's exalting.
 - B. This corresponds to the two meanings of the name Jeremiah—"Jehovah exalts" and "Jehovah tears down."
- III. Jehovah made Jeremiah into a fortified city, into an iron pillar, and into bronze walls against the whole land, the kings of Judah, its princes, its priests, and the people of the land; they would fight against him but would not prevail against him—vv. 18-19:**
 - A. On earth there is always a battle raging between God and those who oppose Him and fight against Him—Eph. 6:12.
 - B. God fights not by Himself directly but through His servants who have been sent by Him—1 Tim. 1:18; 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7.
 - C. God sent His army—a young man named Jeremiah—to fight those who opposed Him:
 - 1. Jeremiah was equipped by God to such an extent that he became a fortified city and an iron pillar and bronze walls—Jer. 1:18.
 - 2. Those who fought against Jeremiah—Jehovah's one-person army—were actually fighting against Jehovah—v. 19a.
 - 3. No one would defeat him because Jehovah was with him—v. 19b.
- IV. Jeremiah was an overcomer speaking for God—vv. 9-10; 2:1-2:**
 - A. In the age of typology, the overcomers were the prophets; all the genuine prophets were overcomers.
 - B. When the majority of God's people were desolate, there was the need for some to rise up to be God's overcomers to maintain the testimony established by God.

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- C. The prophets took care of God's oracle first, and based upon the oracle, they exercised, to some extent, God's authority, as seen with David the king and Nathan the prophet—2 Sam. 7:1-17; 12:1-15.
- D. The overcomers in Revelation 2 and 3 are the fulfillment of the typology of the prophets.
- E. As an overcomer, Jeremiah was an anti-testimony:
 - 1. The children of Israel had become desolate, and Jeremiah was called by God to be an anti-testimony—Jer. 27:1-15.
 - 2. God's people did not realize that they were deep in sin before God and that God had already ordained that Babylon would be used to punish them, causing them to be captured to Babylon—15:12-14.
 - 3. Because Israel had fallen into such a befuddled situation, Jeremiah, an overcomer, was an anti-testimony, speaking the word given to him by Jehovah and being contrary to the false prophets—27:16—28:17.
- V. The book of Jeremiah has as its particular characteristic and standing God's tenderheartedness plus God's righteousness—9:10-11; 23:5-6; 33:16:**
 - A. Our God is a tenderhearted God, full of compassion and sympathy, yet He is absolutely righteous—9:10-11; 23:6.
 - B. According to the book of Jeremiah, God's love is a composition of His tender care, compassion, and sympathy; even while He chastises His elect people Israel, He is compassionate toward them—Lam. 3:22-23.
 - C. The words in Jeremiah 9:10-11 and 17-19 express Jehovah's feeling concerning Israel's suffering of His correction:
 - 1. Although Jehovah was punishing Israel, He was still sympathetic toward them.
 - 2. The words *us* and *our* in verse 18 indicate that Jehovah joined Himself to the suffering people and was one with them in their suffering.
 - 3. Jehovah Himself was weeping in sympathy with His people.
- VI. The book of Jeremiah is also an autobiography in which Jeremiah tells us of his situation, his person, and his feeling, revealing his tender heart:**

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- A. God is tender, loving, compassionate, and righteous, and Jeremiah, a timid young man, was raised up by God to be His mouthpiece to speak for Him and express Him—3:6-11; 4:3-31; 32:26-27; 33:1-2.
 - B. Jehovah is the tenderhearted God, and in being tenderhearted, Jeremiah was absolutely one with God; thus, God could use the prophet Jeremiah to express Him, speak for Him, and represent Him—2:1—3:5; 4:19; 9:1, 10.
 - C. Jehovah came in to correct His hypocritical worshippers, and Jeremiah reacted to Jehovah's correction; the prophet's reaction was very tender, sympathetic, and compassionate—8:18-19, 21-22; 9:1-2; 10:19-25.
 - D. Jeremiah wept on God's behalf; his weeping expressed God's weeping—4:19; 9:1; 13:17:
 - 1. In his weeping Jeremiah represented God—9:10.
 - 2. We may say that God wept within Jeremiah's weeping, for in his weeping Jeremiah was one with God—13:17.
 - E. Because Jeremiah often wept, even wailed, he is called the weeping prophet—Lam. 1:16; 2:11; 3:48:
 - 1. Although God was grieved and hurt because of His people, He had to find someone on earth who had these feelings.
 - 2. When His Spirit came upon that particular one, Jeremiah, and put His feelings in Jeremiah's spirit, the prophet could then express the sorrowful feeling of God.
 - 3. As we read the book of Jeremiah, we can sense that, although he wept, his emotion had been disciplined—4:19; 9:1, 10; 13:17.
 - 4. Jeremiah's sorrowful and weeping emotion had been disciplined and restricted so that God could come to him and use him to express the sorrowful feelings that were in His heart.
- VII. In order that God may be fully expressed through us, we need to have spiritual emotions, be tenderhearted with one another, and be able to serve God with tears—James 5:11; Exo. 34:6; Psalms 103:8:**
- A. A spiritual person is full of emotions; the more spiritual we are, the richer our emotions are—1 Cor. 4:21; 2 Cor. 6:11; 7:3; 10:1; 12:15:
 - 1. We need the Lord to work on us until our feelings are fine and tender.

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2. Every time God works on us, chastises us, and deals with us, our feelings become finer and more sensitive; this is the deepest lesson in the breaking of the outer man—4:16.
- B. In the church life we need to be tenderhearted with one another—Eph. 4:32:
 1. We should not judge and condemn our fellow believers but be kind to them, tenderhearted, forgiving them even as God in Christ also forgave us—Luke 6:37; Eph. 4:32.
 2. The more we experience Christ as our life supply, the more our hearts become tender, and when we are tenderhearted, we will forgive others.
- C. The apostle Paul served the Lord with tears and admonished the saints with tears—Acts 20:19, 31; Phil. 3:18:
 1. If we do not know how to weep or shed tears, we are not very spiritual.
 2. When we live in the spirit, using the soul as an organ, we will be able to serve the Lord and admonish the saints with tears—Acts 20:19, 31.
- D. “Out of much affliction and anguish of heart” Paul wrote to the Corinthians “through many tears”—2 Cor. 2:4:
 1. Paul’s expression was tender and filled with the intimate concern of the ministering life—11:28; 12:15.
 2. In 2 Corinthians 7 Paul conveyed a deep, tender, and intimate concern for the Corinthians; his word was very touching—vv. 2-3.
 3. Because Paul’s expression was tender and filled with intimate concern, it had power and impact, and it was able to touch the believers deeply.
- E. When, in the church life, we pass through the valley of Baca (weeping), God makes this valley a spring; this spring is the Spirit—Psa. 84:6; John 4:14; 7:38-39:
 1. The more we weep on the highways to Zion (Psa. 84:5), the more we receive the Spirit; while we are weeping, we are being filled with the Spirit, and the Spirit becomes our spring.
 2. The tears we shed are our own, but these tears issue in a spring, which becomes the early rain, the Spirit as the blessing—Zech. 10:1; Gal. 3:14; Eph. 1:3.

Message Two

The Kernel of the Book of Jeremiah

Scripture Reading: Jer. 2:13; 17:9; 13:23; 23:5-6; 33:16; 31:33-34

- I. The kernel of the book of Jeremiah includes three matters—what God wants from us, what we are in our fallen condition, and what Christ is to us; in order to see these three things, we need to “crack” the shell of Jeremiah and concentrate on the kernel inside, which is the complete teaching of the entire Bible.**
- II. What God wants from us is mentioned mainly in Jeremiah 2:13, which reveals that our God is the fountain of living waters:**
 - A. God’s intention in His economy is to be the fountain, the source, of living waters to satisfy us for our enjoyment; He wants us to take Him as the source, the fountain, of our being; the only way to take God as the fountain of living waters is to drink of Him day by day—v. 13; 1 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 11:36:
 1. This requires us to call on the Lord continually (with thanking, rejoicing, praying, and praising) and draw water with rejoicing from Him as the fountain of living waters—Isa. 12:3-4; John 4:10, 14; Rom. 10:12; 1 Thes. 5:16-18; 4:3a.
 2. Isaiah 12:3 shows that the way to receive God as our salvation is to draw water from the springs of salvation, that is, to drink Him—Psa. 36:8; John 4:14; 7:37; 1 Cor. 12:13; Rev. 22:17; 1 Chron. 16:8; Psa. 105:1; 116:1-4, 12-13, 17:
 - a. To be our salvation, the Triune God was processed to become the life-giving Spirit as the living water, the water of life; God’s practical salvation is the processed Triune God Himself as the living water—1 Cor. 15:45; John 7:37-39; Rev. 7:17; 21:6; 22:1, 17.
 - b. The fountain is the source, the spring is the gushing up, the issue, of the source, and the river is the flow; the term *the springs of salvation* implies that salvation is the source, that is, the fountain; God as our salvation is the fountain (Isa. 12:2), Christ is the springs of salvation for our enjoyment and experience (John 4:14), and the Spirit is the flow of this salvation within us (7:38-39).
 - c. In order to enjoy salvation, we need to realize that the Lord Himself is our salvation, strength, and song and that by calling on His name we may draw water with rejoicing out of the springs of salvation—Isa. 12:2-3.

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- d. The way to draw water out of the springs of the divine salvation includes repenting, calling, singing, thanking, praising, and making God's saving deeds known—vv. 4-6.
- B. When the living water enters into us, it permeates us, passes through our entire being, and is assimilated by us, causing us to be nourished, transformed, conformed, and glorified—v. 3; John 4:10, 14; Rom. 12:2; 8:29-30.
- C. "The water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into eternal life"—John 4:14b:
 - 1. The Triune God flows in the Divine Trinity in three stages: the Father is the fountain, the Son is the springs, and the Spirit is the river.
 - 2. The flowing of the Triune God is "into eternal life":
 - a. The New Jerusalem is the totality of the eternal life, and the word *into* means "to become"; thus, *into eternal life* means to become the totality of the eternal life, the New Jerusalem.
 - b. By drinking the living water, we become the New Jerusalem, the totality of the eternal life, the destination of the flowing Triune God.
- D. God's goal in being the fountain of living waters is to produce the church as His increase to be His fullness for His expression; this is the heart's desire, the good pleasure, of God in His economy—Jer. 2:13; Lam. 3:22-24; 1 Cor. 1:9; Eph. 1:5, 9, 22-23.
- E. Nothing apart from God as the fountain of living waters can quench our thirst and satisfy us; nothing apart from God dispensed into our being can make us His increase for His expression—Rev. 22:1, 17.
- F. We need to realize that whenever God's people are short of the Spirit of life as the water of life, they will have problems; when God's people have an abundance of the saving Spirit as the living water, their problems among themselves and with God are solved—Exo. 17:1-7; Num. 20:2-13.

III. Another aspect of the kernel of the book of Jeremiah is the exposure of what we are in our fallen condition:

- A. "The heart is deceitful above all things, / And it is incurable; / Who can know it?"—17:9:

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1. Even this word regarding the deceitful and incurable heart of man is related to God's economy with His dispensing; although man's heart is corrupt and deceitful and its condition is incurable, even such a heart can be a tablet upon which God writes His law of life—31:33; cf. 2 Cor. 3:3.
 2. This reveals that God has a way to impart Himself into man; once He has come into man, God will spread from man's spirit into his heart; this is God's way, according to His economy, to deal with the heart of fallen man.
- B. "Can the Cushite change his skin, / Or the leopard his spots? / Then you also may be able to do good, / Who are accustomed to do evil"—Jer. 13:23:
1. Having forsaken God as the source, the fountain of living waters (2:13), Israel became evil, having an unchangeable and sinful nature, like the Cushite's skin and the leopard's spots, which cannot be changed; this exposes the true condition of fallen man.
 2. As fallen human beings, in ourselves and by ourselves and with ourselves we are incurable and unchangeable—Rom. 7:18; Matt. 12:34-35; 15:7-11, 18-20; 1 Chron. 28:9; cf. Ezek. 36:26-27; Jer. 32:39-40.
- C. Everyone who truly sees a vision of the Lord in His glory is enlightened in his conscience regarding his uncleanness; how much we realize concerning ourselves depends on how much we see the Lord—Isa. 6:5; John 12:41; Job 42:5-6; cf. Luke 5:8:
1. The more we see the Lord and are exposed, the more we are cleansed; our fellowship with the Lord needs to be maintained by the constant cleansing of the Lord's blood—1 John 1:7, 9.
 2. In the New Testament sense, seeing God equals gaining God in our personal experience; to gain God is to receive God in His element, in His life, and in His nature that we may become God in life and nature but not in the Godhead.
 3. Seeing God transforms us (2 Cor. 3:16, 18; Matt. 5:8), because in seeing God we receive His element into us, and our old element is discharged; to see God is to be transformed into the glorious image of Christ, the God-man, that we may express God in His life and represent Him in His authority.
 4. The very God whom we look at today is the consummated Spirit, and we can look at Him in our spirit; in our morning

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watch, even if only for fifteen or twenty minutes, we have time to be with the Lord, time to remain in the Spirit.

5. We can pray-read His Word, talk to Him, or pray to Him with short prayers; then we will have the sensation that we are receiving something of God's element, that we are absorbing the riches of God into our being; in this way we are under the divine transformation day by day; this is altogether by our looking at the very consummated God as the Spirit in our spirit.
6. The more we see God, know God, and love God, the more we abhor ourselves and the more we deny ourselves—Job 42:6; Matt. 16:24; Luke 9:23; 14:26.

IV. The third matter in the kernel of the book of Jeremiah is what Christ is to us:

- A. "Indeed, days are coming, / Declares Jehovah, / When I will raise up to David a righteous Shoot... / And this is His name by which He will be called: / Jehovah our righteousness"—23:5-6; cf. 33:16:
 1. *Jehovah our righteousness* refers to Christ in His divinity, and *a righteous Shoot*, to Christ in His humanity.
 2. The name here, Jehovah our righteousness, indicates that Christ, as a descendant of David, is not merely a man but is also the very Jehovah who created the heavens and the earth, selected Abraham, established the race of Israel, and was the Lord of David, the One whom he called Lord (Matt. 22:42-45; cf. Rev. 5:5; 22:16); Christ came as a Shoot of David (the son of David) who is Jehovah Himself (the Lord of David) to be the righteousness of God's people (1 Cor. 1:30):
 - a. With His redemption as the basis, we can believe into Christ to receive God's forgiveness (Acts 10:43), and God can justify us (Rom. 3:24, 26) and clothe us with Christ as the robe of righteousness (Isa. 61:10).
 - b. This opens the way for Christ as the embodiment of the Triune God (Col. 2:9) to enter into us as our life (3:4a), our inner law of life (Jer. 31:33), and our everything in order to dispense Himself into our entire being for the accomplishing of God's eternal economy.
- B. Christ Himself is the new covenant, the new testament, of life given to us by God—Isa. 42:6; 49:8; Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:8-12:

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1. In Greek the same word is used for both *covenant* and *testament*:
 - a. A covenant and a testament are the same, but when the maker of the covenant is living, it is a covenant, and when he has died, it is a testament; a testament in today's terms is a will.
 - b. A covenant is an agreement containing some promises to accomplish certain things for the covenanted people, while a testament is a will containing certain accomplished things that are bequeathed to the inheritor—9:16-17; cf. Deut. 11:29; 28:1, 15; Jer. 31:31-32.
2. The old covenant of the law is a portrait of God, but the new covenant of grace is the person of God—John 1:16-17:
 - a. When we believe into Christ, the person of this portrait comes into us, and He fulfills in us the righteous requirements of the law as we walk according to the spirit and set our mind on the spirit—Ezek. 36:26-27; Rom. 8:2, 4, 6, 10.
 - b. Through His death Christ fulfilled the demands of God's righteousness according to His law and enacted the new covenant (6:23; 3:21; 10:3-4; Luke 22:20; Heb. 9:16-17), and in His resurrection He became the new covenant with all its bequests (1 Cor. 15:45b; Isa. 42:6; Phil. 1:19).
 - c. In His ascension Christ opened the scroll of the new covenant concerning God's economy, and in His heavenly ministry as the Mediator, the Executor, He is carrying out its contents—Rev. 5:1-5; Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24.
 - d. As the Lion of the tribe of Judah, Christ overcame and defeated Satan, as the redeeming Lamb, Christ took away the sin and sins of fallen man, and as the seven Spirits, Christ infuses us with Himself as the contents of the scroll of the new covenant—Rev. 5:5-6; John 1:29.
 - e. God's salvation, God's blessings, and all of God's riches have been covenanted to us, and this covenant is Christ; the reality of all the hundreds of bequests in the New Testament is Christ; God has willed Himself in Christ as the Spirit to us—Gen. 22:18a; Gal. 3:14; 1 Cor. 1:30; 15:45b; Eph. 1:3; 3:8; John 20:22.
3. Our spirit is the "bank account" of all the bequests of the new covenant; by the law of the Spirit of life, all these bequests

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are dispensed into us and made real to us—Rom. 8:2, 10, 6, 11, 16; Heb. 8:10; John 16:13.

4. The center, the content, and the reality of the new covenant is the inner law of life (Rom. 8:2); in its essence this law refers to the divine life, and the divine life is the Triune God, who is embodied in the all-inclusive Christ and realized as the life-giving Spirit (Col. 2:9; 1 Cor. 15:45); He is the One who has been processed and consummated to be everything to His chosen people:
 - a. In the new covenant God puts Himself into His chosen people as their life, and this life is a law, a spontaneous power and an automatic principle—Heb. 8:10; Rom. 8:2.
 - b. According to its life, the law of the new covenant is the processed Triune God, and according to its function, it is the almighty divine capacity; this capacity can do everything in us for the carrying out of God's economy.
 - c. In essence this law is God in Christ as the Spirit, and in function it has the capacity to deify us (vv. 2, 10, 6, 11, 28-29); furthermore, the capacity of the inner law of life constitutes us the members of the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 5:30) with all kinds of functions (Rom. 12:3-8; Eph. 4:11, 16).
 - d. The writing of the law of life on our heart corresponds to the New Testament teaching concerning the spreading of the divine life from the center of our being, which is our spirit, to the circumference, which is our heart (Heb. 8:10; Rom. 8:9; Eph. 3:17); God writes His law on our heart by moving from our spirit into our heart to inscribe what He is into our being (2 Cor. 3:3).
 - e. Through the spontaneous, automatic function of the divine life within us, we have the capacity to know God, to live God, and even to become God in His life and nature but not in His Godhead so that we may become His increase, His enlargement, to be His fullness for His eternal expression—Eph. 3:16-21.

Message Three

**The Two Evils of God's People
and God's Faithfulness in Fulfilling His Economy**

Scripture Reading: Jer. 2:13; Psa. 36:8-9;
John 4:10, 14; 7:37-39; 1 Cor. 10:4; 12:13

- I. Jeremiah, a book full of speaking concerning Israel's sin and God's wrath, chastisement, and punishment, reveals that God's intention in His economy is to be the fountain, the source, of living waters to dispense Himself into His chosen people for their satisfaction and enjoyment with the goal of producing the church, God's counterpart, as God's increase, God's enlargement, to be God's fullness for His expression; the kernel of the divine revelation is that God created us and redeemed us for the purpose of working Himself into us to be our life and our everything—2:13; Psa. 36:8-9; John 3:29-30; 4:10, 14; 7:37-39; Rev. 7:17; Eph. 3:16-19:**
 - A. Christ as the living, spiritual rock was smitten by the authority of God's law so that the water of life in resurrection could flow out of Him and into His redeemed people for them to drink—Exo. 17:6; 1 Cor. 10:4.
 - B. Our drinking of the one Spirit in resurrection makes us members of the Body, builds us up as the Body, and prepares us to be the bride of Christ—12:13; Rev. 22:17.
- II. "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"—Jer. 2:13:**
 - A. Israel should have drunk of God as the fountain of living waters that they might become His increase as His expression, but instead they committed two evils:
 - 1. They forsook God as their fountain, their source, and they turned to a source other than God; these two evils govern the entire book of Jeremiah.
 - 2. The hewing out of cisterns portrays Israel's toil in their human labor to make something (idols) to replace God.
 - 3. That the cisterns were broken and could hold no water indicates that apart from God Himself dispensed into us as living water, nothing can quench our thirst and make us God's increase for His expression—John 4:13-14.

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- B. In the eyes of God, the wicked one, the evildoer, is the one who does not come to drink of Him (Isa. 55:7); the evil condition of the wicked is that they do not come to the Lord to eat, drink, and enjoy the Lord; they do many things, but they do not come to contact the Lord, to take Him, to receive Him, to taste Him, and to enjoy Him; in the sight of God, nothing is more evil than this (57:20-21; cf. 55:1-2).
- C. God intended to dispense Himself into man as man's satisfaction so that He might be enlarged, but man became unfaithful and unchaste and forsook God for idols:
 - 1. An idol in our heart (Ezek. 14:3) is anything within us that we love and treasure more than the Lord and that replaces the Lord in our life (1 John 5:21):
 - a. Those who set up idols in their hearts are estranged from the Lord through their idols (Ezek. 14:5).
 - b. All who have idols within them yet seek God in an outward way cannot find Him (v. 3; cf. Jer. 29:13).
 - 2. By worshipping idols, Israel made themselves vain, nothing; they had so many idols that the number of them was according to the number of their cities (2:5, 28; 11:13); Israel exchanged the reality of their God, their glory, for the vanity of idols (2:11; Psa. 106:20; Rom. 1:23).
 - 3. Apostasy is a matter of leaving the way of God and taking another way to follow things other than God; it is to forsake God and turn to idols—Jer. 2:19.
 - 4. When Israel was captured by the Babylonians, God's people still would not give up their idols and had to carry them from the good land to Babylon; anything that replaces God or occupies the position of God is an idol that becomes a burden to the worshipper—Isa. 46:1.
 - 5. The dumb, voiceless idols (1 Cor. 12:2; Hab. 2:18-20) make their worshippers dumb and voiceless, but the living God causes His worshippers to speak in His Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3b; Psa. 115:4-8; 2 Cor. 4:13; Psa. 116:12-13):
 - a. No worshippers of God should be silent; all should use their voices to speak forth "Jesus is Lord!" in the Spirit of God.
 - b. This—to speak "Jesus is Lord"—is the main function of all the spiritual gifts; to call on the Lord's name with a proper

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- spirit is the way to participate in, to enjoy, and to experience the Holy Spirit—1 Cor. 12:3b; cf. Rom. 14:17.
- c. “The dead do not praise Jehovah, / Nor do any that go down into silence. / But we will bless Jehovah / From now and to eternity. / Hallelujah”—Psa. 115:17-18.
6. Whatever we possess and even whatever we are can become an idol; Israel was evil and unfaithful to God in forsaking God for idols; in the matter of such unfaithfulness to God, we are the same as Israel.

III. We need to see God’s faithfulness in fulfilling His economy—cf. 37:3:

- A. Although we are unfaithful, God is faithful (Lam. 3:23b); the chorus of a well-known hymn (*Hymns*, #19) says, “Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness! / Morning by morning new mercies I see. / All I have needed Thy hand hath provided; / Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!”:
1. We may understand what the Bible says and what this hymn says about God’s faithfulness either in a natural way or in a spiritual way.
 2. If we understand God’s faithfulness in a natural way, we may think that He is faithful primarily in the matter of material provisions or physical blessings, but God’s faithfulness is not according to our natural understanding; 1 Corinthians 1:9 says that God is faithful in calling us into the fellowship of His Son, but to our natural understanding He may not seem to be faithful in caring for our welfare.
 3. “Consider the sufferings of the apostle Paul. He was called, commissioned, burdened, and sent by God, but wherever he went, he had troubles. For example, as soon as he began to preach Christ, he began to suffer persecution. He even had to escape from Damascus by being lowered down the wall in a basket. Does this mean that God was not faithful to Paul? No, it means that God’s faithfulness is not according to our natural understanding” (*Life-study of Jeremiah*, p. 28)—Acts 9:15-16, 23-25; 2 Cor. 11:30-33; Col. 1:24; 2 Cor. 1:5; Phil. 3:10; Rev. 1:9; 2 Tim. 2:10; 3:12.
 4. When we believed into the Lord Jesus, we might have expected to have outward peace and blessing, but instead, we

Message Three (continuation)

might have had many troubles, and we might have lost our security, our health, or our possessions; when some Christians experience such things, they may question God's faithfulness and ask why He did not prevent hardships from happening to them—Acts 14:22; 1 Thes. 3:2-5.

5. We need to realize that in allowing us to have troubles, God is faithful in His purpose to turn us from idols and bring us back to Himself; our peace, safety, health, and possessions may become idols to us, but God is faithful to take these things away so that we may drink of Him as the fountain of living waters.
 6. For example, if our house or our possessions become idols to us, we drink of them and not of God; God's faithfulness is a matter of dealing with these idols and causing us to drink of Him—Psa. 36:8.
 7. God is faithful in leading us into His economy (1 Cor. 1:9; 1 Thes. 5:23-24), and His economy is for us to drink Christ, to eat Christ, to enjoy Christ, to absorb Christ, and to assimilate Christ so that God may have His increase with us to fulfill His economy.
 8. We need to see that we are not better than Israel; anything can become an idol to us, but God is faithful in fulfilling His economy; in His faithfulness He deals with our idols so that we may drink of Him; we all need to drink of God as the fountain of living waters, receiving Christ into us and assimilating Him so that He may increase for the fulfillment of God's economy to have His expression through us as His counterpart—John 3:29-30.
- B. If we realize that we have been unfaithful to God, we may repent and weep, but then we should begin to drink of the living waters, praising God, giving thanks to Him for everything, and enjoying Him (1 Thes. 5:16-18); this is what God wants; God is not interested in anything other than our enjoyment of Christ:
1. We may think that because of our failure, we are hopeless; surely, the people of Israel must have felt that God had given them up and that they were finished, but God's compassions do not fail; rather, they are new every morning—Lam. 3:22-23.

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES

Message Three (continuation)

2. Jeremiah could even declare that Jehovah was his portion and that he hoped in Him, for He is good to those who wait on Him; there is hope in God because with God there is no disappointment—vv. 24-25; cf. Psa. 16:5; 73:25-26.
3. Our failure opens the way for Christ to come in to be our righteousness and our redemption and also to dispense Himself into us to be our life and life law with its capacity to know God and to live God; in other words, our failure simply prepares and opens the way for Christ to come in so that He may be exalted in and through us to be our centrality and universality—Jer. 23:5-6; 31:33-34; Col. 1:17b, 18b.
4. If we fail God today, we should not be disappointed; God has a way to deal with us and cause us to mature and become the New Jerusalem, either as His overcoming bride in the next age or as His wife for eternity—Heb. 6:1a.
5. There is no need for us to worry about our situation; God is patient, sympathetic, and compassionate, and He will take the time to make us mature:
 - a. Every believer, whether presently weak or strong, will be a constituent of the New Jerusalem, and everyone there will be mature—Rev. 19:7-9; 21:2.
 - b. Therefore, we should not be dismayed or discouraged; rather, we should be encouraged and comforted with the God of all comfort and encouragement—2 Cor. 1:3-4; Rom. 15:5.
 - c. We should be the true worshippers of God, who is the fountain of living waters, by drinking Him so that He can be the reality within us, which eventually becomes our genuineness and sincerity in which we worship God with the worship that He seeks—John 4:23-24.

Message Four

God's Words—the Divine Supply as Food

Scripture Reading: Jer. 15:16; Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4;
John 5:39-40; 6:50-51, 57, 63; Col. 3:16

I. "Your words were found and I ate them"—Jer. 15:16a:

- A. In the Bible we first have God, and then we have God's speaking, the word that proceeds out of His mouth—Gen. 1:1, 3; Matt. 4:4.
- B. All Scripture is God-breathed; hence, the words in the Scriptures are the words that proceed out through the mouth of God—2 Tim. 3:16.
- C. The Bible as the Word of God is the embodiment of God, Christ, the Spirit, and life—John 1:1, 4; 6:63; 14:6, 17, 20; 15:7; 1 John 1:1; Rom. 8:2.
- D. The Bible as the Word of God is composed of three elements—Christ, the death of Christ, and the resurrection of Christ—Phil. 1:20-21; 2:16; 3:10-11; 4:13.
- E. The words spoken by the Lord Jesus are spirit and life—John 6:63:
 - 1. The Lord's spoken words are the embodiment of the Spirit of life—Rom. 8:2.
 - 2. Christ is now the life-giving Spirit in resurrection, and the Spirit is embodied in His words—1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17; John 1:1, 4; 6:63.
 - 3. When we receive His words by exercising our spirit, we get the Spirit, who is life—5:39-40.
- F. God's word is the divine supply as food to nourish us—Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4:
 - 1. The divine concept concerning God's word is that it is food by which we are nourished—1 Cor. 3:1-2a; Heb. 5:12-14.
 - 2. The word of God is God Himself as our food—John 1:1, 4, 14; 6:33, 51, 57.
 - 3. The Lord Jesus took the word of God in the Scriptures as His bread and lived by it—Matt. 4:4.
 - 4. Every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God is spiritual food to nourish us; this is the food by which we must live—John 6:51, 57.
 - 5. Through the word as our food, God dispenses His riches into our inner being so that we may be constituted with His element.
- G. According to the entire revelation in the Holy Bible, God's words are good for us to eat, and we need to eat them—Psa. 119:103; Matt. 4:4; Heb. 5:12-14; 1 Pet. 2:2-3:
 - 1. God desires that man eat, digest, and assimilate Him—John 6:50-51, 57:

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES

Message Four (continuation)

- a. To eat is to contact things outside of us and to receive them into us, with the result that they eventually become our constitution—Gen. 2:16-17.
- b. To eat is to take food into us that it may be assimilated organically into our body—John 6:48, 50.
- c. God's words as food eaten, digested, and assimilated by us actually become us; this is the word becoming our constitution—Matt. 4:4; Col. 3:16.
2. Whenever we read the Bible, we must come to the Lord for life and eat the bread of life, which is Christ Himself—John 5:39-40; 6:48, 50-51, 57.
3. To eat the Lord as the word is to take Him in as our life supply; He is the bread of life for us to eat—vv. 48, 51.
4. The way to eat the Lord is to pray the Word; to pray-read the Word of God is to exercise our spirit to eat the word—Eph. 6:17-18.
5. The more we eat God's words, the more we will be constituted and saturated with Christ—Gal. 4:19; Eph. 3:17; Col. 3:4, 10-11.
6. As we eat the Lord Jesus, we need to have proper spiritual digestion—Ezek. 2:8—3:3; Jer. 15:16; Rev. 10:9-10:
 - a. If we have good digestion, there will be a thoroughfare for the food to get into every part of our inward being—Eph. 3:16-17a.
 - b. Indigestion means that there is no way for Christ as the spiritual food to get into our inward parts—Heb. 3:12-13, 15; 4:2.
 - c. We need to keep our whole being with all our inward parts open to the Lord so that the spiritual food will have a thoroughfare within us; if we do this, we will have proper digestion and assimilation, we will absorb Christ as spiritual nourishment, and Christ will become our constituent—Col. 3:4, 10-11.
7. Because we are what we eat, if we eat God as our food, we will be one with God and even become God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead—John 1:1, 14; 6:32-33, 48, 51, 57.

II. "Your word became to me / The gladness and joy of my heart"—Jer. 15:16b:

- A. Although Jeremiah suffered more than all the other prophets, he had gladness and joy in his heart whenever he found God's words and ate them—v. 16.

Message Four (continuation)

- B. The word *became* in verse 16 indicates that gladness and joy are an issue of God's words being eaten, digested, assimilated, and constituted into our inner being, causing the Lord's joy to become our joy—John 15:7, 10-11:
 - 1. When we eat God's words, His word becomes our heart's gladness and joy—Jer. 15:16.
 - 2. After God's words are taken into us and are assimilated into our inward parts, these words become joy within and gladness without.
- C. God is a God of joy, and He wants us to enjoy Him—Neh. 8:10; Psa. 36:8:
 - 1. A sweet thought revealed in the Word of God is that in Christ God has given Himself to us as grace to be our enjoyment—John 1:14, 16-17; 2 Cor. 13:14.
 - 2. In the first reference in the Bible to God's relationship with man, God presented Himself to man as food; this shows that God's desire is to give Himself to us to be our enjoyment—Gen. 2:7, 9; Psa. 16:11; Jer. 15:16.
- D. Romans 14:17 speaks of "joy in the Holy Spirit":
 - 1. This verse indicates that the Spirit is related to joy; joy is an attribute of the Spirit—cf. 1 Thes. 1:6.
 - 2. Joy is also a fruit of the Spirit; the indwelling Spirit gives joy to the believers—Gal. 5:22.
 - 3. When we are in the Spirit, we are joyful, so joyful that we may sing and shout praises to the Lord—cf. Acts 16:25.
 - 4. We may "exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory"—1 Pet. 1:8:
 - a. The joy full of glory is joy immersed in the Lord as glory; thus, it is full of the expression of God—Acts 7:2, 55; 1 Pet. 5:10; 2 Pet. 1:3.
 - b. We exult with a joy that is immersed in glory—1 Pet. 1:8.

III. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly"—Col. 3:16:

- A. The word of Christ is the word spoken by Christ—John 6:63:
 - 1. In His New Testament economy God speaks in the Son—Heb. 1:1-2.
 - 2. The Son speaks not only by Himself in the Gospels but also through His members, the apostles and prophets, in Acts, in the Epistles, and in Revelation; all these speakings can be considered His word.

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3. The word of Christ includes the entire New Testament, and we need to be filled with this word—Col. 3:16.
- B. The word of Christ is actually the person of Christ—v. 16; John 15:4, 7:
 1. Paul almost personifies the word of Christ; he tells us to let this word dwell in us, as if it were a living person—Col. 3:16; cf. Eph. 3:17.
 2. First, we have Christ as our life; then we have His living word personified as His person dwelling in us—Col. 3:4, 16.
 3. Since the word of Christ can dwell in us, it must be a living person; therefore, to let the word of Christ dwell in us indicates that we allow a living person—Christ Himself—to dwell in us—v. 16; 1:27.
- C. We need to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly and have the first place in our being—3:16:
 1. The word *let* is important; the word of Christ is already present, but we need to allow it to operate within us.
 2. For the word of Christ to dwell in us richly means that it inhabits us, indwells us, in a rich way—v. 16.
 3. The Greek word rendered “dwell” literally means “to be in a house,” “to indwell,” “to inhabit”:
 - a. This indicates that we should allow the word of Christ to dwell in us, to inhabit us, to make home in us—v. 16.
 - b. The word of the Lord must have adequate room within us so that it may operate and minister the riches of Christ into us—Eph. 3:8.
 4. The word of Christ should be given the freedom to operate within us, inhabit us, and make home in us—Col. 3:16.
- D. We need to let the word of Christ dwell in us so that we may experience the functions of the word of God operating within us, ministering the riches of Christ into our being—Eph. 3:8:
 1. The word of God enlightens (Psa. 119:105, 130), nourishes (Matt. 4:4; 1 Tim. 4:6), and waters us to quench our thirst (Isa. 55:8-11).
 2. The word of God strengthens (1 John 2:14; Prov. 4:20-22), washes (Eph. 5:26), and builds us up (Acts 20:32).
 3. The word of God completes, perfects (2 Tim. 3:15-17), and edifies us by sanctifying us (John 17:17).
 4. By allowing the word of Christ to inhabit us, we can become a God-man filled with Christ as the reality of the attributes of God—Col. 3:16-21; Phil. 4:5-8.

Message Five

**God as Our Sovereign Potter
Making Us His Vessels, His Containers, to Contain Him**

Scripture Reading: Jer. 18:1-10; Isa. 64:8;
Rom. 9:15-16, 19-23; Acts 9:15; 2 Cor. 4:6-7

I. God as our sovereign Potter has absolute right over us as His pottery; it is crucial that we see a vision of God's sovereignty—Jer. 18:1-10; Isa. 64:8; Dan. 4:3, 34-35; Rom. 9:19-23:

- A. Sovereignty refers to God's unlimited authority, power, and position—Rev. 4:11; 5:13:
 - 1. As the sovereign One, God is above everything, behind everything, and in everything—1 Kings 22:19.
 - 2. God has the full capacity to carry out what He wants according to the desire of His heart and according to His eternal economy—Dan. 4:34-35; Eph. 1:4-5, 9-11.
- B. Romans 9:19-23 refers to God's sovereignty:
 - 1. "Who withstands His will? But rather, O man, who are you who answer back to God? Shall the thing molded say to him who molded it, Why did you make me thus?"—vv. 19b-20:
 - a. We need to realize who we are; we are God's creatures, and He is our Creator—Isa. 42:5.
 - b. As His creatures, we should not resist His purpose or answer back to Him, the Creator—Rom. 9:20.
 - 2. "Does not the potter have authority over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?"—v. 21:
 - a. God is our Potter, and we are the clay in His hand; God, our Potter, is sovereign—Jer. 18:1-6; Isa. 64:8.
 - b. As our Potter, God has the absolute right over us; regarding us, He has the right to do whatever He desires; if God wills, He can make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor—Jer. 18:6; Isa. 29:16; 64:8; Rom. 9:21.
- C. God's sovereignty is the basis of His selection; His selection depends on His sovereignty—vv. 11, 18; 11:5, 28.

II. God as our Potter has sovereignly created us to be His vessels, His containers, to contain Himself according to His predestination—2 Cor. 4:6-7; Eph. 4:6; 3:19b; Phil. 2:13; Heb. 13:20-21; 1 Tim. 3:16; 2 Tim. 2:20-21; Eph. 1:5, 11:

- A. God's purpose in creating man was to make man His vessel, His earthenware container, to contain and be filled with Christ as

Message Five (continuation)

life for the building up of the Body of Christ as God's great corporate vessel for His expression—Gen. 2:7; Acts 9:15; Rom. 9:21, 23; 2 Cor. 4:7.

- B. The basic teaching of the whole Scripture is simply this: God is the very content, and we are the containers made to receive the content; we must contain God and be filled with God so that we can be vessels unto honor, sanctified, useful to the master, prepared unto every good work—2 Tim. 2:20-21.
- C. If we do not contain God and know God as our content, we are a senseless contradiction—Eccl. 1:2-3, 14.
- D. All of Paul's fourteen Epistles can be summed up in two words—*open vessel*:
 - 1. The degree to which God can dispense Himself into us depends on the degree of our openness; God wants us only to love Him and to keep ourselves open to Him—2 Kings 4:1-7; Matt. 5:3; John 1:16; Isa. 57:15; 66:1-2.
 - 2. Decadence starts from self-complacency; progress starts from hunger and thirst—Deut. 4:25; Luke 1:53; Phil. 1:25; Rev. 3:16-18.

III. In His sovereignty God as our Potter has the authority to make the ones whom He has selected and called to be vessels of mercy unto honor and glory—Rom. 9:11, 18, 21-24:

- A. We were chosen by God according to His sovereign mercy; God's mercy is the most far-reaching of God's attributes, saving us out of our wretched position into a condition that is suitable for His grace and love—Eph. 2:1-4; Heb. 4:16; Matt. 5:7; 7:1; 9:13:
 - 1. According to our natural condition, we were far removed from God, totally unworthy of His grace; we were eligible only to receive His mercy—Eph. 2:4.
 - 2. Man's disobedience affords God's mercy an opportunity, and God's mercy brings man to salvation—Rom. 11:32.
 - 3. We were created to be vessels of mercy to contain Christ as the God of mercy—9:11-13, 16, 20-21, 23; Lam. 3:21-24; Luke 1:78-79.
 - 4. Because of God's mercy, we responded to the gospel when others did not respond, we received a word about Christ as life when others refused to receive it, and we took the way of the Lord's recovery when others drew back from taking this way—*Hymns*, #296, stanza 3.

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- B. “I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy’...So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy”—Rom. 9:15a, 16:
1. Our concept is that the one who wills gains what he wills to obtain and that the one who runs gains what he runs after—v. 16:
 - a. If this were the case, God’s selection would be according to our effort and labor.
 - b. On the contrary, God’s selection is of God who shows mercy; we do not need to will or to run, for God has mercy on us.
 - c. If we know God’s mercy, we will neither trust in our effort nor be disappointed by our failures; the hope for our wretched condition is in God’s mercy—Eph. 2:4.
 2. If we would serve God in His New Testament economy, we need to know that it is wholly a matter of God’s sovereign mercy—Rom. 9:15-16; Heb. 4:16:
 - a. If we know God’s sovereignty, we will thank Him for His mercy, realizing that we are under His sovereign mercy—Rom. 9:15.
 - b. The expression *sovereign mercy* means that God’s mercy is absolutely a matter of God’s sovereignty; being a vessel of mercy is not the result of our choice; it originates with God’s sovereignty—v. 18.
 - c. The only thing we can say to explain God’s mercy to us is that in His sovereignty He has chosen to be merciful to us—vv. 15-16, 23.
 3. In God’s sovereign mercy our hearts are inclined toward Him; because of His mercy to us, we seek Him day by day—Jer. 29:12-13; Deut. 4:29; Isa. 55:6; Psa. 27:8; 105:4; 119:2; Heb. 11:6.
 4. The more we see that everything related to us is a matter of God’s mercy, the more we will bear our responsibility before the Lord; however, even our willingness to bear responsibility is of God’s mercy.
 5. Regarding His recovery, God has mercy on whom He will have mercy.
- C. Romans 9 reveals the principle that everything depends on God’s mercy—vv. 15-16:

Message Five (continuation)

1. The apostle Paul applies this principle to the Israelites, showing us that everything that happened to them was of God's mercy—vv. 16, 23.
2. There must be at least one time when we see God's mercy and definitely touch His mercy—Eph. 2:4; Matt. 9:13:
 - a. Concerning this matter, our eyes need to be opened at least once; there must be at least one time when we see that everything depends on God's mercy.
 - b. Whether we see this all at once or we realize it through a process, the minute we touch this matter, we touch not a feeling but a fact; this fact is that everything depends on God's mercy.
- D. "Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help"—Heb. 4:16, cf. v. 15; Luke 15:20-24.
- E. In His sovereignty God the Father has had mercy on us; therefore, we must praise and worship Him for His sovereign mercy:
 1. "Father, we enjoy Thy mercy, / Ever fresh and ever new; / Every morning shed upon us, / It refreshes as the dew. / How we taste it! How we taste it! / Giving Thee the praises due"—*Hymns*, #26, stanza 5.
 2. "Father, Thy mercy with Thy love and grace / Did we obtain; / And in Thy mercy, with Thee face to face, / We'll e'er remain; / And for Thy mercy we would worship Thee / Through all our days and through eternity"—*Hymns*, #25, stanza 3.
- F. We were created to be vessels of mercy unto honor to contain Christ as the God of honor (2 Tim. 2:20-21; Rom. 9:21) so that we may honor God and men (Judg. 9:9):
 1. Being vessels unto honor is not the result of our choice; it originates with God's sovereignty—Rom. 9:21.
 2. The believers are vessels unto honor with Christ as their treasure through regeneration—2 Cor. 4:6-7.
 3. The believers are vessels unto honor through their cleansing of themselves from the vessels unto dishonor—2 Tim. 2:20-21.
 4. Vessels unto honor are those who honor God by living and walking by the Spirit (Gal. 5:16, 25) and those who honor men by ministering the Spirit to them (2 Cor. 3:6, 8).
- G. We were created to be vessels of mercy unto glory to contain Christ as the God of glory:

JEREMIAH AND LAMENTATIONS

Message Five (continuation)

1. Glory is God Himself expressed and manifested—Jer. 2:11; Acts 7:2; Eph. 1:17; 1 Cor. 2:8; 1 Pet. 4:14; Col. 2:9; Psalms 24:7-10.
2. The Lord was able to tell the Father, “I have glorified You on earth, finishing the work which You have given Me to do” (John 17:4); this means that while the Lord was living on earth, He manifested and expressed the Father.
3. The release of the glory of Christ’s divinity (Luke 12:49-50) was His being glorified by the Father with the divine glory (John 12:23-24) in His resurrection (Acts 3:13) through His death; in Christ’s glorification He, as the last Adam, became the life-giving Spirit for His divine dispensing (John 7:39; Luke 24:26, 46; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:6).
4. As vessels of mercy unto honor and glory, we have been prepared by God unto glory through glorification—the last step of God’s full salvation—Rom. 8:21, 23, 29-30; Phil. 3:21.
5. According to His sovereign authority, God created, formed, and even made us for His glory—Isa. 43:7; Rom. 9:23:
 - a. We were predestinated by His sovereignty to be His containers for His glorious expression and manifestation.
 - b. This is the climax of our usefulness to God—the goal of God’s selection according to His sovereignty—vv. 11, 18.
 - c. The glorification of God is the purpose of our service—7:6; 11:36.
 - d. The highest service that we can render to God is to express Him for His glory—1 Cor. 6:20; 10:31; Rom. 6:4.
 - e. God’s glory is wrought into the church, and He is expressed in the church; hence, to God is the glory in the church; that is, God is glorified in the church—Eph. 3:16, 20-21.
6. We have this treasure, Christ as the God of glory, dwelling within us, the earthen vessels (2 Cor. 4:7); “this treasure” (v. 7) indwelling us is “the face of Jesus Christ” (v. 6), the presence of Christ, “the person of Christ” (2:10).
7. When we turn our heart to the Lord, we are beholding the Lord Spirit as the presence of Christ in our spirit, and we are “being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit”—3:16-18; cf. 2 Tim. 4:22.
8. To behold the glory of the Lord is to see the Lord ourselves; to reflect the glory of the Lord is to enable others to see Him through us—Isa. 60:1, 5.

Message Six

**The Principle of Being One with God
as Revealed in the Book of Jeremiah**

Scripture Reading: Gen. 2:8-9, 16-17;

Jer. 2:13; 15:16, 19; 23:5-6; 31:31-34; 40:5-6, 13-14

I. God's desire to be one with man and for man to be one with Him can be seen in the resemblance of God and man in their images and likenesses:

- A. There was no "mankind" created by God in His creation; rather, what God created was after His own kind, that is, God-kind; God created man with the breath of life for a spirit that man may contact Him and receive Him—Gen. 1:24-26; 2:7.
- B. In Genesis 18:2-13 three men appeared to Abraham; one of these men was Christ—Jehovah—and the other two were angels (19:1); this means that two thousand years before His incarnation, God appeared as a man when He visited His friend Abraham—2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23.
- C. The Angel of God (God, Jehovah, a man of God—Christ) appeared to Manoah and his wife before Christ's incarnation—Judg. 13:3-6, 22-23.
- D. Daniel saw a vision of Christ as the Son of Man before Christ's incarnation; according to Daniel 7:13-14, Daniel saw the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven, and He came even to the Ancient of Days—the God of eternity—and they brought Him near before Him; there was given Him dominion, glory, and a kingdom that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him; His dominion is an eternal dominion, which will not pass away, and His kingdom is one that will not be destroyed.
- E. Adam was a type, a prefigure, of Christ—Rom. 5:14.
- F. Christ is the image of the invisible God—Col. 1:15.
- G. The Word (God) became flesh (John 1:14), coming in the likeness of the flesh of sin (Rom. 8:3) and not having the sin of the flesh (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15).
- H. Christ, who exists in the form of God, took the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men and being found in fashion as a man, in His incarnation—Phil. 2:6-8.
- I. Stephen saw the heavens opened up and the Son of Man—Christ—at the right hand of God (Acts 7:56); this indicates that after Christ's ascension to the heavens, He is still the Son of Man (see *Hymns*, #132).

Message Six (continuation)

- J. In Matthew 26:64 the Lord Jesus said, “You will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power [God] and coming on the clouds of heaven”; this shows that when the Lord Jesus comes back, He will still be the Son of Man.
- K. In Romans 8:29 Paul tells us that those whom God foreknew (we believers), He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers; by His resurrecting to make us His many brothers, we became a new kind, “God-man kind.”
- L. Second Corinthians 3:18 says, “We all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit”; Romans 12:2a speaks of our being transformed by the renewing of the mind.
- M. Philippians 2:15 speaks of our being blameless and guileless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation, among whom we shine as luminaries in the world.
- N. The Lord Jesus Christ will transfigure the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of His glory, according to His operation by which He is able even to subject all things to Himself—3:21.
- O. When Christ is manifested, we will be like Him wholly, perfectly, and absolutely, because we will see Him even as He is—1 John 3:2b.
- P. All this will consummate in the New Jerusalem; Revelation 4:3 says, “He [God] who was sitting was like a jasper stone”; the appearance of God, the One sitting on the throne, is like jasper.
- Q. According to Revelation 21, the New Jerusalem’s light is like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone (v. 11b); the building work of its wall is jasper, and the first foundation of the wall is also jasper (vv. 18a, 19):
 - 1. Eventually, God and man, man and God, all have the appearance of jasper; thus, the conclusion and consummation of the Bible is the New Jerusalem—divinity mingled with humanity; divinity becomes the dwelling place of humanity, and humanity becomes the home of divinity.
 - 2. In this city the glory of God is manifested in man, brightly and splendidly; now we are in the process of being deified to become the New Jerusalem and to bear the same appearance of God—jasper—vv. 11, 23.

Message Six (continuation)

3. At the end of this age, we are teaching and preaching the truth that God became a man in order to make man God, the same as He is in life and in nature but not in the Godhead; it is a great blessing to hear this truth.
4. Eventually, the God-men will be the victors, the overcomers, the Zion within Jerusalem; having a God-man living in all the details of our daily life will bring in a new revival that has never been seen in history, and this will end this age—read Psalm 48:2 and footnote 1.

II. The book of Jeremiah shows us the principle of being one with God:

- A. The principle of being one with God, which is the principle of the tree of life, versus the principle of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is seen in Jeremiah 2:13, which reveals the two basic sins of God's people:
 1. The first sin was forsaking Jehovah as the fountain, the source, of living waters; the second sin was hewing out for themselves broken cisterns that could not hold water.
 2. The principle in the Bible is that God does not want His chosen people to take anything other than Himself as their source; by placing man in front of the tree of life, which signifies God as life, God was indicating that He wanted man to partake of the tree of life, not anything else; to partake of the tree of life is to take God as our unique source, as our source of everything—Gen. 2:8-9.
 3. The second sin was a matter of God's people not trusting in God but of trusting in themselves to do whatever they could do to work out something by themselves for their own enjoyment; sin is to forsake God and do something by ourselves and for ourselves.
 4. These two basic sins show us the tree of life, which signifies God, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which signifies Satan (vv. 8-9, 16-17); Israel had been distracted from the tree of life to the tree of knowledge, from the fountain of living waters to the cisterns (idols).
- B. God placed man in front of the tree of life, indicating His desire to be one with man, that is, to be man's life, life supply, and everything—vv. 8-9:

Message Six (continuation)

1. The tree of life signifies the crucified (implied in the tree as a piece of wood—1 Pet. 2:24) and resurrected (implied in the life of God—John 11:25) Christ as the embodiment of all the riches of God for our food.
2. Eating the tree of life, that is, enjoying Christ as our life supply, should be the primary matter in the church life; to receive Christ by eating Him is to have Him assimilated into our being organically and metabolically to mingle Himself with us—Rev. 2:7; John 6:57, 63:
 - a. The words that the Lord speaks are spirit and life; this shows that the Lord's spoken words are the embodiment of the Spirit of life—v. 63:
 - 1) He is now the life-giving Spirit in resurrection (1 Cor. 15:45b), and the Spirit is embodied in His words.
 - 2) When we receive His words by means of all prayer and petition (Eph. 6:17-18) by exercising our spirit, we get the Spirit, who is life.
 - b. To eat Christ is to eat His words, to receive His words, which are the embodiment of the Spirit of life, by exercising our spirit—Jer. 15:16; Eph. 6:17-18; 1 Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:13-14; Ezek. 3:1-4.

III. To take, receive, and keep the word of God, we must be absolutely one with Him:

- A. The case of Gedaliah is the case of a person who was not one with God; although Gedaliah was faithful in caring for Jeremiah, God's prophet, he did not seek the Lord's word, because this was not his habit—Jer. 40:5-6, 13-14:
 1. Gedaliah did not take God as his source to be one with Him and to receive whatever issued from Him; if he had been a person who was one with God, the first thing he would have done would have been to receive the word of God.
 2. To take, to receive, and to keep the word of God as the expression of His thought, His will, His heart's desire, and His good pleasure, we must be absolutely one with God, trusting in Him, relying on Him, and not having any opinion that comes from the self—cf. 2 Cor. 1:8-9, and v. 12, footnote 2.
 3. The principle of the Bible, especially of the New Testament, is that God opens Himself to us so that we may enter into Him,

Message Six (continuation)

receive Him, and become one with Him; then He will be in us, and we will be in Him, taking Him as everything—John 15:4-5; 1 John 2:28; 3:24.

4. The first thing we will take is His word to express His thought, His will, His heart's desire, and His good pleasure; we will not care for our opinions or preferences; in this way we become His mouthpiece to speak Him forth to others for their supply—Jer. 1:6-9.
- B. The Lord told Jeremiah, "If you bring out the precious from the worthless, / You will be as My mouth"—15:19; 23:29, cf. v. 16:
 1. We need the eyes of our heart to be enlightened to see the excellency, the supereminence, the surpassing worth, of Christ as the preciousness to His believers in order to gain Christ, counting all things other than Christ as loss—Phil. 3:7-8; 1 Pet. 2:7, cf. vv. 4, 6.
 2. We must treasure the Lord's words more than our apportioned food, tasting the Lord in His word as the reality of the good land flowing with nourishing milk and fresh honey for us to dispense to God's people for their full salvation—Job 23:12; 1 Pet. 2:2-5; Psa. 119:103; Deut. 8:8; S. S. 4:11a.
 3. We must treasure the Lord's words more than all earthly riches so that we can speak oracles of God (God's speaking, God's utterance, which conveys divine revelation) to dispense the unsearchable riches of Christ as the varied grace of God to all the saints—Psa. 119:72, 9-16; Eph. 3:8; 2 Cor. 6:10; 1 Pet. 4:10-11.

IV. The secret of Israel's failures and defeats was that they had lost God's presence and were no longer one with God (cf. Josh. 7:3-4; 9:14); we should always be one with our God, who is not only among us but also in us, making us men with God—God-men:

- A. As God-men, we should practice being one with the Lord, walking with Him, living with Him, and having our entire being with Him (Rom. 8:4; 2 Cor. 2:10; Gal. 5:16, 25); this is the way to walk as a Christian, to fight as a child of God, and to build up the Body of Christ; if we have the Lord's presence, being one with Him, we have wisdom, insight, foresight, and the inner knowledge concerning things; the Lord's presence is everything to us.

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- B. The stubbornness of the children of Israel in sinning against God was due to their not being one with God (Jer. 42:1—43:2); if they had been one with God, they would have received God's word and would have known His heart, His nature, His mind, and His purpose; furthermore, they would have spontaneously lived Him and would have been constituted with Him to be His testimony on earth.
 - C. Those who are not one with God do not take His will and good pleasure but express their opinions and pursue their preferences; to do this is to forsake God as the source, the fountain, of living waters and hew out broken cisterns that can hold no water—2:13.
- V. **In order to be one with God, we need Christ as the Shoot of David to be our redemption and justification; this ushers the Triune God into us to be our life, our inner life law, our capacity, and our everything to dispense Himself into our being to carry out His economy; this is the new covenant (31:33); eventually, we will know God, live God, and become God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead so that we may become His corporate expression as the New Jerusalem—23:5-6; 31:31-34; Rev. 21:2.**

Message Seven

**Knowing Jehovah, the Eternal God,
in His Lovingkindness, Compassions, and Faithfulness**

Scripture Reading: Jer. 2:19; 10:10a; 11:20; 20:12;
Lam. 3:22-25; 5:19

**I. Jeremiah often addressed God as Jehovah of hosts—Jer. 2:19;
5:14; 6:9; 7:21; 9:7, 15, 17; 11:17; 20:12:**

- A. “Jehovah is the true God; / He is the living God and the eternal King”—10:10a:
 - 1. *Jehovah* means “I am who I am,” indicating that Jehovah is the eternal One, the One who was in the past, who is in the present, and who will be in the future forever—Exo. 3:14; Rev. 1:4:
 - a. Jehovah is the self-existing and ever-existing God; this One exists eternally, having neither beginning nor ending—Exo. 3:14.
 - b. *I Am* denotes the One whose being depends on nothing apart from Himself—John 8:24, 28, 58.
 - 2. Jehovah is the only One who is, and we must believe that He is—Heb. 11:6.
 - 3. As the I Am, Jehovah is the all-inclusive One, the reality of every positive thing and of whatever His people need—John 6:35; 8:12; 10:14; 11:25; 14:6.
 - 4. Apart from Jehovah, all else is nothing; He is the only One who *is*, the only One who has the reality of being—Heb. 11:6.
- B. “O Jehovah of hosts, who judges righteously, / Who tests the inward parts and the heart”—Jer. 11:20:
 - 1. The title *Jehovah of hosts* indicates that Jehovah God is the Mighty One, the Lord of all the heavenly host, the Commander of all the host—20:12; 30:8; 48:1; 50:18; 1 Kings 22:19.
 - 2. Jehovah of hosts is the King of glory, the One who is strong and mighty; He is Jehovah of the armies—Psa. 24:8, 10.
 - 3. The King of glory, Jehovah of hosts, is the consummated Triune God embodied in the victorious and coming Christ.
 - 4. As the incarnated, crucified, and resurrected Christ, the King of glory is coming to possess the earth and take it as His kingdom:
 - a. Jehovah of hosts makes wars to cease unto the end of the earth; He will be exalted among the nations, and He will be exalted on earth—46:9-10.

Message Seven (continuation)

- b. Jehovah of hosts has the authority to rule over all the nations, and His hand holds the authority to remove kings and set up kings—Dan. 2:21.
- 5. At a time when the priesthood had become destitute, God revealed His name as Jehovah of hosts, indicating that when His administration was in such a destitute state, He would come out to rule over the entire situation to usher in the reign of His kingdom—1 Sam. 1:3.

II. “You, O Jehovah, abide forever; / Your throne is from generation to generation”—Lam. 5:19:

- A. In verse 19 Jeremiah, changing his position and angle from himself to God, refers to God’s eternal being and unchanging government.
- B. Jerusalem was overthrown, the temple was burned down, and God’s people were carried away, but Jehovah, the Lord of the universe, remains to exercise His administration.
- C. The phrase *You, O Jehovah, abide forever* indicates that God is eternal and that there is no change in Him—v. 19:
 - 1. God remains immutable, not subject to any change due to any kind of environments and circumstances—Psa. 90:2; Rom. 16:25-26.
 - 2. In the human realm changes take place in every way, but there is no change with God’s eternal being; He remains forever the same.
 - 3. Abraham “called on the name of Jehovah, the Eternal God”—Gen. 21:33:
 - a. In Hebrew *the Eternal God* is *El Olam*; *El* means “the Mighty One,” and *Olam* means “eternal” or “eternity” and comes from a Hebrew root meaning “to conceal” or “to hide.”
 - b. The divine title *El Olam* implies eternal life—cf. John 1:1, 4.
 - c. By calling on Jehovah, the Eternal Mighty One, Abraham experienced God as the ever-living, secret, mysterious One, who is the eternal life.
- D. The phrase *Your throne is from generation to generation* refers to God’s eternal and unchanging government—Lam. 5:19; Psa. 45:6; 93:2; Rev. 4:2-3:

Message Seven (continuation)

1. God's throne has no beginning or end; His throne exists from generation to generation.
2. Jeremiah's writing at the end of Lamentations concerning God's eternal being and unchanging government surely is divine:
 - a. Jeremiah's word about God's eternal being and His throne is a strong sign that in writing Lamentations Jeremiah touched God's economy.
 - b. He came out of his human feelings, touched God's person and God's throne, and entered into God's divinity.
- E. In the New Jerusalem God will be fully unveiled in His person as the eternal King and in His government as His eternal, unshakable kingdom, both of which are the unshakable foundation of His dealing with His people—Heb. 12:28; Rev. 22:3.

III. "It is Jehovah's lovingkindness that we are not consumed, / For His compassions do not fail; / They are new every morning; / Great is Your faithfulness"—Lam. 3:22-23:

- A. Jehovah appeared to Jeremiah, saying, "I have drawn you with lovingkindness"—Jer. 31:3:
 1. Jehovah's lovingkindness is precious, everlasting, and higher than the heavens and leads to Christ as the cornerstone for God's building—Psa. 36:7, 9-10; 108:4; 118:1-4, 22-29; 136:1, 26.
 2. Psalm 103 speaks of God's history in His lovingkindness and compassions in His forgiving of sins, healing, redeeming, and caring for His people.
 3. The psalmist said to Jehovah, "In the abundance of Your lovingkindness / I will come into Your house"—5:7:
 - a. Anyone who had the privilege of entering into the temple on Mount Zion had to be under God's lovingkindness.
 - b. Actually, to enter into the temple in itself was an enjoyment of the abundance of God's lovingkindness.
 - c. Considering Jehovah's lovingkindness in the midst of His temple indicates that we touch His lovingkindness in the church.
 4. Psalm 101 unveils how Christ will reign over the earth with lovingkindness and justice.
- B. The people of Israel had failed, but God's compassions preserved the remnant of Israel for the carrying out of His economy—Lam. 3:22-23:

JEREMIAH AND LAMENTATIONS

Message Seven (continuation)

1. Compassion is deeper, finer, and richer than mercy—Rom. 9:15; Psa. 103:8.
2. Compassion refers to God's inward affection originating in His loving essence—2 Cor. 1:3; James 5:11; Luke 6:36.
3. Christ came to the earth because of the merciful compassions of God—1:78.
4. Jehovah's compassions "are new every morning"—Lam. 3:23:
 - a. Verse 23a indicates that Jeremiah contacted the Lord as the compassionate One every morning.
 - b. It was through his contact with the Lord that he received the word regarding God's lovingkindness, compassions, and faithfulness.
- C. Jeremiah said to Jehovah, "Great is Your faithfulness"—v. 23b:
 1. God's compassions do not fail, because He is the faithful One—Psa. 57:10.
 2. God is faithful to His own word; He cannot deny Himself; He cannot deny His nature and His being—2 Tim. 2:13.
 3. In His faithfulness God has called us into the fellowship of His Son, and He will keep us in this participation and enjoyment in His faithfulness—1 Cor. 1:9.
 4. The faithful God who has called us will also sanctify us wholly and preserve our entire being complete—1 Thes. 5:23-24.

IV. "Jehovah is my portion, says my soul; / Therefore I hope in Him"—Lam. 3:24:

- A. Jeremiah's word concerning Jehovah being our portion and our hoping in Him bears a New Testament flavor—Col. 1:12, 27:
 1. Jeremiah enjoyed Jehovah as his portion, and he put his hope not in himself nor in anything else but only in Jehovah—Lam. 3:24:
 - a. On the one hand, Jeremiah realized that God is a God of lovingkindness, that He is compassionate, and that His word is faithful.
 - b. On the other hand, Jeremiah realized that we still need to contact the Lord every morning, put our entire hope in Him, wait on Him, and call on His name—vv. 23-25, 55.
 2. When the psalmist went into the sanctuary of God and had a divine view and perception of his situation, he could say that God was his portion forever—Psa. 73:17, 26:

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES

Message Seven (continuation)

- a. In God's sanctuary the psalmist was instructed to take only God Himself as his portion, not anything other than God—v. 26.
 - b. God's intention with His seekers is that they may find everything in Him and not be distracted from the absolute enjoyment of Himself.
- B. "Jehovah is good to those who wait on Him, / To the soul that seeks Him"—Lam. 3:25:
- 1. Although God is true, living, compassionate, and faithful, in order to test His people, He often delays in fulfilling His word—Psa. 27:14; 130:6; Isa. 8:17; 30:18; 64:4.
 - 2. To wait on the eternal God means that we terminate ourselves; that is, we stop ourselves with our living, our doing, and our activity and receive God in Christ as our life, our person, and our replacement—40:28, 31:
 - a. We need to learn the lesson of waiting on the Lord—30:18.
 - b. Today is not the time of the ultimate consummation; therefore, we need to wait on the Lord—64:4.
 - 3. As we are waiting on the Lord, we should seek Him and call unto Him:
 - a. "You will seek Me and find Me if you search for Me with all your heart"—Jer. 29:13.
 - b. "Call unto Me, and I will answer you and tell you great and hidden things, which you do not know"—33:3.

Message Eight

**God's Economy with His Dispensing
in the Book of Jeremiah**

Scripture Reading: Jer. 2:13; 15:16; 17:7-8, 19-27;
23:5-6; 31:31-34; Heb. 8:8-12

I. Jeremiah 17:7-8 says, “Blessed is the man who trusts in Jehovah / And whose trust Jehovah is. / And he will be like a tree transplanted beside water, / Which sends out its roots by a stream, / And will not be afraid when heat comes; / For its leaves remain flourishing, / And it will not be anxious in the year of drought / And will not cease to bear fruit”:

- A. These verses can be understood in two different ways—according to the natural understanding or according to God's economy; these verses are not concerned with a shallow matter of trusting in God to receive material blessings; actually, these verses refer to God's economy carried out by His dispensing:
 - 1. The revelation here reveals that according to God's economy, the one who trusts in God is like a tree transplanted beside water, signifying God as the fountain of living waters (2:13a); we not only trust in God, but also God Himself is our trust in Him.
 - 2. The tree grows beside water by absorbing all the riches of the water into it; this is a picture of God's dispensing; in order to receive the divine dispensing, we as the trees must absorb God as the living water to be dispensed into our being in order to become our very constituent.
- B. The thought here is the same as that in 1 Corinthians 3:6, where Paul says, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth”; the watering is for the tree's absorbing, and the absorbing is the receiving of God's dispensing:
 - 1. The tree grows with God as the Supplier and the supply; the supply is the riches of the supplying God dispensed into us as the plants so that we may grow into God's measure; eventually, the plants and God, God and the plants, become one, having the same element, essence, constitution, and appearance—Col. 2:19.
 - 2. We all need to see the crucial significance of absorbing God as the living water that we may be constituted with His element and essence and grow with the growth of God; where the growth in life is lacking, the believers' Christian life will

Message Eight (continuation)

be a mess, the church life will be damaged, and the Body life will be destroyed.

3. In order to grow in life for the building up of the Body of Christ, we need to absorb God by taking root downward and bearing fruit upward (Isa. 37:31); this means that we need to have hidden times of fellowship with God (Matt. 6:6; 14:22-23); the empowering, enlightening, enjoying of rest, rejoicing, believing, solving of problems, overcoming of trials, temptations, and hardships, and comforting for a Christian all depend upon his secret fellowship with God through prayer and God's word (Dan. 6:10; Col. 4:2; 2 Tim. 3:14-17).

II. In Jeremiah 17:19-27 we have a word about keeping God's Sabbath; the way to keep God's Sabbath is to enjoy Him, to rest in Him, and to be satisfied in Him as the fountain of living waters—2:13:

- A. In Exodus 31:12-17, after a long record concerning the building up of God's dwelling place, there is a repetition of the commandment to keep the Sabbath; according to Colossians 2:16-17 and Matthew 11:28-30, Christ is the reality of the Sabbath rest—Heb. 4:7-9; Isa. 30:15a:
 1. If we only know how to work for the Lord but do not know how to rest with Him, we are acting contrary to the divine principle:
 - a. God rested on the seventh day because He had finished His work and was satisfied; God's glory was manifested because man had His image, and His authority was about to be exercised for the subduing of His enemy, Satan; as long as man expresses God and deals with God's enemy, God is satisfied and can rest—Gen. 1:26, 31; 2:1-2.
 - b. Later, the seventh day was commemorated as the Sabbath (Exo. 20:8-11); God's seventh day was man's first day; after man was created, he did not join in God's work; he entered into God's rest.
 2. Man was created not to work first but to be satisfied with God and rest with God; with God it is a matter of working and resting, but with man it is a matter of resting and working; it is a divine principle that after a full enjoyment of God, we may work together with Him—cf. Matt. 11:28-30:

JEREMIAH AND LAMENTATIONS

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- a. If we do not know how to enjoy God Himself and how to be filled with God, we will not know how to work with Him and be one with Him in His divine work; man enjoys what God has accomplished in His work.
 - b. On the day of Pentecost the disciples were filled with the Spirit, which means that they were filled with the enjoyment of Christ as the heavenly wine; only after they were filled with this enjoyment did they begin to work with God in oneness with Him—Acts 2:4a, 12-14.
 - B. As God's people, we must bear a sign that we rest with God, enjoy God, and are filled up with God first; then we work with the very One who fills us; furthermore, we not only work with God but also work by being one with God, having Him as our strength to work and our energy to labor—Exo. 31:13, 17.
 - C. In the church life we may do many things without first enjoying the Lord and without serving the Lord by being one with the Lord; that kind of service results in spiritual death and the loss of the fellowship in the Body—vv. 14-15.
 - D. The work of the Lord to build up the church should begin with the enjoyment of God, which will indicate that we do not work for God by our own strength but by enjoying Him and being one with Him; this is to keep the principle of the Sabbath with Christ as the inner rest in our spirit—1 Cor. 3:9; 15:58; 16:10; 2 Cor. 6:1a.
- III. The book of Jeremiah is an abstract of the entire Bible; Jeremiah's prophecy indicates that only Christ can fulfill God's economy and only Christ is the answer to God's requirements in His economy; the picture portrayed by Jeremiah shows that we are nothing and that Christ is everything to us:**
- A. Jeremiah speaks of Christ, in the fulfilling of God's economy, being our righteousness and our redemption (23:5-6), of God being the fountain of living waters (2:13), of Christ being our food (15:16), and of Christ as the reality of the new covenant with all its blessings (31:31-34; Heb. 8:8-12):
 - 1. On the one hand, we may say that the new covenant is synonymous with God's economy, being the contents and substance of God's economy—Jer. 31:31-34; Job 10:13; cf. Eph. 3:9:
 - a. All the major items of the new covenant are the contents of God's economy and His dispensing with both His judicial

Message Eight (continuation)

- redemption and organic salvation to deify us for the building up of the Body of Christ, consummating in the New Jerusalem.
- b. The apostles' ministry is the ministry for God's new covenant economy; it is the new covenant ministry that is centered on the economy of God—1 Tim. 1:3-4; cf. 2 Cor. 3:3, 6.
 2. On the other hand, we may say that the new covenant is the way that God fulfills, or accomplishes, His economy; 2 Corinthians reveals that the ministry of the new covenant is for the accomplishment of God's eternal economy—2:12—4:1.
- B. Christ is the reality of the new testament, the new covenant, the reality of all that God is and of all that God has given to us; therefore, Christ is the new covenant:
1. The bequests are many, but all these many bequests are actually one person—the pneumatic Christ—Isa. 42:6; 49:8; Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:8-12; John 20:22; Eph. 3:8.
 2. The bequests bequeathed to us by the Lord in the new testament are inexhaustible, and they are for us to experience and enjoy through the Spirit for eternity—Heb. 9:15.
 3. We need to take the ancient paths of our forefathers by walking in the way of the new covenant focused on the economy of God, the way that leads to life; the bypaths are the paths of Satan's schemes according to his devious stratagems that lead to destruction; to take the bypaths is to go downward, but to take the ancient paths, a way that is cast up, is to go upward—Jer. 18:15; cf. Matt. 7:13-14.
 4. In the new covenant, the eternal covenant, God gives us one heart and one way (Jer. 32:39-41); the one heart is a heart to love God, to seek God, to live God, and to be constituted with God so that we may be His expression; the one way is the Triune God Himself as the inner law of life with its divine capacity (31:33-34); this one heart and one way are the one accord (Acts 1:14; 2:46; 4:24; Rom. 15:6).
- C. As the ascended One sitting on the throne in the heavens, Christ is now executing the new covenant, which He has bequeathed to us as a testament, interceding for us and ministering to us that we may realize, experience, and enjoy all the bequests contained in the new testament—Heb. 12:2; 7:25; 8:1-2:

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1. The new testament, the new covenant, the will, has been validated by Christ's death and is being executed and enforced by Christ in His resurrection and ascension.
2. The new covenant has been bequeathed to us as the new testament, and now, in the mystical realm of His heavenly ministry, Christ is executing what He has bequeathed.
3. Christ is now in the heavens, living, divine, and capable; He is able to execute the new testament, the new covenant, in every detail, making every bequest in it available and real to us:
 - a. As the divine High Priest, Christ is executing the new covenant by interceding for us, praying that we would be brought into the reality of the new covenant—7:25.
 - b. As the Mediator, the Executor, of the new covenant, Christ in His heavenly ministry is executing the new testament and carrying out in us every item of its bequests—8:6; 9:15; 12:24.
 - c. As the surety of the new covenant, Christ is the pledge that everything in the new covenant will be fulfilled; He guarantees and ensures the effectiveness of the new testament—7:22.
 - d. As the Minister of the true (heavenly) tabernacle, Christ is serving us with the bequests, the blessings, of the new testament, making the facts of the new covenant effective in our experience—8:2.
 - e. As the great Shepherd of the sheep, Christ, by His shepherding, is consummating the New Jerusalem according to God's eternal covenant—13:20.
- D. If we would receive the application of all the blessings in the new covenant, we need to be those who respond to Christ's heavenly ministry—12:1-2; Col. 3:1:
 1. Christ's ministry in heaven to execute the new covenant requires our response—Heb. 7:25; 4:16; 10:19, 22:
 - a. For centuries Christ has tried without adequate success to gain a group of people to respond to His ministry in the heavens.
 - b. By the Lord's mercy and grace, there is on earth today a group of people in the Lord's recovery responding to the heavenly ministry of Christ.

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- c. As the Head is in heaven interceding for us and ministering to us, we, the Body, are on earth responding to Christ's heavenly ministry, corresponding to and reflecting what He is doing to execute the new covenant—Eph. 1:22-23; 4:15-16; Acts 6:4.
- 2. Our eyes must be opened to see the heavenly vision of the new testament, the new covenant, the will, with all its bequests—Eph. 1:17-18; Acts 26:18-19:
 - a. The Father promised everything, and the Lord Jesus accomplished everything; now all the accomplished facts have been itemized in the will as our bequests—Luke 22:20; Heb. 9:16-17.
 - b. If we have the heavenly vision to see that all of God's blessings are bequests in the will, we will pray not as poor beggars but as glorious inheritors, receiving the bequests by faith—Rom. 8:17; Eph. 3:6; Heb. 6:17; 1:14.
 - c. If we have the heavenly view of the new testament, the new covenant, our concept will be changed, we will be radically revolutionized, and we will be beside ourselves with praise to the Lord—2 Cor. 5:13; Rev. 5:6-13.
- E. We need all twenty-seven books of the New Testament to define Jeremiah 31:31-34:
 - 1. If we understand this portion in the light of the entire New Testament, we will see that in this new covenant we have the church, the kingdom of God, God's household, the house of God as God's dwelling place in our spirit, the new man, and the Body of Christ as the fullness of the processed and consummated Triune God.
 - 2. Eventually, this new covenant will bring in the millennium; ultimately and consummately, it will bring in the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth for eternity.

Message Nine

God's Judgment upon Egypt and Babylon

Scripture Reading: Jer. 46:2-28; 50:1, 8-16;
51:6-9, 24-25, 28-37, 44-45, 58-64

I. The book of Jeremiah presents a picture of God's coming in to punish and judge the nations, which typify aspects of the world—46:2; 47:1; 48:1; 49:1, 7, 23, 28, 34; 50:1:

- A. In speaking concerning the nations, Jeremiah mentions Egypt first (46:2-28) and Babylon last (chs. 50—51):
 - 1. This indicates that, in God's view, the world is first Egyptian and then Babylonian.
 - 2. According to the picture in the book of Jeremiah, the last nation to be judged is Babylon; when God judges Babylon, His judgment of the nations will be complete.
- B. For the accomplishment of God's economy, the church, God's New Testament elect, must be separated from the world in all its aspects—John 17:14, 16; Rom. 12:2; 1 John 2:15-17.

II. Jeremiah 46:2-28 speaks concerning God's judgment on Egypt:

- A. Egypt typifies the world of making a living and of enjoyment, with which Satan, the ruler of the world, typified by Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, occupies and usurps the people chosen by God for His economy—Gen. 12:10; 41:57—42:3; Num. 11:4-6; Heb. 11:25; John 12:31:
 - 1. The nation of Egypt signifies the kingdom of darkness, the authority of darkness—Col. 1:13; Matt. 12:26.
 - 2. The world is not a source of enjoyment; it is a place of tyranny, and every aspect of the world is a form of tyranny—Gal. 4:8.
 - 3. In the world Satan is keeping God's chosen people, those destined for the fulfillment of God's purpose, under his usurping hand—Eph. 2:2; Luke 13:11-12:
 - a. To exist is one thing, but to exist for the divine purpose is another thing—Rom. 8:28; Eph. 1:11; 3:11; 2 Tim. 1:9.
 - b. Satan has usurped people so that they care only for their existence, not for God's purpose in their existence—Matt. 6:25, 31-33.
 - 4. One aspect of God's purpose in calling us is to use us to bring others out of the usurpation and tyranny of Satan and the world—Acts 26:18; Eph. 3:9.
- B. The world is an evil system arranged systematically by Satan—1 John 2:15-17; James 4:4:

Message Nine (continuation)

1. God created man to live on the earth for the fulfillment of His purpose, but His enemy, Satan, in order to usurp the God-created man, formed an anti-God world system on this earth by systematizing people with culture, education, industry, commerce, entertainment, and religion—Eph. 3:11; Gen. 1:26-28; 2:8-9; 4:16-24.
2. All the things on the earth, especially those related to mankind, and all the things in the air have been systematized by Satan into his kingdom of darkness to occupy people and frustrate them from accomplishing the purpose of God and to distract them from the enjoyment of God—1 John 2:15-17.
3. The world is against God the Father, the things in the world are against the will of God, and those who love the world are enemies of God—vv. 15-17; James 4:4.
4. “The whole world,” the satanic system, “lies in the evil one”—1 John 5:19:
 - a. *The whole world* comprises the satanic world system and the people of the world, the fallen human race.
 - b. *Lies* means remaining passively in the sphere of the evil one’s usurpation and manipulation; the whole world and the people of the world are lying passively under the usurping and manipulating hand of Satan, the evil one.
 - c. The Greek word rendered “evil” in 1 John 5:19 refers to one who is pernicious, harmfully evil, one who affects others, influencing them to be evil and vicious; such an evil one is Satan, the devil, in whom the whole world lies.
5. Satan is utilizing the material world and the things that are in the world to eventually head everything up in the kingdom of Antichrist; at that hour the world system will have reached its zenith, and every unit of it will be revealed to be anti-Christian—2 Thes. 2:3-12.
6. Satan’s evil world system, the kingdom of darkness, was judged through Christ’s work on the cross—John 12:31-32; 16:11:
 - a. Through His death on the cross in the likeness of the flesh of sin, the Lord destroyed Satan, who is in man’s flesh—Rom. 8:3; Heb. 2:14.
 - b. By judging Satan in this way, the Lord also judged the world, which is hanging on Satan—John 16:11.
 - c. The Lord’s being lifted up on the cross caused the world to be judged and its ruler, Satan, to be cast out—12:31-32.

Message Nine (continuation)

III. Jeremiah 50 and 51 speak concerning God's judgment on Babylon:

- A. Babylon began from Babel—Gen. 10:8-10:
 - 1. At Babel Satan caused the human race to rebel against God, to worship idols, and to exalt man's self; thus, Babel was the origin, the source, of man's rebellion against God, man's worship of idols, and human self-exaltation—11:1-9.
 - 2. Babel had its continuation in Babylon, which, in the sight of God, is the consummation of human government—Jer. 50:1; Dan. 2:32-34:
 - a. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, was even identified with Satan as Satan's embodiment—Isa. 14:4, 11-15.
 - b. Babylon destroyed God's holy city and His holy temple and carried God's holy people and the vessels of God's temple into captivity—2 Chron. 36:17-20.
- B. In Revelation 17 and 18 the restored Roman Empire is called Babylon the Great, which has two aspects—religious and material:
 - 1. Revelation 17 is an unveiling of religious Babylon—the apostate Roman Catholic Church:
 - a. In the eyes of God the Roman Catholic Church, which perpetuates much of Judaism and has assimilated much of paganism, is Babylon.
 - b. The harlot in 17:1 is the apostate Roman Catholic Church.
 - c. Because God hates the apostate church, at the beginning of the great tribulation God will cause Antichrist and his ten kings to destroy the Roman Catholic Church—vv. 16-17.
 - 2. Revelation 18 is an unveiling of material Babylon—the city of Rome:
 - a. In Revelation 17 and 18 two aspects of Babylon—the religious aspect and the material aspect—are mixed together:
 - 1) The harlot in 17:16 denotes religious Babylon, signifying the Roman Catholic Church, whereas the woman in verse 18 denotes material Babylon, signifying the city of Rome.
 - 2) Since Babylon the Great is twofold, to come out of her means to come out of both religious Babylon and material Babylon—18:4.
 - b. Material Babylon, the city of Rome, will become hateful in the eyes of God because it has been the source of both devilish politics and devilish religion—vv. 6-8, 20-24.

Message Nine (continuation)

- c. Christ as another Angel will shine over the earth to destroy Babylon the Great, the city of Rome, with His great authority—vv. 1-2.
- C. The principle of Babylon is mixing the things of man with the Word of God, and the things of the flesh with the things of the Spirit—17:1-5:
 - 1. Babylon is the mixture of the things of God with the things of idols:
 - a. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon burned the house of God in Jerusalem, and he carried away all the vessels in God's house for God's worship and put them in the temple of his idols in Babylon—2 Chron. 36:6-7; Ezra 1:11.
 - b. In the New Testament this mixture is enlarged with the great Babylon—Rev. 17:3-5.
 - 2. We must come out of every situation where man's power is mixed with God's power, where man's ability is mixed with God's work, and where man's opinion is mixed with God's word—18:4, footnote 1.
- D. Babylon the Great will have two falls—the fall of religious Babylon and the fall of material Babylon—14:8; 18:2:
 - 1. The fall of religious Babylon will take place at the beginning of the great tribulation—17:16-17.
 - 2. The fall of material Babylon will take place at the end of the great tribulation—18:2, 21.
 - 3. The praise in 19:1-4 is related not mainly to the fall of material Babylon but to the fall of religious Babylon, because in the eyes of God religious Babylon is more hateful than material Babylon.
- E. God will judge Babylon to such an extent that nothing of Babylon will remain in the universe:
 - 1. Both Isaiah and Jeremiah prophesied that once Babylon has been destroyed, it will not be restored—Isa. 14:22-23; Jer. 50:39; 51:62.
 - 2. When God destroys both the religious and the political Babylon at the end of the age, that will be the end of the judgment on Babylon prophesied in chapters 50 and 51.
 - 3. Babylon the Great will be destroyed, removed from the earth, and cast into the lake of fire, and the New Jerusalem will be brought in to be the prominent center of God's eternal kingdom in the new heaven and new earth—Rev. 11:15; 21:2, 10-11.

Message Ten

**The Promise, the Prophecy,
the Remnant, and the Recovery**

Scripture Reading: Jer. 25:11; 29:10-11, 14;
30:1-3, 10-11, 16-19; 31:1-9, 11-13; 33:6

**I. God chose the children of Israel and made them His people
as a type of the church—Rom. 9:11-13; Acts 7:38:**

- A. The children of Israel, as the chosen people of God, are the greatest, collective type of the church—1 Cor. 10:1-11.
- B. In this type we can see that the church is chosen and redeemed by God, enjoys Christ and the Spirit as the life supply, builds God's habitation, inherits Christ as its portion, degrades and is captured, is recovered, and awaits Christ's coming.

**II. Jehovah promised to turn the captivity of Israel and bring
them back to their land—Jer. 16:15; 30:1-3, 10-11, 16-19; 31:1-9,
11-13:**

- A. "I know the thoughts that I think about you, declares Jehovah, thoughts of peace and not for evil, to give you a latter end and a hope"—29:11.
- B. "I have loved you with an eternal love; / Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness"—31:3.
- C. "I will turn your captivity and gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, declares Jehovah, and bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile"—29:14.
- D. "I will build you again, and you will be built, / O virgin of Israel. / Again you will adorn yourself with your tambourines / And will go forth in the dance of those who make merry"—31:4.
- E. "They will come and sing in the height of Zion, / And they will flow forth to the goodness of Jehovah... / And their soul will be like a watered garden, / And they will not languish anymore"—v. 12.
- F. "I will turn their mourning to gladness / And comfort them and cause them to rejoice after their sorrow"—v. 13.

**III. Jeremiah prophesied that the captivity of Israel in Babylon
would be for seventy years—25:11:**

- A. The word about seventy years was a comfort to Jeremiah, assuring him that the miserable situation of his country and his people, of the temple and the city, would last only seventy years—29:10; Zech. 7:5.

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- B. Just as God gave the people up to captivity, He would bring them back, not as captives but as triumphant warriors—2 Chron. 36:21-23.
- C. Because Daniel understood the prophecies in Jeremiah 25:11-12 and 29:10-14 concerning the seventy years of Israel's captivity, he set his face "toward the Lord God to seek Him in prayer"—Dan. 9:2-3:
 - 1. As God's co-worker on earth, Daniel understood God's will from the Scriptures and prayed for God's will according to the Scriptures.
 - 2. Daniel knew that God's intention was to bring the children of Israel back to the land of Israel for the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and thus, he prayed for it; the return of the children of Israel to Jerusalem was God's fulfilling of Daniel's prayer.

IV. Jehovah said that He would gather the remnant of His flock out of the lands where He had driven them and that He would bring them back to their pasture, and they would be fruitful and multiply—Jer. 23:3:

- A. After the seventy-year captivity, God came in to call the children of Israel to return from Babylon to the Holy Land—25:11:
 - 1. When God called His people to come back to His chosen land, very few responded; the majority remained in their captivity.
 - 2. Only a small number came back to the chosen land; those who returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple were the remnant of God's people—Ezra 1:3; 2:1-67.
 - 3. God promised that His people would return to Jerusalem after seventy years of captivity in Babylon (Jer. 25:11; 29:10); in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah a remnant returned according to this promise.
- B. In the Lord's recovery today we are a remnant of God's people who have come back to His original intention while so many genuine believers are scattered and remain in captivity—Psa. 126:1-4:
 - 1. We are members of the Body of Christ who have come back to the original ground of oneness and are standing here as God's remnant—Deut. 12:5.
 - 2. The majority of Christians remain in captivity; only a small remnant have returned to the proper ground for God's building—v. 11; 16:2; Psa. 132:13-14.

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Message Ten (continuation)

- C. The return of the children of Israel from Babylon to Jerusalem prepared the way for the coming of Christ—Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:4-6; Luke 2:4-7:
 - 1. The Lord's first coming depended on the return of God's people from their captivity in Babylon to the Holy Land:
 - a. According to the prophecy in Micah 5:2, Christ was to be born in Bethlehem.
 - b. In order for this prophecy to be fulfilled, God's people had to be in the Holy Land—Matt. 2:4-6; Luke 2:4-7.
 - c. The remnant of returned captives was the instrument used by God to rebuild the temple and usher in the first coming of Christ—Micah 5:2.
 - d. Without the return of the remnant to the Holy Land, there would have been no way for Christ to come to the earth through incarnation—Luke 1:35; 2:4-7.
 - 2. Likewise, Christ's second coming depends on the return of a remnant of His New Testament believers from their captivity in Babylon, degraded Christianity, to the unique ground of oneness for the building of the church, God's spiritual house—Eph. 2:21-22; Rev. 2:1; 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 2:5:
 - a. The Lord is calling a remnant of His people to meet His need by coming out of Babylonian captivity and returning to the proper ground of the church—Rev. 18:4; Isa. 52:11; Jer. 50:8; 51:6, 9, 45.
 - b. The Lord's intention is not to revive Christianity as a whole but to call a remnant of His people who are willing to pay the price to follow Him for the fulfillment of His purpose and to be built up as a part of the Body—Matt. 16:18; 18:17; Eph. 1:22-23; 2:21-22; 4:16; Rev. 1:11; 22:16.
- V. Jehovah said that He would bring recovery to the children of Israel—Jer. 30:17; 33:6:**
- A. Jehovah promised to bring the city of Jerusalem recovery and healing—v. 6.
 - B. He said that He would reveal to them an abundance of peace and truth and that He would cleanse them from all their iniquity and forgive all their iniquities, by which they had sinned against Him and transgressed against Him—vv. 6-8.

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- C. Jehovah made the further promise that Jerusalem would be a name of gladness and a praise and a glory to Him before all the nations—v. 9.

VI. The return of the children of Israel from their captivity typifies the recovery of the church—Ezra 1:3-11; Neh. 2:11, 17:

- A. When we speak of the recovery of the church, we mean that something was there originally, that it became lost or damaged, and that now there is the need to bring that thing back to its original state—Matt. 16:18; 18:17.
- B. Because the church has become degraded through the many centuries of its history, it needs to be restored according to God's original intention—1 Cor. 1:2; 12:27; Rom. 12:4-5; 16:1, 4-5; Rev. 1:11; 22:16.
- C. For the children of Israel to be recovered meant for them to be brought back to Jerusalem from Babylon; the recovery of the church involves a return from the capturing and divisive ground signified by Babylon—Psa. 126:1-4; 133:1.
- D. The children of Israel went back to Jerusalem, the God-ordained unique ground, with all the vessels of the temple of God, which had been brought to Babylon—2 Chron. 36:18; Ezra 5:14; 6:5:
 - 1. Jerusalem was the center for God's people to worship Him, and this unique center preserved the oneness of the people of God; for this reason it was necessary for God's people in the Old Testament to be brought back to Jerusalem, the unique ground ordained by God—Deut. 12:11; 16:2; 26:2.
 - 2. These vessels, which were of silver and gold, signify the riches of Christ and the various aspects of the experience of Christ—Eph. 3:8.
 - 3. Today's Babylon has not only captured God's people but also robbed all the riches from God's temple; now the Lord wants not only to call His faithful people out of Babylon and bring them back to the proper church life but also to recover all the different aspects of Christ, which have been lost—vv. 17-19; Col. 1:15-20; 2:16-17; 3:4.
- E. The recovery of the church is also typified by the rebuilding of the temple of God, the house of God in Jerusalem, and the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem—Ezra 1:3; Neh. 2:11, 17; Psa. 26:8; 36:8-9; 46:1, 5; 47:2, 6-8:

JEREMIAH AND LAMENTATIONS

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1. The temple, the place of God's presence, needed protection; the wall of the city was the defense of the temple.
2. In order to understand the relationship between the house and the city in the New Testament, we need to realize that the church is the enlargement of Christ and the increase of Christ—John 3:29-30; Eph. 4:13; Col. 2:19:
 - a. The first step of the enlargement of Christ is the church as the house, composed of all the believers put together to be the increase of Christ—Eph. 2:21-22.
 - b. The second step of the enlargement of Christ is the church as the city; the church as the house must be enlarged to be the church as the city—Matt. 5:14; Rev. 3:7, 12; 21:9-10.
 - c. The building of the church as the house and the city is the center of God's eternal purpose—Eph. 2:21-22; 1 Tim. 3:15; Rev. 21:2-3.
3. If there is no recovery of God's people from Babylon the Great to the church life, there will be no way for Christ to carry out His second coming—1:7:
 - a. This is the reason that the Lord, at the end time, is working to have a recovery of the church—v. 11; 3:7-10; 22:16; 1 Cor. 12:27; 1:2.
 - b. This recovery will be a preparation and a base for Christ's coming again—Rev. 1:7; 3:11; 19:7-9; 22:7, 12, 20.

Message Eleven

Shepherds according to God's Heart

Scripture Reading: Jer. 2:8; 3:15; 10:21; 23:1-4;
Isa. 40:11; Ezek. 34:11-31; John 10:11; Heb. 13:20-21;
1 Pet. 2:25; 5:2, 4; Rev. 7:16-17

I. Jehovah spoke through the prophet Jeremiah concerning the shepherds, the rulers—Jer. 2:8; 10:21:

- A. The shepherds, the rulers, transgressed against Jehovah; they did not seek Jehovah, and their flock was scattered—2:8; 10:21.
- B. The shepherds destroyed and scattered the sheep of Jehovah's pasture—23:1-2.
- C. Jehovah promised that He would gather the remnant of His flock and bring them back to their pasture and that He would raise up shepherds over them who would shepherd them, and they would be fruitful and multiply—vv. 3-4.
- D. Jehovah promised to give Israel shepherds according to His own heart; such shepherds would give the people of God proper knowledge and understanding of God—3:15.

II. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament reveal Christ as the Shepherd according to God's heart—Isa. 40:11; Ezek. 34:11-31; John 10:11; Heb. 13:20-21; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4; Rev. 7:16-17:

- A. As the mighty One, the ruling and judging One, Christ comes to be a Shepherd; He cares for His flock by ruling and correcting His sheep and by feeding His flock, gathering the lambs in His arm, carrying them in His bosom, and leading those who are nursing the young—Isa. 40:10-11; Matt. 2:6; 9:36.
- B. Ezekiel 34:11-31 prophesies that the Lord Himself will come as the Shepherd to search for His sheep and seek them out:
 - 1. As the Shepherd, the Lord will gather His people, His sheep, out of the nations and bring them back to the land of Canaan, which typifies the all-inclusive Christ as the allotted portion of God's people, to dwell on the high mountains, signifying the resurrected and ascended Christ—vv. 11, 14.
 - 2. When the Lord Jesus comes as the Shepherd to care for us, He comes also as the King to govern us; the issue of the Lord's caring for us as our Shepherd is that we obey Him as our King and come under His kingship and His throne within us—vv. 23-24.
- C. Christ is the good Shepherd, the great Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd, and the Shepherd of our souls—John 10:9-17; Heb. 13:20-21; 1 Pet. 5:4; 2:25:

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1. As the good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus came that we may have life and may have it abundantly—John 10:10-11:
 - a. He laid down His soul-life, His human life, to accomplish redemption for His sheep that they may share His zoe life, His divine life—vv. 11, 15, 17.
 - b. He leads His sheep out of the fold into Himself as the pasture, the feeding place, where they may eat freely of Him and be nourished by Him—v. 9.
 - c. The Lord has formed the Jewish and Gentile believers into one flock (the church, the Body of Christ) under His shepherding—v. 16.
2. God raised up from the dead “our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, in the blood of an eternal covenant”—Heb. 13:20:
 - a. The eternal covenant is the covenant of the new testament to gain a flock, which is the church issuing in the Body of Christ and consummating in the New Jerusalem.
 - b. As the great Shepherd, the Lord is making real to us the contents of the new covenant and is leading us into the experience and enjoyment of all the positive matters revealed in the book of Hebrews—8:8-13; 1:1-3; 2:9-18; 5:6-10, 14; 7:16, 22, 24-26; 13:1, 8, 12-15.
3. As the Chief Shepherd, Christ shepherds His flock through the elders of the churches—1 Pet. 5:4:
 - a. Without the elders’ shepherding, the church cannot be built up—v. 2.
 - b. The elders’ shepherding should be Christ’s shepherding through them.
4. As the Shepherd of our souls, the pneumatic Christ oversees our inward condition, caring for the situation of our inner being—2:25:
 - a. He shepherds us by caring for the welfare of our soul and by exercising His oversight over the condition of our inner being.
 - b. Because our soul is very complicated, we need Christ, who is the life-giving Spirit in our spirit, to shepherd us in our soul, to take care of our mind, emotion, and will and of our problems, needs, and wounds.

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- c. As the Shepherd of our souls, the Lord restores our soul and gives rest to our soul—Psa. 23:3a; Matt. 11:28-30.
- 5. In eternity future Christ will be our eternal Shepherd guiding us to springs of waters of life—Rev. 7:16-17:
 - a. As our eternal Shepherd, Christ will lead us into Himself as the springs of waters of life so that we may enjoy the eternal dispensing of the Triune God—v. 17a.
 - b. The waters of life will be supplied, and the water of tears will be wiped away—v. 17b.
 - c. Under Christ's shepherding in eternity, there will be no tears, no hunger, and no thirst—only enjoyment—vv. 16-17.

III. In His heavenly ministry the Lord Jesus continues the shepherding that He began in His earthly ministry—Heb. 13:20-21:

- A. In John 21:15-17 the Lord commissioned Peter to feed His lambs and shepherd His sheep in His absence, while He is in the heavens; this was to incorporate the apostolic ministry with Christ's heavenly ministry to shepherd God's flock:
 - 1. What He was doing in the heavens, the apostles did on earth to carry out His heavenly ministry—Heb. 13:20-21; John 21:15-17.
 - 2. Regarding shepherding, the apostolic ministry cooperates with Christ's heavenly ministry—vv. 15-17.
- B. The apostle Paul is a pattern of shepherding the saints in cooperation with Christ's shepherding in His heavenly ministry—Heb. 13:20-21; 7:25-26; 1 Tim. 1:16; 2 Cor. 1:3-4; Acts 20:20:
 - 1. Paul shepherded the saints as a nursing mother and an exhorting father—1 Thes. 2:7-8, 11-12.
 - 2. Paul shepherded the saints in Ephesus by teaching them "publicly and from house to house" (Acts 20:20) and by admonishing each one of the saints with tears even for as long as three years (vv. 31, 19), declaring to them all the counsel of God (v. 27).
 - 3. Paul had been enlarged in his heart to have the intimate concern of the ministering life—2 Cor. 7:2-3; 1 Thes. 2:8; Phil. 2:19-20.
 - 4. Paul came down to the weak ones' level so that he could gain them—2 Cor. 11:28-29; 1 Cor. 9:22; cf. Matt. 12:20.
 - 5. As a lover of the church in oneness with the church-loving Christ, Paul was willing to spend what he had, referring to

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his possessions, and to spend what he was, referring to his being, for the sake of the saints in order to build up the Body of Christ—Eph. 5:25; 2 Cor. 12:15; 11:28-29.

IV. Those who shepherd the flock of God should shepherd according to God—1 Pet. 5:2:

- A. To shepherd according to God is to shepherd according to what God is in His attributes—Rom. 9:15-16; 11:22, 33; Eph. 2:7; 1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Cor. 1:12.
- B. To shepherd according to God is to shepherd according to God's nature, desire, way, and glory, not according to our preference, interest, purpose, and disposition.
- C. In order to shepherd according to God, we need to become God in life, nature, expression, and function—John 1:12-13; 3:15; 2 Pet. 1:4:
 - 1. We need to be the reproduction of Christ, the expression of God, so that in our shepherding we express God, not the self with its disposition and peculiarities—John 1:18; Heb. 1:3; 2:10; Rom. 8:29; Gal. 4:19.
 - 2. We need to become God in His function of shepherding the flock of God according to what He is and according to His goal in His economy—Eph. 4:16; Rev. 21:2.
 - 3. When we are one with God, we become God in life and nature and are God in our shepherding of others—1 John 5:11-12; 2 Pet. 1:4; 1 Pet. 5:2.

V. The shepherding that builds up the Body of Christ is a mutual shepherding—1 Cor. 12:23-26:

- A. To shepherd is to take all-inclusive, tender care of the flock—John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28.
- B. All believers, regardless of their stage of spiritual growth, need shepherding.
- C. All of us need to be under the organic shepherding of Christ and be one with Him to shepherd others—1 Pet. 2:25; John 21:16.
- D. We need to shepherd the flock of God according to the Father's loving and forgiving heart and according to the Son's seeking, finding, and shepherding spirit—Luke 15:4-24, 32.
- E. We are both sheep and shepherds, shepherding and being shepherded in mutuality; through this mutual shepherding, the Body builds itself up in love—Eph. 4:16.

Message Twelve

**Experiencing and Enjoying
the Contents of the New Covenant
according to Our Spiritual Experience
for the Accomplishment of God's Economy**

Scripture Reading: Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:8-12;
Rom. 8:2, 28-29; 12:1-2

I. Based on the fact that Jeremiah prophesies concerning the new covenant, the book of Jeremiah may be considered an Old Testament book that is also a New Testament book; we need to see and appropriate the contents of the new covenant as God's bequests to us—Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:8-12:

- A. In the new covenant four blessings are promised:
 - 1. Propitiation for our unrighteousnesses and the forgetting (forgiveness) of our sins—v. 12.
 - 2. The imparting of the law of life by the imparting of the divine life into us—v. 10a.
 - 3. The privilege of having God as our God and of being His people—v. 10b.
 - 4. The function of life that enables us to know Him in the inward way of life—v. 11.
- B. Since forgiveness of sins is only a procedure by which to achieve God's purpose, this Scripture puts forgiveness of sins at the very end; however, according to our spiritual experience, we first obtain the cleansing that comes from forgiveness; then we enjoy God as the law of life, become God's people in the law of life, and possess a deeper knowledge of God in an inward way—cf. v. 12.

II. "I will be propitious to their unrighteousnesses, and their sins I shall by no means remember anymore"—v. 12; Jer. 31:34b:

- A. Christ made propitiation for our sins to appease God's righteousness, to reconcile us by satisfying the demands of God's righteousness—Heb. 2:17.
- B. The precious and all-efficacious blood of Christ resolves all our problems so that we can remain constantly in fellowship with God to continually enjoy His organic salvation—1 John 1:7-9; 2:1-2:
 - 1. Before God, the redeeming blood of the Lord has cleansed us once for all eternally (Heb. 9:12, 14), and the efficacy of that cleansing need not be repeated.

Message Twelve (continuation)

2. However, in our conscience we need the instant application of the constant cleansing of the Lord's precious blood again and again whenever our conscience is enlightened by the divine light in our fellowship with God.
3. Once God forgives us, He erases our sins from His memory and remembers them no longer; forgiveness of sins means the removal of the charges of sin against us before God that we may be delivered from the penalty of God's righteousness—John 5:24:
 - a. When God forgives us of our sins, He causes the sins that we have committed to depart from us—Psa. 103:12; Lev. 16:7-10, 15-22.
 - b. God's forgiveness of our sins results in our fearing Him and loving Him in our restored fellowship with Him—Psa. 130:4; Luke 7:47.
- C. The precious blood of Christ satisfies God, it is the believers' access to God, and it overcomes all the accusations of the enemy (Exo. 12:13; Eph. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; Heb. 10:19-20, 22; 9:14; 1 John 1:7, 9; Rev. 12:10-11); the Lord's precious blood is also the blood of the eternal covenant (Matt. 26:28; Heb. 13:20), typified by the blood through which the high priest entered into the Holy of Holies in Leviticus 16:
 1. The blood of the covenant enables us to enter into the practical Holy of Holies (Heb. 10:19-20), our spirit (Eph. 2:22; 2 Tim. 4:22), to enjoy God and to be infused by Him.
 2. According to the revelation in the New Testament, we are not only brought into God's presence by the blood of the covenant—we are also brought into God Himself; the redeeming and cleansing blood brings us into God!
 3. The blood of the covenant is primarily for God to be our portion for our enjoyment—cf. Psa. 27:4; 73:16-17, 25; 1 Cor. 2:9; Heb. 10:19-20.
 4. Eventually, the blood of Christ as the blood of the new covenant (Matt. 26:28; Luke 22:20) ushers God's people into the better things of the new covenant, in which God gives His people a new heart, a new spirit, His Spirit, the inner law of life (denoting God Himself with His nature, life, attributes, and virtues), and the ability of life to know God (Jer. 31:33-34; Ezek. 36:26-27; Heb. 8:10-12).

Message Twelve (continuation)

5. Ultimately, the blood of the new covenant, the eternal covenant (13:20), enables God's people to serve Him (9:14) and leads God's people into the full enjoyment of God as their portion (the tree of life and the water of life) both now and for eternity (Rev. 7:14, 17; 22:1-2, 14, 17).

III. "I will impart My laws into their mind, and on their hearts I will inscribe them"—Heb. 8:10; Jer. 31:33a:

- A. The center, the centrality, of the new covenant is the inner law of life; the law of the divine life, the law of the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2), is the automatic principle and the spontaneous power of the divine life.
- B. The Triune God has been processed through incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension to become the law of the Spirit of life installed in our spirit as a "scientific" law, an automatic principle—vv. 2-3, 11, 34, 16.
- C. God's relationship with us today is based fully on the law of life; every life has a law and even is a law; God's life is the highest life, and the law of this life is the highest law—cf. Prov. 30:19a; Isa. 40:30-31.
- D. Romans 8, the subject of which is the law of the Spirit of life (v. 2), may be considered the focus of the entire Bible and the center of the universe; thus, if we are experiencing Romans 8, we are in the center of the universe:
 1. God is in us now as a law that operates automatically, spontaneously, and unconsciously to free us from the law of sin and of death; this is one of the biggest discoveries, even recoveries, in God's economy—7:18-23; 8:2.
 2. We enjoy the dispensing of life into our being for the accomplishment of God's economy by the working of the law of the Spirit of life—Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10; Rom. 8:2-3, 10, 6, 11.
 3. The enjoyment of the law of the Spirit of life in Romans 8 ushers us into the reality of the Body of Christ in Romans 12; this law operates within us as we live in the Body and for the Body—8:2, 28-29; 12:1-2, 11; Phil. 1:19.
- E. By imparting His divine life into us, God puts the highest law (singular—Jer. 31:33) of this highest life into our spirit, whence it spreads into our inward parts, such as our mind, emotion, and will, and becomes several laws (plural—Heb. 8:10):

Message Twelve (continuation)

1. The spreading of this law in us is the imparting (Rom. 8:10, 6), and the imparting is the inscribing (2 Cor. 3:3); while the Lord is spreading, imparting, and inscribing, He reduces the old element of Adam from us and adds into us the new element of Christ, accomplishing metabolically the transformation of life for us—v. 18.
2. By the working, the spreading, of the law of life within us, God makes us the same as He is in life, nature, and expression; we are conformed to the image of the firstborn Son of God by the working of the law of life—Rom. 8:2, 29.
- F. While we remain in touch with the Lord, staying in contact with Him, the law of life, the law of the Spirit of life, works automatically, spontaneously, and effortlessly—Phil. 2:12-13; Rom. 8:2, 4, 6, 13-16, 23; 1 Thes. 5:16-18:
 1. We must cease from our own struggling and striving—Gal. 2:20a; cf. Rom. 7:15-20:
 - a. If we have not seen that sin is a law and that our will can never overcome this law, we are trapped in Romans 7; we will never arrive at Romans 8.
 - b. Paul willed again and again, but the result was only repeated failure; the best that a man can do is to make resolutions—7:18.
 - c. When sin is dormant within us, it is merely sin, but when it is aroused in us by our willing to do the good, it becomes “the evil”—v. 21.
 - d. Instead of willing, we should set our mind on the spirit and walk according to the spirit—8:6, 4; Phil. 2:13.
 2. We must cooperate with the indwelling, installed, automatic, and inner operating God as the law of the Spirit of life by prayer and by having a spirit of dependence, calling upon the Lord and pray-reading His Word in order to maintain our fellowship with Him—Rom. 10:12-13; 1 Thes. 5:17; Eph. 6:17-18:
 - a. The secret of experiencing Christ as the law of life is to be in Him, the One who empowers us to do all things, and the secret of being in Him is to be in our spirit—Phil. 4:13, 23.
 - b. In order to live in our spirit, we must take time to behold the Lord, praying to fellowship with Jesus to bathe in His countenance, to be saturated with His beauty, and to radiate His excellence—2 Cor. 3:16, 18; cf. Matt. 14:23.

Message Twelve (continuation)

- G. The function of the law of life requires the growth in life, for the law of life functions only as it grows—Mark 4:3, 14, 26-29:
 - 1. Christ's intercession on the throne motivates the life seed that He sowed into us at the time of resurrection—Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:34.
 - 2. The firstborn Son is interceding for us so that the life He has sown into our spirit may be motivated to grow, develop, and saturate all our inward parts, until we are completely permeated with His glorified and uplifted being.
 - 3. While the divine life grows in us, the law of life functions to shape us, to conform us, to the image of Christ as the firstborn Son of God so that we may become His corporate expression; the law of life does not regulate us from doing wrong; it regulates the shape of life—vv. 2, 29:
 - a. The indwelling prototype, the firstborn Son of God, automatically works in us as the law of life to conform us to His image, to “sonize” us; the Lord is working desperately to make every one of us the same as the firstborn Son.
 - b. God's way to mass reproduce this prototype is to work His living prototype, the firstborn Son, into our entire being; if we cooperate with and open up to this wonderful prototype, He will spread outward from our spirit into our soul.
 - c. The firstborn Son is the prototype, the standard model, for the mass reproduction of the many sons of God, who are His many brothers to constitute His Body as the new man for the corporate reproduction and expression of the standard model, the firstborn Son of God—v. 29.
 - 4. The law of life does not primarily function in the negative sense of telling us what not to do; rather, while life grows, the law of life functions in the positive sense of shaping us, that is, conforming us to the image of Christ; through the function of the law of life, we all will become the mature sons of God, and God will have His universal, corporate expression.
- IV. **“I will be God to them, and they will be a people to Me”—Heb. 8:10; Jer. 31:33b:**
 - A. For God to be our God means that He is our inheritance—Eph. 1:14:

Message Twelve (continuation)

1. God created man as a vessel to contain Him (Gen. 1:26-27; Rom. 9:23-24); therefore, God is man's possession, just as the content of a vessel is its possession.
 2. God is not only our inheritance but also the portion of our cup (Psa. 16:5) for our enjoyment; to be saved is to come back to God and enjoy Him anew as our possession, as signified by a man's returning to his possession in the jubilee (Lev. 25:10; Luke 4:18-19; 15:17-24; Acts 26:18; Col. 1:12).
 3. God gives us the Spirit not only as a guarantee of our inheritance but also as a foretaste of what we will inherit of God (2 Cor. 1:22); the Spirit's pledging adds more of God into us little by little until we enter into eternity and have God as our full enjoyment.
- B. For us to be God's people means that we are His inheritance—Eph. 1:11, 14, 18; 3:21:
1. We not only inherit God as our inheritance (1:14) for our enjoyment but also become God's inheritance (v. 11) for His enjoyment.
 2. It is by having God wrought into us that we are being constituted into God's inheritance; this is transformation, and it is also subjective sanctification.
 3. God put His Holy Spirit into us as a seal (v. 13) to mark us out, indicating that we belong to God; this seal is living, and it works within us to permeate and transform us with God's divine element until the redemption of our body.
 4. Consummately, the mutual inheritance of God and man becomes God's inheritance in the saints for eternity (v. 18); this will be His eternal expression to the uttermost universally and eternally (Rev. 21:11).
- V. **“They shall by no means each teach his fellow citizen and each his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all will know Me from the little one to the great one among them”—Heb. 8:11; Jer. 31:34a:**
- A. The function of life enables us to know God in the inward way of life; we can know God subjectively from within by the sense of life, which is the feeling, the consciousness, of the divine life within us—Rom. 8:6; Eph. 4:18-19; Phil. 3:10a:

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES

Message Twelve (continuation)

1. The sense of life comes from the divine life (Eph. 4:18), the law of life (Rom. 8:2; Heb. 8:10), and the anointing of the Spirit (1 John 2:27).
 2. The sense of life on the negative side is the feeling of death, and on the positive side it is the feeling of life and peace—Rom. 8:6; Isa. 26:3.
 3. We should live according to the sense of life in the principle of life, not according to the principle of right and wrong, the principle of death.
 4. This is to live according to the principle of the tree of life, not according to the principle of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—Gen. 2:9.
 5. The sense of life makes us know whether we are living in the natural life or in the divine life and whether we are living in the flesh or in the spirit.
- B. “In order to serve God and work for Him, a Christian must learn to stay away from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil... Only those who touch the tree of life will see their life and work remaining in the New Jerusalem” (*Messages Given during the Resumption of Watchman Nee’s Ministry*, vol. 1, pp. 94-95).
- VI. Ultimately, our enjoyment of the indwelling Spirit as the automatic law of the divine life, the law of the Spirit of life, is in the Body of Christ and for the Body of Christ with the goal of making us God in life, nature, and expression but not in the Godhead to accomplish the goal of His eternal economy—the New Jerusalem—Rom. 8:2, 28-29; 12:1-2; 11:36; 16:27; Phil. 1:19; cf. Gal. 4:26-28, 31.**