

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE ONE

AN INTRODUCTORY WORD

Scripture Reading: Job 1:1-5

With this message we begin the life-study of Job. My burden in these messages can be expressed by the following four sentences:

1) God deals with His saints for the purpose that they may gain Him as life.

2) God strips His seekers of their possessions so that they may inherit Him in full.

3) God works out for His overcomers through affliction an eternal weight of glory.

4) God is bringing His lovers into Himself as glory through all things and will glorify them with Himself.

I. THE NAME

The book of Job is named after its writer, Job, whose name means “hated” or “persecuted,” signifying what Job suffered of Satan, the enemy of God. Job surely suffered Satan’s hatred and persecution.

In this book Satan as the enemy of God is a mystery to us. We cannot understand in full why Satan still has not only the freedom but also the “civil right” to go to God’s place and attend one of the councils held by God with His angels. Of course, what is described in Job 1 and 2 took place two thousand years before Christ died on the cross to destroy the devil, who has the might of death (Heb. 2:14). Since Christ destroyed Satan on the cross, we may think that Satan no longer has the “civil right” to go into the presence of God. However, according to Revelation 12:10, Satan still accuses us in the presence of God day and night. This right will be taken away from Satan at the beginning of the great

tribulation. When the overcomers arrive in the heavens, Satan will be cast down from the heavens to the earth. From that time onward, Satan will no longer have the right to come into the presence of God.

II. THE WRITER

The writer of the book of Job was Job. This is confirmed by Ezekiel 14:12, 14, 20 and James 5:11. These verses are a proof of the authenticity of this book.

III. THE TIME

According to the way of Job's nomadic living (Job 1:3) and the way he offered the burnt offering for his children, this book should have been written at the time of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (v. 5; Gen. 22:13; 31:54), about 2000 B.C. This means that Job was written five hundred years before Moses wrote the Pentateuch.

IV. THE PLACE

The book of Job tells us that Job lived in Uz, a city in Edom (Lam. 4:21), west of the Arabian desert.

V. THE FORM OF WRITING

The book of Job is poetic in form, with the exception of chapters one and two and the last eleven verses of chapter forty-two. Job is the first of the five poetic books in the Scriptures; the other four are the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs.

VI. THE CONTENTS

A. The Expressions of the Sentiments of Godly Men

The contents of the book of Job are the expressions of the sentiments of godly men, including Job, his three friends, and the young man Elihu. This book is the record of the speaking of these five parties plus the speaking of God.

1. According to the Experiences of Their Godly Life

The book of Job, like the Psalms, consists of the expressions of the sentiments of the speakers according to the experiences of their godly life.

2. Filled with the Principle of Good and Evil

Their expressions were uttered before the law was given, yet their sentiments were filled with the principle of good and evil. This is the principle of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

3. Their Logic Being according to the Line of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil

Their logic was according to the line of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and, based on this, they considered very much God's justice and righteous judgment.

B. In Relation to the Judgments of God's Government

The expression of the sentiments of these godly men are in relation to the judgments of God's government. The debates between Job and his three friends were mainly concerning judgment. They reasoned that Job must have been wrong in some regard or aspect and that the things which happened to him were a judgment from God. They may also have thought that Job's children were wrong and died because of God's judgment. Thus, the contents of this book involve the matter of God's judgment.

1. God Creating the Universe according to His Economy and for His Intention

It was according to His economy and for His intention that God created the universe.

2. God Creating Man according to His Desire

Furthermore, it was according to His desire that God created man that He might express Himself through man. In order to be God's expression, man must be under God's rule, and this involves God's judgment.

3. God Exercising His Governmental Control over Man

It is necessary that God exercise His governmental control over man and judge man according to His righteousness. No one will escape God's judgment. Romans 2:5 and 6 say, "According to your hardness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each according to his works." In Acts 17:31 we are told that God "has set a day in which He is to judge the world in righteousness by the man whom He has designated." This man is Jesus Christ, who has been charged by God to judge the living and the dead (Acts 10:42). Sooner or later, all will be judged by the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. Some of His Judgments Being Temporary, and Some Being Ultimate

Some of God's judgments are temporary, like that on Sodom, and some are ultimate, like that at the great white throne (Rev. 20:11-15). Concerning this, 1 Timothy 5:24 says, "The sins of some men are openly manifest, going before to judgment; and for others, they also follow after." The sins of certain persons come to God's judgment earlier, and the sins of others come later. God's judgment, whether earlier or later, depends on His timing.

5. Some People Prospering and Flourishing for Awhile, Even though They Are Sinful and Evil

Because some of God's judgments are temporary and others are ultimate, some people prosper and flourish, even though they are sinful and evil. Some suffer natural calamities because of the curse brought in through man's sin (Gen. 3:17-18). What they suffer may not be due to their sinful deeds. Because Adam fell, committing sin, the curse came in as a kind of judgment. According to Romans 8:20 through 22, "the creation was made subject to vanity" and, subject to the slavery of corruption, "groans together and travails in pain together." This also is a kind of judgment. Because of this judgment, people sometimes suffer natural calamities, even

though they may not commit sin. Not all those who suffer a calamity such as a devastating hurricane suffer because they are sinful.

6. Different Views concerning God's Judgment

Job and his friends might have had different views in what they insisted on and debated about regarding God's judgment. Much of their debate resulted from different views concerning God's judgment.

7. Job and His Friends

Not Seeing the Positive Aspect of God's Economy in Dealing with His Holy People

It is evident that Job and his friends did not see the positive aspect of God's economy in dealing with His holy people. That is, God wants to strip, not to judge, His holy ones that He might gain them so that they might gain Him more.

Job's friends thought that what he was suffering was a matter of God's judgment. However, Job's sufferings were not God's judgment but God's stripping. The Sabeans took away Job's oxen and donkeys, the "fire of God" devoured his sheep, the Chaldeans took his camels, and a great wind caused the death of his sons and daughters (Job 1:13-19). All these things were God's stripping, but Job and his friends regarded them as God's judgment. Throughout the centuries, many readers of the book of Job have had the same concept, thinking that Job suffered because of God's judgment.

Have you ever had the thought that quite often God does something to strip you? Even though you may not be wrong, suddenly certain things happen to you, and God uses these things to strip you. Before I came into the Lord's recovery, the word *stripping* was not in my spiritual dictionary. I had heard about judgment, punishment, and chastisement but not about stripping. It was from Brother Nee that I learned about God's stripping.

Today in our spiritual dictionary the first word should be *Christ*, and the second word should be *stripping*. How much of Christ have you gained? How much of Christ we have

gained is according to how much stripping we have suffered. The more we suffer God's stripping, the more we gain Christ.

***8. Through His Stripping God Dispensing Himself
to Those Who Love Him and Seek After Him***

It is through His stripping that God dispenses Himself to those who love Him and seek after Him. Job lost all that he had, but ultimately he gained God Himself. God stripped his all in order that He could be his all for his full transformation and conformation to the glorious image of God in His Son (Rom. 8:29).

**C. Under the Inadequate Revelation
of the Divine Truths**

Job and his friends did not have the adequate revelation of the divine truths. As godly men, they expressed their sentiments within the limits of the revelation they had received.

***1. The Divine Revelation in the Bible
Being Progressive***

The divine revelation in the Bible is progressive. Up to Job's time the progression of the divine revelation had reached only the level of Abraham's time, that is, that sinners need God's redemption with the shedding of the blood of the burnt offering. Nothing had been unveiled regarding regeneration, renewing, transformation, conformation, and glorification. These things were not a part of the spiritual culture of Job and Abraham.

Many of today's Christians do not know about such matters as transformation, conformation, and glorification. They may know a little about regeneration and renewing, but most do not know anything about transformation, conformation, and glorification. Did you know about these things before you came into the Lord's recovery? Among today's Christians, the teaching concerning such matters is lacking because the revelation regarding them is lacking. In the recovery, on the contrary, we strongly emphasize transformation. Since the beginning of my ministry in this country, I have been

speaking about the exercise of the spirit for the experience and enjoyment of Christ and about transformation. However, for many of the saints transformation is merely a doctrine, not a practical experience in the spirit. The Christian life is a matter of Christ living in us. As Paul says, "It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). This is the Christian life, and this is the practical, daily experience of transformation in our spirit.

2. The Divine Truths Not Being Revealed in Completion until the Apostle Paul's Time

The divine truths regarding such matters as regeneration, renewing, transformation, conformation, and glorification were not explicitly revealed to man in God's Old Testament economy. They were not revealed in completion until the apostle Paul's time (Phil. 3:8). Paul received a full and explicit revelation of things concerning which Abraham, Job, and his friends had no understanding due to the shortage of the necessary spiritual culture. We should not blame or despise Job and his friends for their lack of understanding.

In Job 42:5 Job said, "I had heard of You by the hearing of the ear, / But now my eye has seen You." We may interpret Job's seeing God as his gaining God. But what does it mean to gain God? In Job there is no further revelation concerning this, for the revelation in this book is not clear, complete, or perfect. The clear, complete, and perfect revelation is found in Paul's writings, especially in Galatians, Ephesians, Philip-pians, and Colossians, the four books that make up the heart of the New Testament. If we read these books, we will have a clear view of what it means to gain God. Unfortunately, many of today's Christians remain in Job's age. I hope, therefore, that this message will help to open your eyes.

VII. THE SUBJECT

The subject of the book of Job is the purpose of God's dealing with His holy one. Job is a book of the debates of godly men concerning the purpose of the sufferings of the saints, that is, the purpose of God's dealing with His people. Since Job is such an early book, it does not contain a clear

revelation of God's purpose in dealing with His people. This revelation was given not to Job but to Paul. In Paul's Epistles we see that God's purpose in dealing with us is to strip us of all things so that we may gain God more and more. This is the subject of the book of Job.

VIII. THE SECTIONS

Job has six sections: the introduction (1:1—2:10); the debates between Job and his three friends (2:11—32:1); Elihu's answer to Job (32:2—37:24); the dialogue between God and Job (38:1—42:6); Jehovah's dealing with the three friends of Job (42:7-9); and Job's end (42:10-17).

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE TWO

THE TRIALS OF JOB

(1)

Scripture Reading: Job 1

In this message on the trials of Job, we will first consider the person of Job.

I. JOB THE MAN

A. Perfect and Upright, Fearing God and Turning Away from Evil

Job 1:1 says, "There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and this man was perfect and upright, and he feared God and turned away from evil." Being perfect is related to our inner man, and being upright is related to our outer man. Furthermore, to be upright means that we are not crooked or biased.

In addition to being perfect inwardly and upright outwardly, Job feared God positively and turned away from evil negatively. However, even with the positive matter of fearing God, there is not anything that is actually positive. God did not create man merely to fear Him without doing anything wrong. The Bible tells us that God created man in His own image and after His likeness that man may express Him (Gen. 1:26). This is the most positive thing among all positive things. To fear God and turn away from evil is not adequate, and actually this is not positive. The most positive thing is to express God. To express God is higher than fearing God and turning away from evil.

Another word used in relation to Job the man is *integrity*. In 2:3 Jehovah tells Satan that Job "still holds fast his integrity." In verse 9 Job's wife asks him, "Do you still hold

fast your integrity?" In 27:5 Job says to his friends, "Until I die, I will not put away my integrity from me." Finally, in 31:6 Job declares, "Let God know my integrity." Whereas the words *perfect* and *upright* are adjectives, the word *integrity* is a noun. Integrity is the totality of being perfect and being upright; it is the totality of perfection plus uprightness. With respect to Job, integrity is the total expression of what he is. In character he is perfect and upright, and in his ethics he has a high standard of integrity.

B. Having Seven Sons and Three Daughters

According to 1:2, seven sons and three daughters were born to Job.

C. Having Great Possessions and Many Servants

Job possessed seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred female donkeys, and a great many servants (v. 3a).

D. Greater Than All the Sons of the East

Job was greater than all the sons of the east (v. 3b).

E. Sanctifying His Children after Their Feasting Together and Offering Burnt Offerings for Them

Job's sons would hold feasts in each one's house, each on his own day, and they would invite their sisters to eat and drink with them (v. 4). Job would send word and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings for them, saying, "Perhaps my children have sinned and have cursed God in their heart" (v. 5). Because feasting, an excess in eating, can be worldly, Job sanctified his children after their days of feasting. He offered the burnt offerings for them continually. He surely was a godly father.

II. A COUNCIL HELD IN HEAVEN CONCERNING JOB

Ethically speaking, Job was very good. According to human eyes, there was no problem with Job. God even boasted to Satan regarding how good Job was (v. 8; 2:3). Only God knew

that Job had a need, that he was short of God. Because of His loving concern for Job, God held a council in the heavens to talk about Job.

A. Held by God with the Angels

This council was held by God with the angels, the sons of God (1:6a; cf. 1 Kings 22:19-23; Psa. 89:5-7).

B. Satan Also Coming as One of the Attendants

I do not believe that Satan was invited to attend this council. He came without invitation; he came by inviting himself. Quite often Satan comes without being invited.

In Isaiah 14:15 and Ezekiel 28:16-17 Satan was condemned by God and even sentenced by God. Yet in His wisdom and sovereignty God did not execute His judgment over Satan. He still has given Satan a certain limited time so that he can do something to meet some negative need in the fulfillment of God's economy. God could not and would not ask any of His many excellent angels to do what was needed to damage Job. Without Satan, there would have been no one to do the ugly work of damaging Job in order to strip him of everything that he might be full of God.

We may use the case of Judas in the New Testament as an illustration. One day the Lord Jesus said, "Was it not I who chose you, the twelve? Yet one of you is a devil" (John 6:70). Why did the Lord choose Judas to be one of the twelve when He knew that Judas would betray Him (John 13:2, 27)? Regarding a particular aspect of God's eternal economy, there was the need of Judas. Without Judas, how could the Lord Jesus have been betrayed, and without being betrayed, how could He have gone to the cross? Thus, there was the need for Judas.

The situation is similar with Satan in the book of Job. There was the need for someone to damage Job, not to judge him but to strip him of everything. Job had been laboring under God's blessing for many years and he had accumulated many things. He had seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred female donkeys, and a great many servants. He had a dear wife and

seven sons and three daughters. Moreover, Job was very successful in being perfect and upright and in holding to his integrity. His possessions, success, and attainment made him a contented and satisfied person. Although Job was full of possessions and full of his attainment, he did not have God within him. As God looked upon Job, He might have said, "Job, what shall I do with you? You are full of your possessions and your attainment, but you are not full of Me. You have Me in name, but you do not have Me within you." Thus, for God's dealing with Job, Satan was needed. Satan was the unique one in the universe who could and who would fulfill God's intention of stripping Job of his possessions and his ethical attainment.

C. God's Checking with Satan concerning Job

Job 1:7-12a is a record of God's checking with Satan concerning Job.

1. God Questioning Satan

God questioned Satan, asking him where he had come from (v. 7a).

2. Satan's Answer

In answer to God's question, Satan replied, "From roving the earth and going about in it" (v. 7b).

3. God Asking Satan concerning Job

"Jehovah said to Satan, Have you considered My servant Job? For there is none like him on the earth, a perfect and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil" (v. 8). Here God was boasting to Satan regarding Job. If we read this carefully, we will see that God's boasting here was with the intention that Satan would do something for Him.

4. Satan Asking If Job Fears God without Cause

Satan answered Jehovah, asking Him, "Does Job fear God without cause? Have You not set a hedge around him and his household and all that he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his possessions are spread throughout the

land” (vv. 9-10). God had set a hedge around Job, and He had blessed the work of his hands. In verse 11 Satan went on to say, “But stretch forth Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face.”

**5. God Saying That
All That Job Had Was in Satan’s Hand**

“Jehovah said to Satan, Behold, all that he has is in your hand; only do not stretch forth your hand against him” (v. 12a). We should not think that God was caught by Satan, for Satan was caught by God to do something for Him—to strip Job for God. Satan, an evil angel, was willing to do what none of the good angels was willing to do, and he immediately accepted God’s commission.

**6. Satan’s Evil Concept concerning God’s Dealing
with His Seeking People Being Based
on His Commercial Principle of Gain or Loss**

Satan’s evil concept concerning God’s dealing with His seeking people is based on his commercial principle of gain or loss. Satan is a business man, a merchant, and his thought is according to his commercial principle. He does not know that God’s purpose in dealing with those who love Him, even in the way of loss, is that they may gain Him to the fullest extent, more than the loss of all that they have other than Him, that He might be expressed through them for the fulfillment of the purpose in His creation of man (Gen. 1:26).

**III. SATAN ATTACKING JOB,
AND JOB SUFFERING TRIALS IN THE MATTER
OF HIS POSSESSIONS AND CHILDREN**

In Job 1:12b-19 we see that Satan attacked Job and that Job suffered trials in the matter of his possessions and children.

A. Satan Going Forth from God’s Presence

Verse 12b tells us that Satan went forth from God’s presence.

B. Satan's Attack

1. The Oxen and the Donkeys Being Taken Away

One day, when Job's sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in the house of their firstborn brother, a messenger came and reported to Job that the Sabeans had fallen upon the oxen and the donkeys and had taken them away, striking the servants with the edge of the sword. Only the messenger had escaped to relate these things to Job (vv. 13-15).

2. The Fire of God Devouring the Sheep

While this messenger was still speaking, another came and reported that the fire of God had fallen from heaven and had burned up the sheep and the servants and had devoured them. That fire had been some kind of natural calamity. Only the messenger had escaped to relate these things to Job (v. 16).

3. The Chaldeans Raiding the Camels and Taking Them

While this messenger was still speaking, another came and reported that the Chaldeans had formed three companies and had raided the camels and had taken them. They had struck the servants with the edge of the sword, and only the messenger had escaped to relate these things to Job (v. 17).

4. A Great Wind Causing the Death of Job's Sons and Daughters

While this messenger was still speaking, another came and reported concerning Job's sons and daughters. They were eating and drinking wine in the house of their firstborn brother; and suddenly a great wind came from beyond the desert and struck the four corners of the house, so that it fell upon the young people and they died. Only the messenger had escaped to relate these things to Job (vv. 18-19). The great wind was probably a whirlwind. Like the fire, it was a natural calamity instigated by Satan.

C. Job's Reaction to His Trials

Verses 20 through 22 describe Job's reaction to his trials.

1. Tearing His Clothes, Shaving His Head, Falling to the Earth, and Worshipping God

Job rose up, tore his clothes, shaved his head, fell to the earth, and worshipped God (v. 20).

2. Saying That Jehovah Gives and Takes Away

Job said, "Naked I came out of my mother's womb, / And naked I will return there" (v. 21a). Then he went on to declare, "Jehovah gives and Jehovah takes away; / Blessed be the name of Jehovah" (v. 21b).

3. Not Sinning nor Charging God with Unseemliness

In all this Job did not sin, nor did he charge God with unseemliness (v. 22).

Later, Job's three friends heard about his situation and came to visit him (2:11-13). Job, his wife, and his friends all were perplexed and unable to find out the reason for what had befallen Job. They could not find the answer because the Old Testament alone does not have the answer. The answer is in Paul's Epistles.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE THREE

THE TRIALS OF JOB

(2)

Scripture Reading: Job 2

In this message we will continue to consider the trials of Job.

IV. A COUNCIL HELD AGAIN IN HEAVEN CONCERNING JOB

A council was held again in heaven concerning Job (2:1). It was not easy for God to gain a person like Job who feared God and turned away from evil. Yet what Job had attained was altogether vanity. It did not fulfill God's purpose, and it did not satisfy God's desire. Thus, God was lovingly concerned for Job and held two councils in heaven concerning how to deal with Job (1:6-8; 2:1-3).

A. Held by God with the Angels

The second council was also held by God with the angels, the sons of God (v. 1a).

B. Satan Coming Again as One of the Attendants

Satan came again as one of the attendants, presenting himself before God (v. 1b).

C. God's Checking with Satan concerning Job

In verses 2 through 6 we see that again God checked with Satan concerning Job.

1. God's Question and Satan's Answer

Jehovah said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan

answered Jehovah, saying, "From roving the earth and going about in it" (v. 2).

2. God Asking Satan concerning Job

According to verse 3, Jehovah said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is none like him on the earth, a perfect and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, though you have moved Me against him to destroy him without cause." Here God admitted that what was done to Job was without cause.

3. Satan Saying That All That a Man Has He Will Give for the Sake of His Life

Satan answered Jehovah, saying, "Skin for skin! Indeed all that a man has he will give for the sake of his life. But stretch forth Your hand, and touch his bone and his flesh; and he will surely curse You to Your face" (vv. 4-5). Apparently, Satan was challenging God. Actually, Satan said exactly what God wanted, and God was pleased with it.

4. Jehovah Telling Satan That Job Was in His Hand

Jehovah told Satan that Job was in his hand. Only Satan was to spare Job's life (v. 6).

5. God Restricting Satan in the Limit of His Permission

Satan, in his cruel nature, would attack God's lovers to any extent to damage them, if God did not draw a line to preserve His lovers for their existence that they might gain Him to the fullest extent for His fullest satisfaction. The Bible shows us that although after God judged Satan, God still allowed him to be free to accuse, attack, damage, persecute, and martyr His saints that God may use him to a certain extent for the fulfillment of God's particular purpose, God always restricts him in the limit of His permission.

V. SATAN ATTACKING JOB, AND JOB SUFFERING THE TRIAL IN HIS BODY

In verses 7 and 8 we see that Satan attacked Job and that Job suffered the trial in his body.

A. Satan Going Forth from God's Presence

Satan went forth from God's presence (v. 7a).

B. Satan's Attack

Satan attacked Job by striking him with severe boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head (v. 7b).

C. Job's Pain

Job took a potsherd with which to scrape himself, and he sat among the ashes (v. 8). The boils that covered his body were extremely painful. As he sat there in pain, he had nothing to say.

D. Job's Reaction to His Trial

In verses 9 and 10 we have Job's reaction to his trial.

1. His Wife's Mocking Reaction

In her mocking reaction to Job's trial, his wife said, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die" (v. 9).

2. Job's Answer and Reaction

In answer and reaction to his wife, Job said, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Should we receive the good from God but not receive the ill?" (v. 10a). It seems that Job's thought here was not according to the commercial principle of gain or loss. In a sense, he was willing to suffer loss. However, his physical pain was unbearable.

3. Job Not Sinning with His Lips

In all this Job did not sin with his lips (v. 10b).

VI. A SIGNIFICANT, INSTRUCTIVE, AND UNVEILING SCENE

Here we have a significant, instructive, and unveiling

scene, a scene that involves both the earth and the heavens. Because the heavens were the origin of the scene, what happened to Job on earth began in the heavens. Today, through the help of the Bible, we can see both the scene on earth and the scene in the heavens.

**A. At the End of Satan's First Series of Attacks,
Job Not Praying but Blessing God**

At the end of Satan's first series of attacks, Job did not pray but blessed God without sinning or charging God with unseemliness (1:20-22).

**B. At the End of Satan's Second Attack,
Job Suffering Very Great Pain in Silence**

At the end of Satan's second attack, Job was suffering very great pain in silence (2:13b).

C. None of Job's Friends Speaking a Word to Him

In their visit Job's three friends lifted up their voice and wept, tore their clothes, cast dust over their heads toward heaven, and sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, but none spoke a word to him (vv. 12-13a). They could not speak anything because they had no knowledge, no understanding, concerning the purpose of what had happened to Job.

D. Job Cursing the Day of His Birth

Eventually, Job cursed the day of his birth (3:1). Instead of complaining to either God or man, Job cursed himself in cursing his birth.

**E. Job and His Three Friends
Being Ignorant concerning That
Most Painful and Most Terrifying Occurrence**

Such a scene indicates that Job and his three friends were all ignorant concerning that most painful and most terrifying occurrence and were puzzled in their godliness, unable to figure out what the reason was, what the purpose was, and what the result would be.

VII. A STEP OF THE DIVINE ECONOMY

Job's experience was a step of the divine economy. In this situation God took a step to accomplish something with Job.

A. The Occurrence Being Planned by God

The occurrence was undoubtedly planned by God. This should not be a problem to us. In His plan, God held a council twice and checked with Satan twice concerning Job, and Satan fell into God's plan.

B. To Carry Out the Consuming and Stripping of the Contented Job

This step in God's economy was to carry out the consuming and stripping of the contented Job in his seeking after Him. Before Satan's first attack, Job was a person of contentment. He was fully content and satisfied with his attainments in everything. Eventually, Job's possessions, health, and integrity were stripped away and consumed.

C. To Usher Job into a Deeper Seeking after God

God's intention was to usher Job into a deeper seeking after Him that he might gain Him instead of His blessings and his attainments in his perfection and integrity. Job was contented in the realm of success in his gaining of material things and in his ethical attainments, but he had nothing of God. Therefore, God ushered him into another realm that he might gain God.

VIII. AN UGLY TOOL WITH A DISHONORABLE COMMISSION

Satan was an ugly tool used by God to accomplish a dishonorable commission.

A. Satan Remaining Free to Be Purposely Used by God as an Ugly Tool

The scene in Job 1 and 2 shows that Satan, who had been judged by God, still remained free to be purposely used by God as an ugly tool to execute God's cruel dealing with His loving ones.

B. His Commission Being Dishonorable

Satan's commission in executing God's dealings with His loving ones was altogether dishonorable.

IX. A MYSTERIOUS AND GLORIOUS CONSUMMATION

A. Satan's Attacks on Job

Laying a Mysterious and Glorious Base

Satan's attacks on Job in two steps laid a mysterious and glorious foundation, or base, for God to accomplish His glorious transformation on Job and for Job to experience the mysterious transactions in his relationship with the mysterious God.

B. To Reach the Standard and Level of God's Eternal Economy regarding His Chosen Ones

The mysterious and glorious consummation is that we would reach the standard and level of God's eternal economy regarding His chosen ones, as revealed in the New Testament through the apostle Paul's writings (2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 3:9).

God is very mysterious not only in His person but also in His purpose, in His desire. However, today we have the New Testament, especially the writings of the apostle Paul, who completed the divine revelation (Col. 1:25). If we humble ourselves before God and empty ourselves and if we are poor in spirit, admitting that we have nothing and know nothing concerning God's person, God's purpose, and God's desire, and come to Paul's writings with the help of the Life-study messages, we will see something regarding the divine revelation in a clear, explicit, complete, and impressive way. In particular, we will see something concerning God's dispensing of Himself in His eternal economy.

The ancient book of Job is mysterious, and we need to study it in the light of Paul's writings. Without the Epistles of Paul it would be difficult for us to understand the book of Job because the conclusion of Job does not give us an explicit view concerning the purpose of God's dealing with His people. However, in the view of the New Testament, it is very clear

that God's purpose in dealing with His holy people is that He desires that they would be emptied of everything and to receive only God as their gain. The desire of God's heart is that we would gain Him in full as life, as the life supply, and as everything to our being.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE FOUR

JOB'S CURSING OF HIS BIRTHDAY

Scripture Reading: Job 3

In chapter three Job cursed the day of his birth. He was a good man and he was trying to keep his perfection, uprightness, and integrity, but due to his vexation he could not contain himself, and he did not know what to do. No doubt, he expected to have a time to deal with God, but this was not something that he dared to initiate. Not wanting to lose his perfection, he released his vexation by cursing his birthday.

I. JOB BREAKING THE SILENCE AND INITIATING THE DEBATE BY CURSING THE DAY OF HIS BIRTH

Job broke the silence of seven days and seven nights and initiated the debate by cursing the day of his birth because of his suffering of the very great pain (2:13; 3:1-3).

A. Being Disturbed, Perplexed, and Entangled by His Suffering

Job was disturbed, perplexed, and entangled to the uttermost by his suffering of the disasters that befell his possessions and his children and the plague on his body, in spite of his perfection, uprightness, and integrity. When Job cursed his birthday, he surely was not perfect and upright. In doing this he did not hold his integrity. Rather, by cursing the day of his birth, he became bankrupt in integrity. For Job to curse his birthday meant that he cursed his mother.

B. Preferring Darkness and Abhorring Light

Job preferred darkness and abhorred light (vv. 4-10).

Concerning the day of his birth, he said, "Let that day be darkness; / Let God not seek it from above, / Nor let light shine upon it." I find it hard to believe that Job really preferred darkness and abhorred light.

C. Preferring Death Instead of Life

Job indicated that he preferred death instead of life (vv. 11-23). It is difficult to believe that Job actually preferred death instead of life. If death had been his preference, why did he not put an end to himself and thereby solve his problem? Perhaps Job did not do this because he wanted to keep his integrity.

D. His Sighing Coming as His Food

Job said that his sighing came as his food and that his groaning poured out like water in his suffering (v. 24). What he dreaded came upon him (v. 25), and he had no ease, no quiet, and no rest, yet trouble came (v. 26).

II. JOB'S EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S CONSUMING AND STRIPPING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT BEING FAR BEHIND THAT OF PAUL IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Job's experience of God's consuming and stripping in the Old Testament was far behind that of Paul in the New Testament. God's consuming is to exhaust us, and God's stripping is to take away our riches from us. First, God stripped Job of his possessions, and then God consumed him. Job's suffering of the plague on his body was a consuming. Day by day and hour by hour, Job was being consumed. In the New Testament God's consuming and stripping become pleasant things. Since the day he was converted, Paul was a person under God's consuming and God's stripping (2 Cor. 4:16).

A. Paul Being Born Destined to Be Crucified and Being Reborn Crucified

Paul was born destined to be crucified, and he was reborn crucified that it would be no longer he who lived but Christ who lived in him (Gal. 2:20a). When we were regenerated,

we, like Paul, were reborn crucified for the purpose that from that time it would be no longer we who live but Christ who lives in us.

B. Paul Not Being Constricted under the Pressures on Every Side

In his experience of God's consuming and stripping, Paul was not constricted under the pressures on every side and did not perish despite his being cast down (2 Cor. 4:8-9). There were pressures on every side, yet Paul was not constricted. Every day he was cast down, but he did not perish. Paul did not curse the day of his birth, and he did not say that he preferred to die rather than to live. On the contrary, after much consideration Paul said that he still preferred to live, not to die, because to him to live was Christ (Phil. 1:21-25). Paul's living Christ was for him to magnify Christ. His desire was to magnify Christ whether through life or through death (v. 20). He did not care for life or death; he cared only for magnifying Christ.

C. Paul Being Well Pleased in Distresses for the Sake of Christ

When Paul was suffering distresses for the sake of Christ (2 Cor. 12:10), he was well pleased, he was happy, and he was even rejoicing in the Lord for his experiences (Col. 1:24). Paul's reaction to his sufferings was very different from Job's. Job did not rejoice but was all the time vexed.

D. Paul Pursuing to Be Conformed to Christ's Death in the Fellowship of His Sufferings

Paul pursued to be conformed to Christ's death in the fellowship of His sufferings (Phil. 3:10). He took Christ's death as a mold for his life. To Paul it was a great pleasure to be molded in the death of Christ.

E. Always Bearing About in the Body the Putting to Death of Jesus

Paul said that he was always bearing about in the body

the putting to death of Jesus and was always being delivered unto death for Jesus' sake that the life of Jesus might be manifested in his mortal flesh (2 Cor. 4:10-11). Every day in his Christian life Paul was put to death. The only way for him to manifest Christ's life was to experience Christ's death.

F. Paul's Outer Man Being Consumed, yet His Inner Man Being Renewed Day by Day

In his experience of God's consuming and stripping, Paul did not lose heart. Though his outer man was being consumed, yet his inner man was being renewed day by day. He said that his momentary lightness of affliction worked out for him an eternal weight of glory (2 Cor. 4:16-17).

Paul was one who expected to be consumed every day. He was such a man because he wanted to be renewed. Renewing can be consummated only by consuming. If you are not consumed, you cannot be renewed. This kind of renewing by consuming adds to the weight of glory that you will share in the coming ages. We will all share the Lord's glory, but the weight of glory will differ among the believers. Through God's consuming, the glory that we will share will become an eternal weight.

Job considered his suffering of affliction something very heavy, but Paul considered his affliction momentary and light. Instead of caring about our affliction, we need to care for the increase of the weight of glory. How much weight of glory we will have depends on how much we suffer in our present affliction for the Lord's sake. Paul did not care how much he suffered. He knew that the more he suffered, the more weight of glory he would share in eternity.

G. Paul Magnifying Christ by Living Him

Paul magnified Christ by living Him, whether through life or through death, by the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:19-21a). This is the Christian life. When God created man, this is the kind of life He wanted man to live.

III. GOD'S INTENTION WITH JOB

A. To Consume the "Perfect and Upright" Job and to Strip His Attainments in the Highest Standard of Ethics in Perfection and Uprightness

God's intention with Job was to consume this "perfect and upright" person and to strip his attainments, his achievements, in the highest standard of ethics in perfection and uprightness (Job 1:1).

B. To Tear Down the Natural Job in His Perfection and Uprightness

God's intention was also to tear down the natural Job in his perfection and uprightness that He might build up a renewed Job in God's nature and attributes.

C. To Have a Job in the Line of the Tree of Life

God's intention was not to have a Job in the line of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil but a Job in the line of the tree of life (Gen. 2:9).

D. To Make Job a Man of God

Eventually, God's intention was to make Job a man of God (1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 3:17), filled with Christ, the embodiment of God, to be the fullness of God for the expression of God in Christ, not a man of the high standard of ethics in Job's natural perfection, natural uprightness, and natural integrity, which Job attempted to maintain and hold (Job 2:3, 9a). Such a person, constituted with God according to His economy, would never be entangled by any troubles and problems so that he would curse his birth and prefer to die rather than to live.

After God created Adam, He placed him in front of two trees—the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God then charged Adam not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for if he ate of that tree, he would die (Gen. 2:9, 16-17). God wanted Adam to eat of the tree of life. If Adam had eaten of the tree of life, this tree

would have entered into him and then would have grown within him. However, Adam ate instead of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This tree was thus sown into Adam and grew within him, and it has been growing in all of Adam's descendants. At Job's time the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was only two thousand years old, but now it is six thousand years old. Today the entire human race is a race constituted according to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In every human society, regardless of the kind of ethics it has, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is growing. As long as this tree is growing among the human race, there will be no peace.

Before we were regenerated, we were in the line of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. When we were regenerated, Christ planted Himself into us as the tree of life. However, in our practical, daily living, are we in the line of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or in the line of the tree of life? In our married life, for example, we may be in the line of the tree of knowledge, and by the way we talk with our spouse we may not only grow this tree but also water it and fertilize it. What, then, should we do? We need to remember Paul's word in Galatians 2:20—"It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me"—and turn from the tree of knowledge to the tree of life. If we do this, we will live Christ and grow Christ as the tree of life.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE FIVE

THE FIRST OF THE THREE ROUNDS IN THE DEBATES BETWEEN JOB AND HIS THREE FRIENDS

CHAPTERS 4—11

(1)

ELIPHAZ'S ANSWER TO JOB BY REBUKING

Scripture Reading: Job 4—5

In chapter four we have the beginning of the first of the three rounds in the debates between Job and his three friends. Eliphaz answered Job not by sympathizing but by rebuking.

I. AFTER THE FORCED SILENCE

Eliphaz began to speak after the forced silence (4:2). The strong person and character of Job had forced his friends to be silent. After Job broke this silence, Eliphaz began to rebuke him.

A. Reminding Job of His Positive Condition in the Past

First, Eliphaz reminded Job of his positive condition in the past. He said to Job, “Behold, you have instructed many, / And you have strengthened the weak hands. / Your words have raised up him who was stumbling, / And you have made the bowing knees firm” (vv. 3-4).

B. Rebuking Job concerning His Negative State at That Time

In verse 5 Eliphaz went on to rebuke Job concerning his negative state at that time. “But now it comes to you, and you are wearied by it; / It touches you, and you are disturbed.”

According to Eliphaz, Job was no longer strong but had been defeated by the disasters and the plague.

C. Eliphaz's Word Being Based on Job's Perfection, Uprightness, and Integrity

Eliphaz's word was based on Job's perfection, uprightiness, and integrity (vv. 6-11). In verse 6 Eliphaz asked Job, "Is not your fear of God your confidence, / And the integrity of your ways your hope?"

D. Eliphaz's Word Being in the Principle of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil

Eliphaz's answer to Job was in the principle of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He said that the innocent and the upright (the good) will never perish (v. 7) and that those who plow iniquity and those who sow trouble (the evil) reap the same (v. 8). Speaking in a poetic manner, Eliphaz continued, saying, "By the breath of God they perish, / And by the blast of His anger they are consumed. / The roaring of the lion and the sound of the fierce lion / And the teeth of the young lions are broken; / The strong lion perishes for lack of prey, / And the whelps of the lioness are scattered" (vv. 9-11).

II. ELIPHAZ CORRECTING JOB

After rebuking Job, Eliphaz corrected him (vv. 17-21).

A. Asking Him If a Mortal Man Can Be More Righteous than God

Job held the concept that he was right, and his friend corrected him. Referring to Job, Eliphaz asked, "Can a mortal man be more righteous than God? / Can a man be purer than his Maker?" (v. 17).

B. Advising Him Not to Be Such a Fool as to Be Smashed to Pieces and Become Nothing

"Behold, He puts no trust in His servants, / And He charges His angels with error. / How much more those who dwell in houses of clay, / Whose foundation is in dust, / Who

are crushed like a moth! / From morning to evening they are smashed to pieces; / Without any considering it, they continually perish. / Should their tent cord be plucked up within them, / They die, and not in wisdom" (vv. 18-21). Here Eliphaz was advising Job not to be such a fool as to be smashed to pieces and become nothing.

**C. Eliphaz's Logic
concerning Man's Standing before God
Being Based on Ethics
according to the Short-sighted Teachings**

Eliphaz's logic concerning man's standing before God was based on ethics according to the short-sighted teachings, which he might have received at his time. These teachings did not come up to the standard of the divine revelation in the New Testament, that is, that man's standing before God is based on how much of God he has gained. Eliphaz should have asked Job how much of God he had gained, but at that time the divine revelation had not reached such a level. Therefore, we should sympathize with Eliphaz in his limited understanding.

**III. ELIPHAZ WARNING JOB NOT TO BE THE FOOL
SLAIN BY VEXATION AND JEALOUSY**

Eliphaz warned Job not to be the fool slain by vexation and jealousy (5:1-2), whose end will be miserable (vv. 3-7). Job was suffering and was waiting to receive something from his friend, but Eliphaz did not minister anything to Job. This should be a warning to us regarding our speaking to the saints and our prophesying in the church meetings. Our words should not be vain but should minister the supply of life.

**IV. ELIPHAZ IMPLYING THAT JOB
SHOULD FOLLOW HIM TO SEEK AFTER GOD
AND COMMIT HIS CAUSE TO GOD**

Eliphaz implied that Job should follow him to seek after God and commit his cause to God that he might prosper by the benefit of God's good doings (vv. 8-16). Eliphaz said, "As for me, I would seek after God, / And I would commit my cause

to God, / Who does great things that cannot be searched, / Wonderful deeds that cannot be numbered" (vv. 8-9). This kind of speaking did not afford any kind of supply to Job in his suffering. Job was in one realm, and Eliphaz was in another realm. Thus, Eliphaz's words were words of waste and vanity.

V. ELIPHAZ CONSIDERING THAT JOB WAS BEING CHASTENED BY GOD

Eliphaz considered that Job was being chastened by God. He admonished him not to reject God the Almighty's chastening, so that Job might be blessed by God in His ways (vv. 17-27). Eliphaz said to Job, "Behold, blessed is the man whom God corrects; / Therefore do not reject the chastening of the Almighty. / For He wounds, but He binds up; / He strikes, but His hands heal" (vv. 17-18).

Eliphaz's diagnosis of Job's situation was altogether wrong; he was a useless physician. Later, Job said to his three friends, "Physicians of no value are you all" (13:4b). As such a physician, Eliphaz was unable to diagnose Job's condition.

I am happy that we are now studying the book of Job. However, I am somewhat concerned that we may come to this book merely to gain more knowledge. We may condemn the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but we may add to the growth of the tree of knowledge by picking up mere knowledge from our study of Job.

We need to see that the entire Bible is a book on God's eternal economy. In His economy God's intention is to dispense Himself into us to be our life and our nature that we may be the same as He is in life and nature in order to express Him. What, then, about the stripping and the consuming? God's stripping and God's consuming are to tear us down. We are fallen and natural men. As such men, we need to be torn down. God must tear us down. Then God can have a base, a way, to build us up again.

Many Christians think that fallen man needs help so that he can be made whole. However, in His economy God's intention is not to make fallen man whole. Rather, God's intention is to tear us down and rebuild us with Himself as our life

and our nature that we may be persons who are absolutely one with Him.

The book of Job shows us that God, through Satan as an ugly tool, was tearing Job down by two ways: stripping and consuming. God's stripping and consuming were exercised over Job to tear Job down that God might have a base and a way to rebuild him with God Himself that he might become a God-man. This is what we should receive in our study of Job.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE SIX

THE FIRST OF THE THREE ROUNDS IN THE DEBATES BETWEEN JOB AND HIS THREE FRIENDS

CHAPTERS 4—11

(2)

JOB'S VINDICATION

Scripture Reading: Job 6—7

After Eliphaz's rebuking and correcting, Job vindicated himself. Chapters six and seven are devoted to Job's vindication.

I. STATING HIS GRIEVANCES

First, in 6:1-7 Job stated his grievances. He said, "Oh that my vexation were weighed indeed, / And that my ruin were lifted onto the scales together with it! / For then it would be heavier than the sand of the seas; / Therefore my words have been rash" (vv. 2-3). Then he went on to say that the arrows of the Almighty were with him and were the poison of which his spirit drank up and that the terrors of God were arrayed like an army against him (v. 4).

II. CHALLENGING GOD CONCERNING HOW MUCH GOD WOULD REQUIRE OF HIM

Job continued by challenging God concerning how much God would require of him (vv. 8-13). Job said, "Oh that I might have my request, / And that God would grant me what I long for; / That God would be willing to crush me; / That He would release His hand and cut me off!" (vv. 8-9). In his speaking Job surely was different from Paul, who rejoiced triumphantly when he was about to be martyred.

“What is my strength, that I should wait? / And what is my end, that I should be patient? / Is my strength the strength of stones? / Or is my flesh bronze? / Is there any help for me at all within me, / And has all wisdom been driven away from me?” (vv. 11-13). Here Job was challenging God, asking Him how much He would require of him. It seemed to Job that God was treating him as if he was stone or bronze. Job’s word regarding wisdom indicates that he had been exhausted in every way and had become empty.

III. BLAMING HIS FRIENDS FOR NOT SHOWING KINDNESS TO HIM

Job blamed his friends for not showing kindness to him, who was fainting under the striking of God (vv. 14-23). Job said to them, “To him who is fainting there should be kindness from his friend, / Else he will forsake the fear of the Almighty. / My brothers have dealt as treacherously as a desert brook, / As the rivulets of the desert brooks that pass away, / Which are turbid because of the ice, / And into which the snow hides itself. / When they are scorched, they are completely consumed; / When it is hot, they are dried up from their place” (vv. 14-17). Here Job compared his friends to water brooks that did not have much water. He also compared them to brooks that were turbid, dark, because of ice and snow and that were eventually scorched by the sun and became dry. Job was saying that his friends did not have any “water” with which to supply him as he was fainting.

IV. JUSTIFYING HIMSELF BY SAYING THAT HE WAS NOT WRONG IN ANYTHING

Job justified himself by saying that he was not wrong in anything (vv. 24-30). “Teach me and I will be silent; / Cause me to understand how I have erred. / How forceful are upright words! / But what does this reproving from you reprove? / Do you think you can reprove words? / But the words of a desperate man are for the wind” (vv. 24-26). Here Job was saying that Eliphaz’s words were not upright but crooked and

biased. If they had been upright, Job would have been helped by them.

In verse 27 Job went on to say, "You would even cast lots over the orphan / And bargain over your friend." Job told his friends that they treated him not as a friend but as merchandise over which people bargain regarding the price.

In verses 28 through 30 Job continued, "Now then be pleased to look upon me, / For surely I will not lie to your face. / Turn now; let there be no injustice. / Indeed turn; my righteousness is still here. / Is there any injustice on my tongue? / Can my palate not discern calamities?" Here Job strongly declared that his righteousness was still there (v. 29b). He vindicated himself by insisting that he was not wrong in anything.

**V. EXPRESSING THAT HE HAD
THE COMMON KNOWLEDGE OF THE STRUGGLE,
THE VANITY, THE TROUBLE, THE SUFFERING,
AND THE END OF HUMAN LIFE**

In his vindication of himself, Job expressed that he had the common knowledge of the struggle, the vanity, the trouble, the suffering, and the end of human life (7:1-10). Although Job knew these things, he did not know God in reality, and he did not know anything concerning God's economy.

VI. LOATHING LIFE AND COMPLAINING

Job loathed life and complained by asking why God would not forgive him and let him die (vv. 11-21). He said that he would speak in the distress of his spirit and complain in the bitterness of his soul (v. 11b). He loathed life and would not live forever (v. 16a). He concluded by saying to God, "If I have sinned, what have I done to You, / O Watcher of man? / Why have You made me Your target so that I have become a burden to myself? / And why do You not forgive my transgression / And take away my iniquity? / For now I may lie down in the dust; / And You will seek me out, and I will not be" (vv. 20-21). This was Job's complaint as he vindicated himself to God.

**VII. JOB, LIKE HIS FRIENDS, BEING HALTED
IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF RIGHT AND WRONG,
NOT KNOWING GOD'S ECONOMY**

Job, like his friends, was halted in the knowledge of right and wrong, not knowing God's economy, not realizing in an adequate way the purpose of God's creating of man. He and his friends were devoid of the divine revelation and of the experience of the divine life. He had no idea that God had no intention to increase his perfection, uprightness, righteousness, and integrity. Rather, God's intention was to strip all these human virtues which he had as his contentment, that he could seek and gain only God Himself. Neither his friends nor he were in the line of the tree of life as God ordained man to be.

God put the book of Job into the Bible as a black background. The speaking of Job and his friends indicated that although they apparently were godly men, they were short of God, and they did not express God. Job and his friends came together to debate, not to fellowship. They had nothing of God to fellowship with one another.

We need to consider our speaking today in the church meetings. As we are practicing the New Testament way, we desire to nourish, to feed, all the saints that they may be perfected, equipped, to speak for God. What we want to hear is nothing other than God in Christ with the church. We speak what we are, we speak what we have, we speak what we enjoy, and we speak what we love and appreciate. If we love Christ and appreciate God in Christ, that is what we will speak. Then our prophesying in the church meetings will be rich in God with Christ and with the church. However, many have been members of the Body of Christ for years, but still they cannot speak even a short word for Christ. We may talk about Christ, but we may not live Christ or have the practice of appreciating Christ or exalting Christ. If this is our situation, how can we minister Christ to others by speaking Him for the divine dispensing? I hope that from now on our church life will be full of Christ, with Christ in our praying, praising, and prophesying.

The Bible is a consistent book. It begins with God, and it

ends with God. It begins with the tree of life, and it ends with the tree of life. It begins with the river of living water, and it ends with the river of living water. This shows us the consistency of the Bible.

In this consistent book, the subject is God's economy, God's eternal plan, God's arrangement, to have man to contain Christ—to have Christ as man's life, as man's nature, and even as man's person. Our having Christ as our life, our nature, and our person means that we are constituted with Christ. As a result of being constituted with Christ, we become a Christ-man, a Christian. Then we express Christ by living Him, by magnifying Him, and by exalting Him. When we come together, whatever we do—our singing, praying, speaking, prophesying—will be an expression of Christ.

Paul's speaking in Ephesians is very different from the speaking in the book of Job. In Ephesians 1 Paul spoke of the spiritual blessings in the heavenlies: God's choosing, God's predestinating, Christ's redeeming, and the Spirit's sealing. Through such blessings the Triune God becomes one with all His beneficiaries, making them the church, the Body of the One who fills all in all. Then in chapter three Paul said that he bowed his knees to the Father and asked Him to strengthen the believers with power through His Spirit into their inner man, that Christ may make His home in their hearts, that they may be filled unto all the fullness of God to become God's fullness, His expression.

God could not speak such things to Job and his friends because their kind of spiritual culture was very primitive. Therefore, when they spoke to one another, they could only rebuke and vindicate, uttering words of vanity and emptiness. In Job 11:12 Zophar called Job "an empty-headed man."

We should not appreciate the speaking of Job and his friends in a positive way but only in a negative way, as a black background for the bright revelation in the New Testament. I hope that through this study of the book of Job we all will be brought into a further step of our divine culture in order that we may be filled with the dispensing of God in Christ as our life, our life supply, and our everything.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE SEVEN

THE FIRST OF THE THREE ROUNDS IN THE DEBATES BETWEEN JOB AND HIS THREE FRIENDS

CHAPTERS 4—11

(3)

BILDAD'S REBUTTAL

Scripture Reading: Job 8

Before we come to Bildad's rebuttal in chapter eight, I would like to say something further concerning Job's self-vindication in chapters six and seven. Job's vindication of himself in these chapters is an extract of the whole book. The entire book of Job is actually a kind of vindication.

As he vindicated himself, Job stated his grievances, challenged God, blamed his friends, justified himself, and expressed that he had the common knowledge of the vanity and end of human life. Job was challenging God and his friends to give him an answer. Actually, the entire book of Job, which has become a big problem to many Christians, needs an answer. As we will see, the needed answer is found not in the book of Job but in the New Testament.

After stating his grievances, longing for his vexation to be weighed and his ruin to be lifted onto the scales together with it (6:2), Job challenged God concerning how much God would require of him. Job seemed to be saying, "God, I have done what You have required me to do. What else do You want? What do You want me to be, and what do You want me to do? Because You did not tell me these things, I am puzzled." When we come to chapter nine, we will see that Job wanted an opportunity to present his "case" before God in "court," with himself as the plaintiff and God as the

defendant. However, Job expected that God, who is almighty and wise, would win the case. As a result, Job felt that he had no way out of his situation.

After challenging God, Job turned to his friends, blaming them for not showing kindness to him, who was fainting under the striking of God. Job seemed to be saying to them, "Your way is not right. You reprove me, condemn me, and despise me. This is not love, and this is not kindness. I need direction. You should tell me what my direction should be. Tell me where I should go and what I should do."

Next Job turned to himself, justifying himself by saying that he was not wrong in anything. He expressed that he had the common knowledge of the struggle, the vanity, the trouble, the suffering, and the end of human life. Regarding this, he felt that he knew more than his friends did. Eventually, Job said that he loathed life and indicated that he no longer had any taste for life. Since there was no answer to his situation, Job concluded that the only thing for him to do was to die.

Job and his friends were in the wrong realm. They were in the realm of good and evil, in the realm of promoting man's integrity. They needed to get into the right realm, the realm of the tree of life. They needed to come back to the tree of life. The tree of life was their answer.

Instead of trying to attain to the peak of integrity, Job needed to do his best to pursue God, to pursue Christ the person directly. Job's direction should have been toward that peak, not toward the peak of human integrity. This is the answer to Job and his friends regarding the purpose of Job's sufferings.

Let us now go on to consider Bildad's rebuttal to Job in chapter eight.

I. BILDAD BEING THE SECOND ONE TO REBUT JOB

In the first round of the debates between Job and his friends, the second one to rebut Job was Bildad, who complained that Job's speaking was too long, like a mighty wind (8:1-2). Bildad's speaking was a rebuttal to Job's vindication of himself.

**II. CLAIMING THAT ALL THE DISASTERS
AND THE PLAGUE ON JOB
WERE NOT GOD'S PERVERTING OF JUSTICE**

Bildad claimed that all the disasters and the plague on Job were not God's perverting of justice or the Almighty's perverting of righteousness (v. 3). Bildad implied that Job had condemned God, claiming that God had perverted justice concerning him. Bildad told Job that God would never do such a thing.

**III. THINKING THAT JOB'S CHILDREN
MIGHT HAVE SINNED AGAINST GOD**

Bildad thought that Job's children might have sinned against God and that God delivered them into the hand of their transgression (v. 4). To be fair, Bildad might have had some ground to say this, since Job's children were killed while they were feasting and drinking wine.

**IV. BELIEVING THAT IF JOB SOUGHT GOD EARNESTLY
AND MADE SUPPLICATION UNTO THE ALMIGHTY,
AND IF JOB WAS PURE AND UPRIGHT,
GOD WOULD ROUSE HIMSELF FOR HIM**

Bildad believed that if Job sought God earnestly and made supplication unto the Almighty, and if Job was pure and upright, then surely God would rouse Himself for him and restore well-being to his righteous habitation, including his family. Though his beginning was small, his end would be very great (vv. 5-7). It is hard to say what was Bildad's standard of purity and uprightness. His speaking was according to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. While Bildad was speaking, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was growing.

**V. TEACHING JOB
TO INQUIRE OF THE FORMER GENERATIONS**

Bildad went on to teach Job to inquire of the former generations and to attend to what their fathers had sought out, that they might teach him (vv. 8-10). Bildad's word was full of disrespect and despising.

**VI. WARNING JOB
THAT ALL WHO FORGET GOD
WITHER LIKE PAPYRUS AND REEDS**

Bildad warned Job that all who forget God wither like papyrus and reeds. He said that the hope of the profane perishes, whose confidence is cut off and whose trust is a spider's web. He leans upon his house, but it will not stand. He holds fast to it, but it will not endure (vv. 11-19). This was the speaking not of a learned person but of one who was childish, foolish, and in darkness.

**VII. DECLARING TO JOB
THAT GOD WILL NOT REJECT A PERFECT MAN**

Bildad continued by declaring to Job that God will not reject a perfect man, nor will He support evildoers. God, Bildad said, would fill Job's mouth with laughter and his lips with shouting. Those who hated Job would be clothed with shame, and the tent of the wicked would be no more (vv. 20-22). Once again, Bildad spoke vain words.

**VIII. BILDAD'S LOGIC
CONCERNING MAN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD
BEING ABSOLUTELY IN
THE PRINCIPLE OF THE TREE
OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL**

Bildad's logic concerning man's relationship with God was even the more built upon good and evil, right and wrong, absolutely in the principle of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, altogether according to the human, ethical concept of fallen man. In his rebuttal there was no flavor of being enlightened in the divine revelation and no taste of being spiritual in the divine life. He was altogether in darkness and in the vanity of man's ethics. His rebuttal was utterly powerless to convince Job, who was higher in things concerning God than his contemporaries.

Even though Job was higher in such things than he was, Bildad presumed to rebuke him, to warn him, to teach him, to educate him, and to give him instructions. Bildad could do this because he was in darkness. Job was also in darkness,

daring to challenge God, and this opened the way for his friends to speak in darkness. Thus, both Job and his friends were in darkness.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE EIGHT

THE FIRST OF THE THREE ROUNDS IN THE DEBATES BETWEEN JOB AND HIS THREE FRIENDS

CHAPTERS 4—11

(4)

JOB'S UNYIELDINGNESS AND ZOPHAR'S BLIND ARGUMENT

Scripture Reading: Job 9—11

In this message we will consider Job's unyieldingness and Zophar's blind argument. Whereas Job was very strong in character and was not easily subdued, Zophar was foolish, not clear in the divine revelation concerning God's economy of dispensing Himself into His people.

I. JOB'S UNYIELDINGNESS

Job's unyieldingness is fully shown in chapters nine and ten.

A. Boasting in Knowing What His Friends Knew

Job boasted in knowing what his friends knew, saying, "I do indeed know that it is so" (9:2a). Job was saying that he already knew what his friends were talking about and that they did not need to speak any more about it.

B. Admitting That He Could Not Contend with God and Resist Him

Job admitted that he could not contend with God and resist Him, because He is wise and mighty (vv. 3-12). In verses 5 through 9 Job alluded to God's judgment upon the preadamic

universe. After asking how a man can be righteous before God, Job said, "If he is pleased to contend with Him, / He cannot answer Him one thing in a thousand. / He is wise in heart and mighty in strength— / Who has ever resisted Him and come through whole?" (vv. 3-4). No one can stop God or say to Him, "What are You doing?" (v. 12).

C. Thinking That He Could Not Win His Case, Even though He Was Righteous and Perfect

Job thought that he could not win his case, even though he was righteous and perfect (vv. 15, 20-21), because God is mighty and does not turn back His anger in His judgment (vv. 13-24). This indicates that Job expected that he and God would go to a law court to be judged. Job would be the plaintiff, and God would be the defendant. Here Job as the plaintiff had a wrong concept, thinking that God the defendant was dealing with him in anger. However, God's dealing with Job was not God's anger but God's good pleasure. It was not God's judging but God's stripping, consuming, and tearing down that He might rebuild Job with God Himself.

D. Considering That He Was a Man Living in the Days Which Were Fleeing Away

Job considered that he was a man living in the days which were fleeing away and that he could not be judged together with God and be held innocent (vv. 25-35).

E. Complaining That God Ill-treated Him without Cause on His Side and Attacked Him according to What Was Hidden in God's Heart

Job complained that God, knowing that he was not wicked and not acquitting him of his iniquity, ill-treated him without cause on his side and attacked him again and again according to what was hidden in God's heart (10:1-17). Job said to God, "Make known to me why You contend with me" (v. 2b). In verse 13 he went on to say, "You have hidden these things in Your heart; / I know that this is with You." This indicates that Job could not find the reason for God's treatment of him, but he believed that there had to be some reason hidden in

God's heart. Job was right; something was hidden in God's heart. Ephesians 3:9 tells us of the mystery hidden in God. This is the mystery of the ages.

According to Job 38:7 the angels of God (the sons of God) shouted for joy when God laid the foundations of the earth. The angels might have wondered what God's purpose was in creating the earth and man. Adam himself did not know why God created him in His image after His likeness (Gen. 1:26). God kept His intention hidden throughout the ages, not telling Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, Isaiah, or any of the prophets. The Creator did a lot in His creation, but before the New Testament time He did not unveil to anyone what His purpose was.

The hidden mystery is that God in His Divine Trinity desires to be dispensed and wrought into His creation, man, to make man His duplication, to make man His expression. Not knowing this, Job misunderstood God and thought that God was angry with him and was judging him and punishing him. God's intention was not to judge Job or to punish him but to tear him down and then rebuild him with Himself. God knew that after Job had passed through a time of suffering, he would be rebuilt and become another person—a new man in God's new creation. This is the answer to Job, to the book of Job, and to Job's vindication.

The Bible of sixty-six books is for only one thing: for God in Christ by the Spirit to dispense Himself into us to be our life, our nature, and our everything that we may live Christ and express Christ. This should be the principle that governs our life. In a practical way, it should be today's tree of life for our enjoyment.

The Bible is not mainly a book of prophecy, teaching, or types. The Bible is a book of God's economy. To say merely that the Bible is a book consistently on Christ is not adequate. The Bible is on Christ in God's economy. God's economy is to dispense Himself in His Divine Trinity in Christ by the Spirit into us that we may have Him as our life, nature, and everything. When we experience this, it is no longer we who live, but it is Christ who lives in us (Gal. 2:20). This is the tree of life.

F. Wishing That He Had Died at His Birth

Job wished that he had died at his birth and expected that God would let him alone that he might be somewhat revived before he went to the shadow of death (Job 10:18-22).

Job's unyieldingness was due to the fact that he was devoid of the divine revelation and was thus unable to comprehend that God's dealing with him through disasters was not in the realm of ethics, that is, did not depend on whether he did good or evil, or on whether he was right or wrong, but was in the sphere of God-gaining that he should be turned from seeking perfection in ethics to seeking and gaining God instead of anything else.

II. ZOPHAR'S BLIND ARGUMENT

In chapter eleven we have Zophar's blind argument.

A. Zophar Being the Third One to Answer Job in the First Round of Their Debates

Zophar was the third one to answer Job in the first round of their debates (v. 1).

B. Feeling That Job Was Too Vindictive

Zophar felt that Job was too vindictive, that his doctrine was not pure, that he was not clean in God's eyes, and that God had forgotten some of his iniquity (vv. 2-6).

C. Teaching Job That God the Almighty Is Unlimited

Zophar taught Job that God the Almighty is unlimited, higher than heaven, deeper than Sheol, longer than the earth, and broader than the sea. No one can stop Him from judging the man of falsehood, iniquity, and the man empty of intelligence (vv. 7-12).

In verse 12 Zophar said, "An empty-headed man acquires intelligence / When the foal of a wild ass is born as a man." This surely was not a word of fellowship or of lovingkindness. Zophar was saying that Job was an empty-headed man, a person altogether lacking intelligence. In his despising and

even sarcastic speaking here, Zophar went so far as to liken Job to a foal of a donkey without any intelligence. It is no wonder that Job blamed his friends for not showing any lovingkindness to him.

D. Teaching Job about Setting His Heart Right and Stretching His Hands Out to God

Zophar also taught Job that if he would set his heart right and stretch his hands out to God, and if he put iniquity far away from his hand and did not let wrong dwell in his tents, then he would lift up his face without blemish and would be steadfast and not be afraid. He would forget misery, and his time would rise more brightly than the noonday, or, though dark, it would still be like the morning. He would be secure with hope and lie down without being terrified. But the eyes of the wicked will fail, the way to flee will be lost to them, and their hope will be to end their breathing (vv. 13-20). Such was the teaching that Zophar gave to Job.

Zophar was absolutely blind in the comprehension of man's standing before God, and his argument was altogether based on man's natural concept in the realm of ethics, without any enlightenment of the divine revelation regarding what man should be to God.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE NINE

THE SECOND OF THE THREE ROUNDS IN THE DEBATES BETWEEN JOB AND HIS THREE FRIENDS

CHAPTERS 12—20

(1)

JOB'S SUPERIORITY COMPLEX, ACCUSATION, AND ARGUMENTS AND ELIPHAZ'S REBUKE AND WARNING

(1)

Scripture Reading: Job 12—13

In this message we will begin to consider Job's superiority complex, accusation against his friends, and arguments with God. This is followed by Eliphaz's rebuke and warning.

I. JOB'S SUPERIORITY COMPLEX, ACCUSATION, AND ARGUMENTS

A. Job's Superiority Complex in the Matter of Knowing God

In 12:1—13:2 we see Job's superiority complex in the matter of knowing God.

1. Claiming That He Was Not Inferior to His Friends

Considering himself the righteous man, the perfect man, who called out to God, Job claimed that he was not inferior to his friends, who had made him a laughingstock. They were at ease and contemned calamity, not knowing that the tents of robbers prosper and that those who provoke God and carry their god in their own might have security (12:1-6). This word

is about the supposed prosperity in doing good and suffering in doing evil.

**2. Contemning His Friends
and Asking Them to Learn of the Beasts,
of the Birds, of the Earth, and of the Fish**

Job contemned his friends and asked them to learn of the beasts, of the birds of heaven, of the earth, and of the fish of the sea, all of which know that Jehovah made them and that in His hand is the life of every living thing and the spirit of all flesh of man. Yet his friends were inferior to the ear that tries words and to the palate that tastes food (vv. 7-11).

**3. Boasting of His Superior and Broader Knowledge
of God**

Finally, Job boasted of his superior and broader knowledge of God (12:12—13:2). Job declared that with God are wisdom and might, that God controls what happens on earth, and that God rules over the nations, making nations great and destroying them. His speaking in 12:12-25 indicates that he was quite knowledgeable. Then as a concluding word he said to his friends, "Behold, my eye has seen all this; / My ear has heard and understood it. / What you know, I also know; / I am not inferior to you" (13:1-2). This surely is a sign of Job's superiority complex.

B. Job's Accusing His Friends of Being False

In 13:4-19 Job accused his friends of being false. He called them plasterers of lies and physicians of no value and urged them to be silent (vv. 4-5).

C. Job's Arguments with God

In 13:3, 20—14:22 we have Job's arguments with God. In 13:3 he declared, "I would speak to the Almighty, / And I desire to argue with God."

1. Job's Contention with God for His Case

In 13:20-28 Job contended with God for his case. In

verse 28, referring to himself, Job said, "Such a one is like some rotten thing that wastes away, / Like a garment eaten by moths." On the one hand, Job recognized that he was something rotten, something that would waste away. On the other hand, Job continued to feel that he was not wrong in anything. Realizing that God had marked his paths and had set limits for him (v. 27), Job wanted God to explain the situation to him. As we have pointed out, Job did not know God's purpose concerning him, although he believed that there was a purpose hidden in God's heart.

The Bible, which consists of sixty-six books, begins with God and His creation in Genesis and consummates with the New Jerusalem in Revelation. Between these two ends of the Bible, there are history, teachings, prophecies, and types. But if we understand the Bible only according to these things, we still do not know the Bible. We need to see the eternal economy of God, which is God's eternal intention with His heart's desire to dispense Himself in His Divine Trinity as the Father in the Son by the Spirit into His chosen people to be their life and nature that they may be the same as He is for His fullness, His expression.

The word *economy* is an anglicized form of the Greek word *oikonomia*, which means "house law, household management, or administration," and derivatively, "administrative dispensation (arrangement), plan, economy." This Greek word implies the notion of dispensing. A dispensing is different from a dispensation. The word *dispensing* denotes an imparting of something, whereas the word *dispensation*, as it is commonly used by Christians, refers to the way God deals with people during a particular age. Today many talk about God's dispensations without seeing the crucial matter of God's dispensing.

An economy is an arrangement to carry out a plan for dispensing. God's economy is God's plan, God's arrangement, for God to dispense Himself in His element, life, nature, and attributes, and all that He has achieved and attained into His chosen people that they may be rebuilt by being constituted with the divine essence in the divine element of the divine source to be something divine. Before receiving

God's dispensing, we were merely human. After God's rebuilding with the divine constitution we, like the Lord Jesus, become divinely human and humanly divine. Before incarnation Christ was only divine, but after His incarnation He became a God-man, a man with the divine nature. Now He is divinely human, and He is also humanly divine. Having been regenerated by Christ, we have become a part of Him, and now we are the same as He is—divinely human and humanly divine.

The regenerated ones, who are divinely human and humanly divine, spontaneously become an organism, the Body of Christ, which is the church of God as the new man in God's new creation to carry out God's new "career," that is, to build up the Body of Christ for the fullness, the expression, of the Triune God. This fullness as the organism of the Triune God will consummate in the New Jerusalem. The Bible begins with God in His creation as the initiation and ends with the New Jerusalem, which is the mingling of the Triune God and all His chosen, redeemed, regenerated, transformed, conformed, and glorified tripartite people. The New Jerusalem is thus a constitution of God with man to express God for eternity.

To see this is to have an overview of the entire Bible. In our reading of the Bible, we need to focus our attention on God's eternal economy for the divine dispensing. Unless we know God's economy we will not understand the Bible.

Christ is not only the center of the Bible but also the centrality and universality of God's economy. It was in this economy that Christ became incarnated, that He went to the cross to pass through crucifixion, that He came out from death and entered into resurrection, and that in resurrection He was begotten of God to be God's firstborn Son and as the last Adam became the life-giving Spirit to regenerate all His believers to make them the same as He is in life and nature that they might become His brothers and the sons of God. These sons plus the Firstborn all become a new man, with Him as the Head and with the church as His Body, to carry out God's eternal purpose to consummate in the New Jerusalem.

If we see this revelation concerning God's economy, then we will be able to understand the book of Job. Job suffered God's stripping and consuming, but he did not understand what was happening to him. Job could say, "You have hidden these things in Your heart; / I know that this is with You" (10:13). He knew that God had a purpose, but he did not know what God's purpose was.

Job and his three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, were in the realm of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Even though Job was on a somewhat higher level than his friends, he and they were still in the same realm. God was trying to rescue them from that realm and put them into the realm of the tree of life. The first thing God had to do was to strip Job, consume him, and tear him down so that he would become nothing as a person under suffering. This became the base for God to rebuild Job with the Divine Trinity, that Job could be a new man, a part of God's new creation, to fulfill God's eternal economy for God's expression.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE TEN

GOD'S ANSWER TO JOB

Scripture Reading: Job 1:1; 10:2, 13; 13:3, 18-28; 19:25-26; 42:5

In this message I have the burden to say a word regarding God's answer to Job. This answer addresses a crucial question raised by the book of Job.

A CRUCIAL QUESTION

In their efforts to vindicate the authenticity of the book of Job, many readers of this book, especially among the fundamentalists and the Brethren, have emphasized certain "golden verses." One of these verses is 19:25: "I know that my Redeemer lives, / And at the last He will stand upon the earth." This verse conveys some amount of revelation concerning Christ, the Redeemer. Another golden verse is 42:5: "I had heard of You by the hearing of the ear, / But now my eye has seen You." This surely is an excellent verse. However, in spite of verses such as these, the forty-two chapters in Job leave us with a crucial question of two parts: What was the purpose of God in His creating of man, and what is the purpose of God in His dealing with His chosen people? To answer this question, we need the entire Bible. In particular, the New Testament is a long answer to Job's question.

Job said that he wanted to argue with God and even "litigate" with God in "court," making himself the plaintiff and God the defendant. But Job did not have the opportunity to do this, and his question concerning his suffering remained unanswered. The New Testament is God's answer to Job. We may say that it is a message "faxed" from God to Job. This "fax," this answer, reveals that God was not judging Job or punishing him but was stripping and consuming him so that

Job could be rebuilt with the Triune God. Although millions of people have read the New Testament, not many understand the answer that it contains. Thus, it is extremely important that we consider the vital aspects of the answer to Job revealed in the New Testament.

THE ITEMS IN GOD'S ANSWER

Incarnation

If we read the Old Testament with its prophecies, types, and plain words from Genesis through Malachi, we will see that the Old Testament ends with the promise that One was coming (Mal. 4:5-6). The New Testament begins with God's incarnation (Matt. 1:18-25). The very God who was in eternity, who created the heavens and the earth and billions of items and man, and who did so many things with mankind, came as the promised One. He came in a mysterious way without advertisement and without public notification. He entered into a virgin's womb and, according to Matthew 1:20, was born in that womb. He remained there for nine months, and then He was born out of that womb. From this we see that the incarnation was God's coming out of eternity into time, to enter with His divinity into humanity. Prior to the incarnation, God was in eternity and man was in time. Through incarnation God brought the divine nature and the human nature together to make them one entity, even one wonderful person, named Jesus. Jesus, who is both God and man, is the totality of the result of the incarnation.

Human Living

The Lord Jesus lived on earth for more than thirty years. Many Christians, paying their attention to the miracles done by the Lord Jesus, do not know the real, spiritual, and intrinsic significance of Christ's human living. Christ's human living was just man living God to express the attributes of God in the human virtues.

Crucifixion

Eventually, the Lord Jesus went to the cross to be crucified

there. According to the revelation of the New Testament, the death that Christ died on the cross was all-inclusive and also vicarious for us.

Resurrection

Christ entered into death and went into Hades to visit Hades. He stayed there for three days. Then He came out and entered into resurrection. In resurrection He was begotten of God to be God's firstborn (Acts 13:33). Not only so, in resurrection He was made the life-giving Spirit—not just a God-man but a Spirit that gives life (1 Cor. 15:45). Moreover, when He was resurrected to be begotten of God to be God's firstborn Son, He regenerated all His believers, making them the many sons of God and His many brothers as members of His Body (1 Pet. 1:3).

From this we see that through Christ's incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection, there is One who is the mingling of divinity with humanity. This One became the firstborn Son of God to express God. He also became the life-giving, life-imparting Spirit to germinate all those of the old creation who had been chosen by God to make them the new creation of God. Now, after the day of resurrection, there are four marvelous things in the universe: the mingling of God with man, the firstborn Son of God, the life-giving Spirit, and the organism of the Triune God.

Ascension

The first four items in God's answer to the question concerning Job's suffering are Christ's incarnation, Christ's human living, Christ's crucifixion, and Christ's resurrection. The fifth item is Christ's ascension. After His resurrection the Lord Jesus appeared to His disciples during a period of forty days, and then He ascended to the heavens.

The Church as the New Man, as the Body of Christ, and as the Organism of the Triune God Consummating in the New Jerusalem

In His ascension Christ poured out Himself as the

consummated Triune God and as the all-inclusive Spirit upon His members, to constitute all of them into one organic Body to be the organism of the processed and consummated Triune God. This is the church as the new man, as the Body of Christ, and as the organism of the Triune God, and this entity will consummate in the New Jerusalem. Thus, in God's long answer to Job's suffering there are ten main items: incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, the church, the new man, the Body of Christ, the organism of the Triune God, and the New Jerusalem.

THE MAIN CONTENTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The main contents of the New Testament are that the Triune God has an eternal economy according to His good pleasure to dispense Himself into His chosen and redeemed people in His life and in His nature, to make all of them the same as He is in life and nature, to make them His duplication that they may express Him. This corporate expression will consummate in the New Jerusalem. Thus, the New Jerusalem is simply the enlarged, the increased, incarnation consummated in full, that is, the fullness of the Triune God for Him to express Himself in His divinity mingled with humanity. These are the contents of the New Testament, and this is the answer that Job needed. This is God's answer concerning the purpose of Job's suffering.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE ELEVEN

THE SECOND OF THE THREE ROUNDS IN THE DEBATES BETWEEN JOB AND HIS THREE FRIENDS

CHAPTERS 12—20

(2)

JOB'S SUPERIORITY COMPLEX, ACCUSATION, AND ARGUMENTS AND ELIPHAZ'S REBUKE AND WARNING

(2)

Scripture Reading: Job 14—15

In this message we will continue to consider Job's arguments with God (13:3, 20—14:22) and then go on to Eliphaz's rebuke and warning (ch. 15).

2. Job's Complaint concerning God's Severe Strictness in Dealing with Him

In 13:3, 20-28 Job contended with God for his case. In 14:1-22 Job went on to complain concerning God's severe strictness in dealing with him, and then Job made his request of God to look away from him that he might rest.

As he argued with God Job said, "Man, born of woman, / Is of few days and full of trouble. / He comes forth like a blossom and is cut down, / He also flees like a shadow and does not remain. / And do You open Your eyes upon such a one / And bring me into judgment with You?" (vv. 1-3). Job's word about God bringing him into judgment implies the notion that there would be litigation involving Job and God in court, with Job as the plaintiff and God as the defendant.

Job was wondering whether God would bring him to court so that he could be judged there. Job was expecting this.

After saying that no one could bring a clean thing from an unclean, Job continued, "Since his days are determined, / And the number of his months is with You; / Since You have appointed his bounds, and he cannot go beyond" (v. 5). Here Job was saying that God had appointed limits that Job could not go beyond. He was altogether under God's control. He wanted God to look away from him so that he could rest. He felt that he was a "hired hand," an employee hired by God and subject to the limits set by God.

Whereas there was hope that a tree which had been cut down would sprout again, there was no hope for a man who had been laid low. "A man lies down and does not rise up; / Until the heavens are no more, he will not awake, / Nor will he be roused from his sleep" (v. 12). Job said that once a man dies, he is finished. Then he told God, "Oh that You would hide me in Sheol, / That You would conceal me until Your anger has passed, / That You would set me an appointed time and remember me!" (v. 13).

Job then asked, "If a man dies, will he live again? / All the days of my service I would wait, / Until a change for me should come" (v. 14). The Hebrew word translated "service" also means "warfare" or "distress." To Job's feeling, his life was a war, and his days were days of fighting.

In verses 15 through 17 Job continued, "You would call, and I would answer You; / You would long after the work of Your hands. / For now You number my steps. / Do You not watch over my sin? / My transgression has been sealed up in a bag, / And You have fastened up my iniquity." Job thought that God was doing this to him. It seems that Job was too sensitive and that he was deeply troubled psychologically as a result of being in the realm of good and evil.

Finally, Job claimed that God destroyed the hope of man, prevailing forever against him, changing his countenance, and sending him away. "Only the pain of his own flesh does he feel, / And his own soul mourns for him" (v. 22). All this was part of Job's argument with God.

II. ELIPHAZ'S REBUKE AND WARNING

In chapter fifteen we have Eliphaz's rebuke and warning.

A. Rebuking Job concerning His Pride and Self-righteousness

In verses 1 through 16 Eliphaz rebuked Job concerning his pride and self-righteousness.

1. Saying That Job's Knowledge Was Vain as Wind, without the Fear of God

Eliphaz said that Job's knowledge was as vain as wind, without the fear of God and restraining godly meditation before God. According to Eliphaz, Job's iniquity instructed his mouth, and Job chose the tongue of the crafty. Thus, Job's mouth condemned him and his lips testified against him (vv. 1-6).

2. Saying That Job Was Proud of His Superiority

Eliphaz continued by rebuking Job for being proud of his superiority (vv. 7-13). Eliphaz asked him, "Are you the first man born? / Or were you brought forth before the hills? / Did you listen in on the secret council of God? / And do you limit wisdom to yourself? / What do you know that we do not know? / What do you understand that is not with us?" (vv. 7-9). Then Eliphaz went on to tell Job that God's gentle words of consolation were too small for Job, that he let his heart take him away, and that he turned his spirit against God.

3. Saying That Job Was Self-righteous

Finally, Eliphaz rebuked Job for being self-righteous. Eliphaz remarked that a man born of woman cannot be clean or righteous, that God puts no trust in His holy ones, and that even the heavens are not clean in His sight, much less a man who is abominable and corrupt and who drinks wrong like water (vv. 14-16).

**B. Warning Job
with the Miserable End of a Wicked Man**

After rebuking Job, Eliphaz warned him with the miserable end of a wicked man (vv. 17-35). This warning was based on the principle of good and evil. In keeping with this principle, Eliphaz said that the wicked, whose heart prepares deceit, would be terrified by distress and straights, that they would not be rich and their wealth would not endure, that they would not go away from darkness, and that vanity would be their recompense. Eliphaz's concept was altogether according to good and evil. In his view, the good people would prosper and the wicked would suffer.

After reading chapters twelve through fifteen, we can see the situation of both Job and Eliphaz. Job, a person of very strong character, had a superiority complex, and Eliphaz was a typical fool who tried to teach Job by rebuking and warning him according to the principle of good and evil.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE TWELVE

GOD'S ETERNAL ECONOMY AS THE ANSWER TO THE BOOK OF JOB

Scripture Reading: Job 10:2, 8-9, 13; Eph. 3:9

We have pointed out that the forty-two chapters of the book of Job leave us with a twofold question concerning the purpose of God in creating man and the purpose of God in dealing with His chosen people. The answer to this question is found not in the Old Testament but in the New Testament. This answer is the eternal economy of God for His dispensing of Himself into His chosen people.

THE TEN MAIN ITEMS IN THE ECONOMY OF GOD

The economy of God consists of ten main items. The first three items are the incarnation of the Triune God, the living of the Triune God in humanity on earth, and the all-inclusive death of Christ which He died on the cross to solve all the problems and to terminate all the negative things in the universe. The fourth item is the life-dispensing resurrection of Christ, in which Christ in His humanity was begotten to be the firstborn Son of God to bring in many more sons after Him, in which the Triune God in humanity became the life-giving Spirit for the divine dispensing, and in which all the believers in Christ were regenerated to be sons of God and members of Christ. The fifth item is the ascension of Christ with the pouring out of the consummated Spirit to produce the church. The remaining five items are the church of God, the Body of Christ, the new man, the organism of the processed and consummated Triune God, and the New Jerusalem. All the other items unveiled in the New Testament are related to these ten main items either directly or indirectly.

**DIVISIONS RESULTING FROM THE BELIEVERS
STRESSING THINGS OTHER THAN
THE TEN ITEMS IN GOD'S ECONOMY**

Whenever Christians stress anything other than these ten items that constitute God's economy, many different schools of opinion are brought in, resulting in divisions among the believers. For example, some emphasize baptism by immersion, a New Testament teaching but not one of the ten basic items in God's economy. This emphasis has issued not only in a denomination devoted to baptism by immersion but also in disputes about the kind of water that should be used, about whether one should be baptized backward, forward, or downward, and about whether baptism should be in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit or simply in the name of Jesus. Other believers argue about matters such as presbytery (the management of the church by the elders) and about what kind of musical instruments, if any, may be used in the church meetings. Years ago I was told that a certain Brethren assembly was divided over the issue of whether a piano or an organ should be used in their meetings. This kind of situation is widespread among today's Christians. Hardly anyone holds to the eternal economy of God for the divine dispensing.

**LEARNING THE ITEMS OF GOD'S ECONOMY
SUBJECTIVELY AND EXPERIENTIALLY**

We need to learn the items of God's economy not merely objectively, in a doctrinal way, but subjectively, in an experiential way. We need to consider how to experience all these items. How can we experience Christ's incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension? How can we have the experience of being a part of the church, the Body of Christ, the new man, and the organism of the Triune God? How can we, in a practical, experiential way, become a part of the New Jerusalem in eternity?

One Unique God

If we would know these ten items experientially, we need to see that they all refer to the one unique God. We have

only one God, but this unique God is triune—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are one. The Father is in the Son; the Son is in the Father; the Spirit is in both the Father and the Son; and both the Father and the Son are in the Spirit. The three not only coexist (exist together at the same time) but also coinhere (dwell in one another). No one can separate them. Among the Father, the Son, and the Spirit there is a distinction, but there is no separation. Because the Father, the Son, and the Spirit coexist and coinhere, when the Father is present, the Son and the Spirit also are present.

The Triune God Being Processed

Before the incarnation the Father, the Son, and the Spirit were the one God in eternity, who had not yet been processed. But by passing through incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, this unique God was processed. These five steps were the five sections of His process. By passing through these five sections of His process, the unique Triune God was processed and consummated to be today's Triune God.

The Triune God Being Consummated as the Spirit

Today's Triune God is altogether consummated in the Spirit. The Spirit is the last of the three of the Divine Trinity. This consummated Spirit is actually the consummation of the Triune God. As the all-inclusive Spirit, He is the consummation, the aggregate, of the Triune God. When we receive Him, we receive the Son and the Father. This Spirit is the Son, and this Spirit is also the Father. All three—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—are the all-inclusive Spirit. Our God is the consummated Spirit. Our Father, our Lord, our Master, our Redeemer, and our Savior is the life-giving Spirit. This life-giving Spirit is all-inclusive, compounded, and consummated. Even now He is within us.

Doing Everything according to the Spirit

In the New Testament we are charged to be regenerated by this Spirit and to receive the divine life through this Spirit.

Then we need to live, to walk, by this Spirit, and we need to experience Christ, to enjoy God the Father, and even to enjoy the fullness of the Triune God by doing everything according to the Spirit. As long as we do everything according to the Spirit, we can experience Christ's incarnation, human living, death, resurrection, and ascension with the outpouring of the Spirit. This will cause us to be the church of God, the Body of Christ, the new man, and the organism of the Triune God, which will consummate in the New Jerusalem.

In our daily living we should not be in the realm of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil but should be in the realm of the life-giving Spirit. We should not do anything according to good and evil. Instead, we should do everything according to the Spirit by being one spirit with the Lord. For instance, we need to be one spirit with the Lord in our speaking. Before I speak for the Lord, I pray one simple prayer: "Lord, be one spirit with me that I may be one spirit with You. Lord, speak in my speaking and make my speaking Your speaking." This is to live in the dispensing of the eternal economy of God. When we live and speak in this way, we enjoy the divine dispensing, and Christ increases within us. Christ grows in us and we grow in Christ. Eventually, this growth will reach the full extent.

Suppose there is a problem between you and your spouse. You should not do anything, for whatever you do will be in the realm of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. You should simply pray-read Galatians 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me." Do not care for the problem or your anger—just care for Christ living in you. This should be our way in everything.

The book of Job contains many vain words, words of accusation and vindication. As we read this book we need to be mindful of God's economy. We need to see that God's eternal economy, which is the answer to the question raised by Job, is to dispense Himself in His Divine Trinity—in the Father, in the Son, and in the Spirit—through incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension with the outpouring of the Spirit to produce the church, the Body

of Christ, the new man, and the organism of the Triune God, which will issue in the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth for eternity.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE THIRTEEN

THE SECOND OF THE THREE ROUNDS IN THE DEBATES BETWEEN JOB AND HIS THREE FRIENDS

CHAPTERS 12—20

(3)

JOB'S REJECTION OF HIS FRIENDS' WORD AND HIS DESIRE THAT GOD WOULD ADJUDICATE FOR HIM IN HIS CASE IN THE PAINFUL SITUATION CAUSED BY GOD AND BILDAD'S REBUKE AND WARNING

Scripture Reading: Job 16—18

In this message we will cover chapters sixteen through eighteen.

I. JOB'S REJECTION OF HIS FRIENDS' WORD AND HIS DESIRE THAT GOD WOULD ADJUDICATE FOR HIM IN HIS CASE IN THE PAINFUL SITUATION CAUSED BY GOD

A. His Rejection of His Friends' Word

According to 16:1-6 Job rejected his friends' word. Although Job's friends had come to him for the purpose of comforting him, he regarded them as "troubling comforters," and he called their words "words of wind." He asked them, "What has provoked you that you so respond?" (v. 3b). The answer is that they were provoked by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In verses 4 and 5 Job continued, "I also could speak like you, / If your soul were in my soul's stead; / I could join my words together against you / And shake my head at you. / I could strengthen you with my mouth, / And the

movement of my lips would mitigate your pain.” Job realized that his friends’ word was vanity, and he rejected it.

**B. His Desire That God
Would Adjudicate for Him in His Case
in the Painful Situation Caused by God**

It was Job’s desire that God would adjudicate for him in his case in the painful situation caused by God (16:7—17:16).

***1. Complaining That God Had Worn Him Out
and Had Desolated All His Company***

Job complained that God had worn him out and had desolated all his company, though there was no violence in his hands and his prayer was pure (16:7-17). Job went so far as to say that God had torn him to pieces, had delivered him over to the unjust and cast him down into the hands of the wicked, had broken him apart, had taken him by the neck and dashed him to pieces, and had set him up as His target. Thus, Job’s face was reddened with weeping, and on his eyelids was the shadow of death.

***2. Crying to the Earth Not to Cover His Blood
and Not to Frustrate His Crying Out***

Job cried to the earth not to cover his blood and not to frustrate his crying out (v. 18). Then he said, “Even now, behold, my Witness is in heaven, / And He who vouches for me is in the heights. / My friends deride me; / My eye pours out tears to God, / That He would adjudicate for a man in his case with God / And for a son of man in his case with his neighbor” (vv. 19-21). Here we see that Job would not release God, that he would not let God go. Instead, Job expressed his desire that God would adjudicate for him in his case. Job’s contending here indicates that he expected to have a time to plead with God concerning his case.

***3. Saying That His Spirit Was Broken,
That His Days Were Extinct,
and That the Graveyard Was Ready for Him***

Job said that his spirit was broken, that his days were extinct, and that the graveyard was ready for him (17:1). Job

went on to say that his mockers were provoking him, even though he was upright, righteous, and held fast to his way more strongly (vv. 2-16). In verse 9 Job declared, "Yet the righteous man will hold fast to his way, / And he whose hands are clean will wax yet stronger." Here Job was saying that he was a righteous man who held fast to his way.

II. BILDAD'S REBUKE AND WARNING

In chapter eighteen we have Bildad's rebuke and warning.

A. His Rebuke

In his rebuke of Job (vv. 1-4), Bildad asked him how long he would hunt for words. Then Bildad inquired of Job, "Why are we considered to be like beasts / And have become unclean in your eyes?" (v. 3). This indicates that Job thought that his friends were like beasts. Bildad continued by asking Job if the earth would be forsaken for his sake.

B. His Warning with the Pitiful End of the Wicked

The remainder of chapter eighteen consists of Bildad's warning with the pitiful end of the wicked. Bildad declared, "Indeed the light of the wicked goes out, / And the flame of his fire does not shine. / The light is darkness in his tent, / And his lamp above him goes out" (vv. 5-6). Regarding the wicked, Bildad went on to say that terrors frighten him all around, that his strength is famished, that calamity is prepared at his side, that he is rooted out of his tent, that brimstone is scattered upon his habitation, that the memory of him perishes from the earth, that he is thrust out from the light to the darkness and is driven from the world, and that he has no posterity and no progeny among his people. Then Bildad concluded, "Surely these are the dwellings of the unjust, / And this is the place of him who does not know God" (v. 21). Bildad tried to give advice, but his words were words of waste. His logic and his warning were based on the principle of good and evil.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE FOURTEEN

THE SECOND OF THE THREE ROUNDS IN THE DEBATES BETWEEN JOB AND HIS THREE FRIENDS

CHAPTERS 12—20

(4)

JOB'S COMPLAINT AGAINST HIS FRIENDS IN THEIR WRONG REPROACH AND TOWARD GOD IN HIS SEVERE STRIPPING AND ZOPHAR'S ANGER AND TEACHING TOWARD JOB

Scripture Reading: Job 19—20

In this message we will cover chapters nineteen and twenty.

I. JOB'S COMPLAINT AGAINST HIS FRIENDS IN THEIR WRONG REPROACH AND TOWARD GOD IN HIS SEVERE STRIPPING

A. His Complaint against His Friends in Their Wrong Reproach

In his complaint against his friends (19:1-5), Job asked them how long they would grieve his soul and crush him with their words. He said that they had reproached him ten times and that they were not ashamed to deal wrongly with him. He continued by saying that if he had erred, his error remained with him.

B. His Complaint toward God in His Severe Stripping

1. Saying That God Had Subverted His Cause

Job complained that God had subverted his cause and had

compassed him about with His net in violence and without justice (vv. 6-7). In his extreme sensitivity Job felt that God had treated him in this way, but surely God did not do such things to Job.

2. Saying That God Had Walled Up His Way

Job went on to say that God had walled up his way so that he could not pass and that He had put darkness upon his paths (v. 8). I do not believe that God did either of these things to Job. Actually, it might have been Job himself who had walled up his way.

3. Saying That God Had Stripped His Glory from Him and Had Taken Away the Crown on His Head

In verse 9 Job said, "He has stripped my glory from me / And taken away the crown on my head." This was true. Job's glory was his perfection and uprightness, and his crown was his integrity. Job was right in saying that God had stripped his glory, his perfection and uprightness, from him and had taken away his crown, his integrity, from his head.

4. Saying That God Had Broken Him All Around

Job further complained that God had broken him all around. Job was gone (dying), and his hope had been plucked up like a tree (v. 10). Job's hope had been to build up the "tree" of his integrity, but God would not allow such a tree to grow within Job. Rather, God had plucked up this tree, this hope.

5. Saying That God Had Kindled His Anger against Him

Job claimed that God had also kindled His anger against him and that in Himself He considered Job as His adversary. Job then said that God's troops had come together and had cast up their highway against him and had encamped all around his tent (vv. 11-12). Although God was stripping Job, He surely was not angry with him; neither did God consider Job as His adversary but as His intimate friend. Moreover, Job was not correct in saying that God had sent a troop

against Job. For God to do such a thing would be against the principle.

**6. *Saying That God
Had Removed His Brothers Far from Him***

Job continued his complaint by saying that God had removed his brothers far from him, and that those who knew him were wholly estranged from him. His relatives had failed him and his acquaintances had forgotten him, and those who sojourned in his house and his maids considered him a stranger. He was a foreigner in their eyes. Job said that he called out to his servant, but his servant did not answer (vv. 13-16).

7. *Saying That His Breath Was Strange to His Wife*

Job said that his breath was strange to his wife, and his supplications, to the children of his mother's womb. Job complained that even little children despised him; he arose, and they spoke against him. All the men with whom he took counsel abhorred him, and those whom he loved had turned against him (vv. 17-19).

**8. *Saying That His Bones Cleaved
to His Skin and to His Flesh***

Job went on to say that his bones cleaved to his skin and to his flesh and that he had escaped by the skin of his teeth. He asked his friends to pity him, for, according to his feeling, the hand of God had touched him and God was persecuting him. Then, using a figure of speech, he asked them why they were not satisfied with eating his flesh (vv. 20-22).

**9. *Wishing That His Words
Were Inscribed in a Book***

"Oh that my words were now written! / Oh that they were inscribed in a book! / That with an iron pen and with lead / They were engraved in rock forever!" (vv. 23-24). Because Job was so hurt by what had happened to him and because he felt that God was treating him too severely, Job wished that his words would be engraved in rock as a permanent record of his suffering.

**10. Knowing That His Redeemer Lives
and That at the Last
He Will Stand upon the Earth**

“But I know that my Redeemer lives, / And at the last He will stand upon the earth; / And after this body of mine is destroyed, / Outside my flesh I will look on God, / Whom I, even I, will look on for myself, / And my eyes will see; I, and no other. / My inward parts that long for God are consumed within me” (vv. 25-27). The Hebrew word for “earth” here literally means “dust.” This verse says that the Redeemer will stand upon the dust.

If we do not have a complete vision of God’s economy, we might think that Job’s word, “My Redeemer lives,” is very good. However, the New Testament tells us not merely that our Redeemer lives but that He lives in us. To Job’s word we need to add the little phrase “in me.” This is according to Paul’s word in Galatians 2:20: “It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me.” If Christ lived only in the heavens, that would not have anything to do with us. Today our Redeemer is not only living—He is living *in us*.

We were made by God in three parts—spirit, soul, and body (1 Thes. 5:23). Our outer part, our body, is dust. Christ has not yet touched this part. Today Christ is living in our spirit to impart Himself from our spirit into our soul so that His element may be transfused into our soul for its transformation. One day He will come to “stand upon our dust,” that is, our body, to touch our body. Then our body of humiliation will be transfigured to be conformed to the body of His glory (Phil. 3:21). At that time He will not only stand upon the dust of the earth, but He will touch our dust.

Today we experience Christ’s living in our spirit to transfuse Himself into our soul, and we are waiting for Him to come out of us to touch our body made of dust. This is Paul’s view, and it is also our view.

Job’s view, being altogether objective, was not complete. It was not like Paul’s view, which was altogether subjective. Paul’s view is expressed in the following stanzas from *Hymns*, #949:

Christ is the hope of glory, He is God's mystery;
He shares with me God's fullness and brings God into
me.

He comes to make me blended with God in every way,
That I may share His glory with Him for aye.

Christ is the hope of glory, He is my history:
His life is my experience, for He is one with me;
He comes to bring me into His glorious liberty,
That one with Him completely I'll ever be.

The New Testament tells us that today Christ lives in us. Not only so, He is also making His home in our hearts (Eph. 3:17). He is gradually getting Himself settled in our entire inner being. This is the subjective living of Christ in us. Job, according to his objective view, declared, "My Redeemer lives." We, according to the subjective view in the New Testament, should shout, "Our Redeemer lives in us. He is making His home in us, and He is transforming our soul. One day He will touch our body of dust."

11. Warning His Friends

In Job 19:28 and 29 Job gave a warning to his friends. He warned them about saying, "How will we persecute him? / For the root of the matter is found in him." He told them to be fearful of the sword, for wrath brings the punishment of the sword, that they might know that there is a judgment. Here Job was warning them regarding a judgment that would be brought in by God's wrath. According to Job, if his friends continued to speak as they were speaking, God would come in to judge them.

Job's complaint against His friends and toward God shows that he was very sensitive. In his sensitivity he thought that others were intending to damage him and he misunderstood God, thinking that God had sent a troop against him. In contrast to Job, who was sensitive and who complained, Paul could rejoice in all that happened to him (Phil. 4:4).

II. ZOPHAR'S ANGER TOWARD JOB AND HIS TEACHING CONCERNING THE WICKED

In chapter twenty we have Zophar's anger toward Job and his teaching concerning the wicked.

A. Zophar's Anger toward Job

In his anger toward Job, Zophar said that his own disquieting thoughts answered him, and hence haste was in him. Zophar continued by saying that he heard the reproof that humiliated him and that the spirit of his understanding answered him (vv. 1-3).

B. Zophar's Teaching concerning the Wicked

Zophar's teaching concerning the wicked (vv. 4-29) was based on the principle of good and evil.

1. Saying That the Joyous Shouting of the Wicked Is Short

In his teaching of Job, Zophar said that the joyous shouting of the wicked is short and that the rejoicing of the profane is for but a moment (vv. 4-11). Regarding the wicked person, Zophar said, "Like a dream he flies away and is not found; / Indeed he is chased away like a vision of the night" (v. 8).

2. Saying That His Food Is the Venom of Asps within Him

Zophar claimed that though wickedness is sweet in the mouth of the wicked, his food in his bowels is the venom of asps within him (vv. 12-19).

3. There Being Nothing Left of What He Has Devoured

Finally, Zophar taught Job that because the wicked knows no respite in his craving, of that which he desires he will save nothing. There will be nothing left of what he has devoured. Thus, his prosperity will not endure (vv. 20-29). Zophar concluded his teaching by saying, "This is the wicked man's portion from God / And the inheritance decreed to him by God" (v. 29).

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE FIFTEEN

THE THIRD OF THE THREE ROUNDS IN THE DEBATES BETWEEN JOB AND HIS THREE FRIENDS

CHAPTERS 21—31

(1)

JOB'S CONCLUSION CONCERNING PROSPERITY AND CALAMITY IN HUMAN LIFE AND ELIPHAZ'S LOGIC CONCERNING THE RECOMPENSE OF GOOD AND EVIL

Scripture Reading: Job 21—22

In this message we will consider the word of Job in chapter twenty-one and the word of Eliphaz in chapter twenty-two.

I. JOB'S CONCLUSION CONCERNING PROSPERITY AND CALAMITY IN HUMAN LIFE

A. His Calming Word to His Friends

In 21:1-6 Job spoke a calming word to his friends. First he said that they should listen carefully to his word and let it be their consolations. Then he told them to bear with him and let him speak, and afterward they could mock on. Next, he asked them if his complaint was to man and why his spirit should not be impatient. Following this Job said, "Look at me and be appalled; / And put your hand over your mouth. / Even when I remember, I am troubled, / And horror takes hold of my flesh" (vv. 5-6). In such speaking there was not any politeness.

B. The Prosperity of the Wicked

1. Living a Long Life and Being Mighty in Riches

In his conclusion concerning the prosperity of the wicked (vv. 7-16), the first thing Job pointed out was that the wicked live a long time and become mighty in riches (v. 7).

2. Multiplying in Offspring

Job said that the wicked multiply in offspring and that their offspring live a happy and rejoicing life (vv. 8, 11-12).

3. Their Houses Being Free from Dread

According to Job, the houses of the wicked are free from dread, and the rod of God is not upon them (v. 9).

4. Their Cattle Breeding

Job continued by speaking concerning the cattle belonging to the wicked. Job said that their bull breeds and does not fail and that their cow calves and does not miscarry (v. 10).

5. Spending Their Days in Prosperity

Job went on to say that the wicked spend their days in prosperity until in a moment they go down into Sheol (v. 13).

6. Forsaking God, Not Desiring to Know God's Ways

Next, Job told his friends that the wicked forsake God and do not desire to know God's ways. Furthermore, the wicked do not serve the almighty God and do not pray to Him for any profit (vv. 14-15).

7. Their Prosperity Being Not in Their Own Hand

Finally, Job concluded that the prosperity of the wicked is not in their own hand and that their counsel is far from God (v. 16).

I believe that, in general, Job's conclusion concerning the prosperity of the wicked was right. His word here was not according to good and evil, for he said concerning the wicked not only that they have prosperity but also that their offspring

live a happy life. Such a situation is not according to the principle of good and evil.

C. Job's Questions concerning God's Recompense to the Wicked

In verses 17 through 34 Job asked a number of questions concerning God's recompense to the wicked.

1. Asking How Often the Lamp of the Wicked Is Put Out

Job began his questions by asking how often the lamp of the wicked is put out, so that their calamity comes upon them and God distributes sorrows in His anger (v. 17).

2. Asking Whether the Wicked Become like Straw before the Wind

Job continued by asking whether the wicked become like straw before the wind and like chaff that the storm carries off (v. 18). Job would probably answer this question by saying that the wicked do not become like such straw and chaff.

3. Saying That God Should Recompense the Wicked

Whereas some said that God stores up the punishment of the iniquity of the wicked for his children, Job said that God should recompense the wicked, so that he knows it (v. 19). Job continued by saying that the eyes of the wicked should see his destruction and that the wicked one should drink the wrath of the Almighty. After asking if someone will teach knowledge to God, seeing that He judges those who are on high, Job went on to say that the one who dies in his full strength and the one who dies in bitterness of soul both lie down in the dust, and the worm covers them (vv. 20-26).

4. Saying That He Knew His Friends' Thoughts and Devices to Wrong Him

Speaking to his friends, Job said that he knew their thoughts and devices to wrong him by saying, "Where is the house of the prince? / Where is the tent of the dwellings of the wicked?" (vv. 27-28). Then Job said that the travelers on the roads are the evidence that the wicked man is spared

in the day of calamity and they are led forth in the day of overflowing wrath. Next, Job asked who would declare the way of the wicked one to his face and who would repay him what he has done. According to Job, when the wicked is borne to the grave and kept by a watch, the clods of the valley are sweet to him. Moreover, all men go in procession after him, and those who went before him are without number (vv. 29-33).

5. Asking His Friends Why They Comfort Him with Vanity

In verse 34 Job asked his friends why they comforted him with vanity, for their responses left only falsehood behind. This was the final word of Job's conclusion concerning prosperity and calamity in human life.

II. ELIPHAZ'S LOGIC CONCERNING THE RECOMPENSE OF GOOD AND EVIL

In chapter twenty-two we see Eliphaz's logic concerning the recompense of good and evil.

A. His Wrong Word of Accusations against Job

In his wrong word of accusations against Job (vv. 1-11), Eliphaz asked him, "Can a man of might be of any use to God? / No, a man of insight is of use only to himself. / Is it a matter of delight to the Almighty that you are righteous? / Or is it a gain to Him that you make your ways perfect? / Is it because of your fear of Him that He reproves you, / That He enters into judgment with you? / Is not your wickedness great, / And is there no end to your iniquities?" (vv. 2-5). Then Eliphaz accused Job of taking pledges from his brothers without cause, stripping the naked of their clothing, not giving water to the weary, withholding bread from the hungry, and sending widows away empty. As a result, according to Eliphaz's logic, snares were around Job, dread and darkness troubled him, and an abundance of waters covered him (vv. 6-11).

B. Saying That the God-forsaking Wicked Were Snatched Away before They Died

In verses 12 through 20 the main point of Eliphaz's speaking is that the God-forsaking wicked were snatched away before they died and that the remnant of them was devoured by fire.

C. Saying That the God-seeking Righteous Man Will Be Blessed and Delivered by God

Eliphaz continued by charging Job to be well disposed to God, to be at peace with Him, to receive instruction from Him, and lay up His words in his heart. The main point in verses 21 through 30 is that, according to Eliphaz's logic, the God-seeking righteous man will be blessed and delivered by God.

The teaching of Eliphaz may seem to be very good; however, its source is not divine revelation but human logic. Furthermore, this teaching is based upon the principle of good and evil, which principle is the principle of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE SIXTEEN

GOD'S INTENTION IN HIS CREATION OF MAN AND IN HIS DEALING WITH HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE

Scripture Reading: Job 10:13a; Matt. 1:18, 20; John 7:39;
1 Pet. 1:3; Eph. 1:22b-23; Col. 3:10-11; Gen. 1:1-2; 2:7; Rev.
22:17; Gal. 3:14; 6:18; 5:25; Rom. 8:4

We have seen that the book of Job leaves us with a crucial twofold question concerning God's intention in His creation of man and in His dealing with His chosen people. In this message I would like to give a further word concerning the answer to this question, an answer which is found not in the Old Testament but only in the New Testament. This answer, given by God in His revelation, is altogether concerned with the Triune God Himself.

GOD'S INTENTION BEING TO WORK HIMSELF INTO MAN

The New Testament unveils to us that God's intention in His creation of the universe and of billions of items including man is to work Himself into man. God wants to enter into man to be man's content and to be man's life, nature, life supply, and element. In order to do this, God had to pass through a long process.

GOD COMING OUT OF ETERNITY AND ENTERING INTO TIME TO BE AN EXTRAORDINARY HUMAN BEING NAMED JESUS

The Bible is not written according to human logic but according to God's move. Although God did many things in the Old Testament, He did not move. Rather, from Adam to

Christ, God remained in His divinity and stayed in eternity. He did not yet come out of eternity into time to enter with His divinity into man. But one day, after a period of four thousand years in which man had been tried, tested, and proved to be sinful and good for nothing, God came out of eternity and entered with His divinity into time, entering into the womb of a human virgin to join Himself to humanity. This was the first step of God's move. The second step was His being born of that human virgin to be the God-man. After staying in the womb of a human virgin for nine months, He came out of that womb, not only with divinity but also with humanity, to be a human being by the name of Jesus. This human being is extraordinary, altogether uncommon, because He is the God-man.

**CHRIST'S LIVING
A GENUINE HUMAN LIFE
TO EXPRESS GOD IN HIS HUMANITY**

This dear One, this God-man who is both divine and human, Jesus Christ the Son of God, lived a genuine human life on earth. He ate and drank, He slept, He rejoiced, and He wept. According to the four Gospels, in this person we can see human virtues that expressed the divine attributes. This means that in His living the Lord Jesus achieved the greatest thing in the universe—He expressed God in His humanity.

**CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION
ACCOMPLISHING
THE ETERNAL REDEMPTION OF GOD**

At the end of His life on earth, the Lord Jesus went to the cross, and He died there. Christ's crucifixion accomplished the eternal redemption of God. Through His death on the cross, Christ terminated all the negative things in the old creation and even the entire old creation itself, and He redeemed the part of the old creation that God had chosen. Not only so, through that death He released the divine life concealed in His human body.

**IN HIS RESURRECTION
CHRIST REGENERATING GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE
TO BE THE MANY SONS OF GOD
AS THE MEMBERS OF CHRIST
TO CONSTITUTE HIS BODY**

After Christ finished His work on the cross, He went to sleep and rested (although He did a number of things between His death and resurrection). Then He rose up from the dead; He resurrected. Through His resurrection He brought His humanity into divinity (Rom. 1:3-4). He was also born to be the firstborn Son of God to be the leading One of the many sons of God. In His resurrection He also became a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b). In other words, through death and resurrection He was consummated to be "the Spirit" (John 7:39). Furthermore, in the resurrection of Christ, all those who were chosen by God were regenerated to be the many sons of God (1 Pet. 1:3).

These many sons of God have become the members of Christ to constitute His Body, which is the church of God (Eph. 1:22b-23). This Body is the new man in the new creation, and Christ is every member of this new man (Col. 3:10-11). This Body, this new man, is a mysterious organism for the processed and consummated Triune God. Eventually, this entity will be enlarged and consummated to be the New Jerusalem as the fullness, the corporate expression, of God for eternity. In the New Jerusalem we can see the mingling of God with man, so that God and man become one corporate entity. In the New Jerusalem we can also see the divine attributes expressed through the virtues of humanity for eternity.

**THE SPIRIT BEING
THE CONSUMMATION OF THE TRIUNE GOD**

All these matters are involved with the Triune God. In Genesis 1 and 2 we see God as Jehovah Elohim and we also see His Spirit (1:1-2; 2:7). But at the end of the Bible, the One mentioned in Revelation 22:17 is the Spirit. Jehovah Elohim is still there, but now He is *the* Spirit. The name of the Spirit is Jesus Christ. When we say, "Lord Jesus, I love

You,” we get the Spirit. Jesus Christ is the name, and the Spirit is the person.

In the New Testament there are many divine titles, such as Father, Lord, Master, Redeemer, Savior, the Lord of all, and the King of kings. All these titles refer to the one person of the Spirit. In a certain regard, the title may be *Father*, and in another regard the title may be *Redeemer* or *Savior*. The point here is that all the divine titles refer, in some regard, to the person of the Spirit—the all-inclusive, compound, life-giving Spirit as the consummation of the processed Triune God.

**THE SPIRIT BEING
THE AGGREGATE OF THE DIVINE BLESSING
OF THE GOSPEL GIVEN TO US**

Galatians 3:14 shows us that the Spirit is the aggregate, the totality, of the divine blessing of the gospel given to us. This blessing is all-embracing and all-inclusive. Such a blessing includes redemption, regeneration, the divine life, righteousness, justification, sanctification, transformation, and renewing.

**DOING EVERYTHING AND BEING EVERYTHING
BY THE SPIRIT, WITH THE SPIRIT,
IN THE SPIRIT, AND THROUGH THE SPIRIT**

Today in our Christian life we Christians should just deal with this Spirit. Since we have life and live by Him, we also should walk by Him (Gal. 5:25; Rom. 8:4). We should do everything and be everything by the Spirit, with the Spirit, in the Spirit, and through the Spirit. We should pray by the Spirit, read the Bible by the Spirit, love others by the Spirit, and preach the gospel by the Spirit.

Galatians 6:18 indicates that the Spirit as the all-inclusive grace is with our spirit. We must treasure the two spirits in Galatians—the divine Spirit as the aggregate of the divine blessing to us and the human spirit as the receiver, the container, the keeper, of the divine Spirit. Thus, we need to take care of our spirit, doing everything by exercising our spirit. Then we will experience the divine Spirit living in us,

making His home in us, and transforming us. The divine Spirit lives in us to pray, to read the Bible, to speak God's word, to love our spouse, and to visit sinners for the preaching of the gospel. Such a living is the mingling of the processed Triune God with the regenerated tripartite man. This is the divine revelation in the New Testament as the answer to the sufferings of Job and to the great question concerning God's purpose in His creation of man and in His dealing with His chosen people.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE SEVENTEEN

THE ALL-INCLUSIVE SPIRIT AS THE CONSUMMATION OF THE PROCESSED AND CONSUMMATED TRIUNE GOD

Scripture Reading: Job 42:5; John 7:39; Rom. 8:2, 9, 11, 14;
Gal. 3:14; 6:18; Eph. 1:13-14; Phil. 1:19; Gal. 5:25; Rom. 8:16, 4

We have seen that the divine revelation in the New Testament is the answer to the sufferings of Job and to the great question concerning God's intention in His creation of man and in His dealing with His chosen people. In this message I would like to give a further word regarding this answer, focusing on the matter of the all-inclusive Spirit as the consummation of the processed and consummated Triune God.

GOD'S MOVE

The Old Testament time was a time not of God's move but of preparation for God's move. The incarnation was the beginning of God's move, which is for God to come out of eternity into time to enter with His divinity into humanity. Then God moved through human living and through His wonderful, all-inclusive death into resurrection. In resurrection Christ was begotten to be God's firstborn Son. Through resurrection He also became the life-giving Spirit, and He regenerated all God's chosen people to be God's many sons as His many members to constitute the church as His Body, as the new man, and as the organism of the processed and consummated Triune God.

THE TRIUNE GOD BEING THE SPIRIT

Today the Triune God is the Spirit—the consummated, all-inclusive, compound Spirit. The title “the Spirit” is used in a particular way in John 7. While the Lord Jesus was still

on earth, He said that His believers would be full of the Spirit (vv. 38-39a). At that time "the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified" (v. 39b). This indicates clearly that when the Lord Jesus was glorified, the Spirit was there. This Spirit is the processed and consummated Triune God.

THE THREE OF THE DIVINE TRINITY BEING DIFFERENT BUT NOT SEPARATE

Some teachers of the Bible claim that the Bible may be divided into three sections—the Old Testament, the four Gospels, and the books from Acts through Revelation—and that these sections correspond respectively to three ages—the age of the Father, the age of the Son, and the age of the Spirit. According to this view, the work of the Father in the Old Testament was replaced by the work of the Son in the Gospels, and then the work of the Son was replaced by the work of the Spirit in Acts through Revelation. Some who hold this view regard the three of the Divine Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—as three separate persons. However, after many years of study and experience, we can say that this understanding of the Triune God is not accurate.

The three of the Divine Trinity are different, or distinct, but they are not separate. If the Son were not different from the Father, the Son could not pray to the Father, as He did in John 17. Nevertheless, the Father and the Son are inseparable, for the Father and the Son coinhere, that is, the Son exists in the Father and the Father exists in the Son. For this reason, the Lord Jesus could say to Philip, who had asked Him to show them the Father, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how is it that you say, Show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak from Myself, but the Father who abides in Me does His works" (John 14:9b-10). Here we see that the Father and the Son, although distinct, coinhere and thus cannot be separated. Furthermore, the Father and the Son are in the Spirit, and the Spirit is in the Father and the Son. If we see this, we

will realize that the God who was incarnated and moved on earth was the Triune God.

The New Testament unveils to us that Christ the Son is the embodiment of the Triune God and that the Spirit is the realization of the Son and the reality of Christ. Because the Spirit is the reality of Christ, we cannot have Christ apart from the Spirit, who is the consummation of the processed and consummated Triune God.

THE STEPS OF THE PROCESS OF THE TRIUNE GOD

His Incarnation

Before incarnation, the first step of His process, the Triune God had divinity but not humanity. He was only divine but not human; He was only God but not man. But one day the Triune God entered into the womb of a human virgin and after nine months was born out of that womb to be the God-man, a divine-human person, a person with both the divine nature and the human nature.

His Human Living

This God-man lived on earth for thirty-three and a half years. Although He did not accomplish anything great in a material sense, He did something marvelous—He expressed God, He manifested God, in full, in His human living.

His All-inclusive Death

The next step of the process of the Triune God was the all-inclusive death of Christ. Through His death Christ redeemed God's chosen people, terminated the old creation, and released the divine life from within the "shell" of His humanity.

His Resurrection

After dying an all-inclusive death, Christ entered into resurrection. Once again I would emphasize the fact that in resurrection Christ was begotten to be the firstborn Son of God (Acts 13:33; Rom. 1:3-4; 8:29) and became the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b) to regenerate God's chosen people (1 Pet.

1:3). Early in the morning on the day of His resurrection, He went to heaven to the Father secretly (John 20:17). On the evening of the same day, He came to the disciples and breathed Himself into them as breath, saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (v. 22). This is the essential Spirit.

His Ascension and Descension

After forty days Christ ascended openly and officially. In His ascension He was made the Lord of all and the Christ of God (Acts 2:36). Ten days later, on the day of Pentecost, He descended to pour out Himself as the economical Spirit on the disciples (vv. 1-4, 17, 33). In His descension three thousand were regenerated, issuing in the church. Today He is the One who is ascending and descending continually (John 3:13). He is in the heavens, and He is also on earth. As a result of all the steps of this process, God is no longer the "raw God," God before His process, but the "cooked God," God after His process.

THE CONSUMMATION OF THE PROCESSED AND CONSUMMATED TRIUNE GOD BEING THE SPIRIT

Our God has been processed and consummated. The consummation of the processed and consummated Triune God is the all-inclusive, compound, life-giving, and indwelling Spirit. As such a One, He is everything to us. Today He is the reality of the Father, He is the reality of the Son, and He is the Spirit, not before the incarnation but after the descension.

The book of Romans, after speaking of justification and of our being crucified and raised with Christ, unveils this Spirit as the Spirit of life (8:2), the Spirit of God (v. 9), the indwelling Spirit (v. 11), and the leading Spirit (v. 14). This one Spirit is our God, our Father, our Lord, our Master, our Redeemer, our Savior, our Shepherd, and our big Brother. Galatians 5:16 charges us to walk, to do everything, according to this Spirit, who is in our spirit (Rom. 8:16).

In Galatians this Spirit is the Spirit of blessing, the all-embracing and all-inclusive blessing of the gospel (3:14). He is also the One in whom we have our life and by whom

we can live (5:25). Hence, we must live by Him, walk by Him, and sow unto Him (6:8) in everything in our human life. According to 6:18, this Spirit is in our spirit as the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ for our enjoyment.

In Ephesians this Spirit is a seal and also a pledge to us (1:13-14). This One who is the Spirit as the person and whose name is Jesus Christ is making His home in our hearts (3:17).

Philippians refers to the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ (1:19), by which we can live Christ, magnify Christ, pursue Christ, and gain Christ (1:20-21; 3:8-14). By this bountiful supply we can count everything as loss and as refuse.

Because Job did not have this Spirit, he was overly sensitive toward God and toward his friends. He had no joy, and he never rejoiced. But Paul, having this Spirit, rejoiced even in prison (Acts 16:25). Instead of being sensitive, he exulted. In 2 Timothy 4:6-8 Paul said that he had fought the good fight, had finished the course, and had kept the faith and that the crown of righteousness was ready for him. Although he was being poured out as a drink offering, he was not complaining but was triumphantly rejoicing.

Job 42:5 tells us that eventually Job saw God. However, the God whom Job saw was not the processed God but the “raw God,” the God who had not yet passed through the steps of His process—incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and descension. In contrast to Job, we have the “cooked God,” the God who has been processed so that we may eat Him, drink Him, and breathe Him. Today our God is the all-inclusive Spirit as the consummation of the processed and consummated Triune God.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE EIGHTEEN

THE THIRD OF THE THREE ROUNDS IN THE DEBATES BETWEEN JOB AND HIS THREE FRIENDS

CHAPTERS 21—31

(2)

JOB'S DESIRE TO CLEAR UP HIS CASE WITH GOD AND HIS KNOWLEDGE CONCERNING GOD IN HIS DEALINGS WITH ALL KINDS OF MEN AND BILDAD'S CONCLUDING WORD

Scripture Reading: Job 23—25

In this message we will cover Job's word in chapters twenty-three and twenty-four and then go on to comment on Bildad's concluding word in chapter twenty-five.

I. JOB'S DESIRE TO CLEAR UP HIS CASE WITH GOD

As Job expressed his desire to clear up his case with God (ch. 23), he said that his complaint was bitter and that his stroke was heavy because of his groaning (v. 2). Job longed to know where he might find God, that he might come to God's seat to present his cause in order before Him, filling his mouth with arguments (vv. 3-4). Confident that he knew the words which God would answer him and that he understood what God would speak to him, Job said that God would not contend with him in His power but would give heed to him. Since, according to Job, the upright man can argue with God, Job would be delivered forever from his Judge (vv. 5-7). Here Job seemed to be extremely sensitive and spoke

as if he was in a dream. While Job was speaking, God was silent, apparently not listening to all these things.

In verses 8 through 10 Job said, "Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; / And backward, but I do not perceive Him; / To the left, where He acts, but I cannot look on Him; / He hides Himself on the right, so I cannot see Him. / But He knows the way that I take; / Should He try me, I would come forth as gold." Job could not find God where he imagined Him to be. Once again, Job's word indicated that he was in some kind of dream. He was surely dreaming when he said that if God tried him, he would come forth as gold.

Job went on to declare that his foot held fast to God's steps, that he had kept God's way and not turned back from the commandment of His lips, and that he had treasured the words of His mouth more than his apportioned food. However, Job said that God was of one mind and did what His soul desired, performing what had been appointed to Job. Therefore, Job was terrified at His presence and was in dread of Him, feeling that God had made his heart faint and that the Almighty had terrified him (vv. 11-16).

II. JOB'S KNOWLEDGE CONCERNING GOD IN HIS DEALINGS WITH ALL KINDS OF MEN

In chapter twenty-four we see Job's knowledge concerning God in His dealings with all kinds of men.

A. God's Dealing with the Ones Who Seize Others' Possessions

First, Job spoke concerning God's dealing with the ones who seize others' possessions, in particular with those who remove landmarks, seize the flock and pasture them, drive away the donkey of the fatherless, take the widow's ox as a pledge, and turn the needy out of the way (vv. 1-8). Then Job spoke of some who pluck the fatherless from the breast and take what the poor has on as a pledge (vv. 9-12).

B. God's Dealing with Those Who Rebel against the Light

Job continued by speaking regarding God's dealing with

those who rebel against the light, who are not acquainted with its ways nor abide in its paths (v. 13). Included among such ones are murderers and adulterers, who do not know the light (vv. 14-16). "For morning is to all of them like the shadow of death, / Because they are acquainted with the terrors of the shadow of death" (v. 17).

C. God's Dealing with Those Who Sin

Finally, in verses 18 through 25 Job spoke about God's dealing with those who sin. Job said that God preserves the mighty for awhile and then lets them be cut off like the ears of grain. Job concluded by saying, "If it is not so, then who will prove me a liar / And bring my words to nought?" (v. 25). It seems that here, in spite of his pain, Job was showing off to his friends.

III. BILDAD'S CONCLUDING WORD

Chapter twenty-five is a record of Bildad's concluding word. His final word was brief. From his previous speakings Bildad might have learned the lesson that the way to lose the case and to appear foolish is to speak too much. This might have been the reason that his concluding word was so short.

A. Saying That God Has Dominion

First, Bildad said that dominion and power are with God, and He makes peace in high places (v. 2). Then Bildad asked if there was any number to God's armies, and if there are any upon whom His light does not arise (v. 3). Bildad's word here was not according to the principle of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Nevertheless, like Job, he was showing off.

B. Saying That No One Can Be Righteous before God

In verses 4 through 6 Bildad returned to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Bildad asked how a man can be righteous before God, how a person born of a woman can be pure. Concluding that this is impossible, he said, "Behold, even the moon has no brightness, / And the stars are not pure

in His eyes. / How much less a man, a maggot; / And the son of man, a worm!" (vv. 5-6). This was the last word of Bildad in the book of Job.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE NINETEEN

OUR UNIQUE NEED—THE PROCESSED AND CONSUMMATED TRIUNE GOD AS THE ALL-INCLUSIVE, LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT

Scripture Reading: Gal. 2:20; 1 Cor. 15:10; Rev. 22:17

In this message I would like to give a further word concerning the processed and consummated Triune God as the all-inclusive, life-giving Spirit.

THE INGREDIENTS OF OUR ABUNDANTLY RICH GOD

Our God today is no longer the “raw” God but the processed God. After God created man, He continued to be the “raw” God, the unprocessed God, observing, testing, and proving humanity but not yet moving or taking any action. Then one day He began to go through a process. Each step of this process has become an ingredient of the Spirit as the consummation of the processed and consummated Triune God.

These ingredients include incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and descension. In eternity God had the ingredient of divinity but not the ingredients of humanity and human living. Through incarnation the ingredient of humanity was added to Him. This was followed by Christ’s human living and the crucial ingredient of His all-inclusive death on the cross. Next came the ingredient of resurrection, which is a matter of passing through death without being held by death. Through resurrection Christ was begotten to be the firstborn Son of God (Rom. 8:29), and through resurrection He also became the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b). Furthermore, in the resurrection of Christ all God’s chosen ones were regenerated to be the sons of God (1 Pet. 1:3). In His ascension, another ingredient, Christ is

transcendent. He is the One who is above all, and everything is now under His feet (Eph. 1:19-23). Finally, we have the ingredient of Christ's descension as the all-inclusive Spirit to produce the church, His Body.

As we consider all these ingredients, we can see that the processed and consummated Triune God is much richer than the "raw" God. Of course, the unprocessed God had the divine attributes, which may be regarded as ingredients, but now He also has the ingredients of incarnation, human living, the all-inclusive death, the life-imparting and life-producing resurrection, ascension, and descension, which issue in the Body. How rich our God is today! He is abundantly rich, aboundingly rich. He is everything to us as the Spirit, who is the consummation of the Triune God.

I have sometimes been asked why we pray to the Father or to the Lord Jesus but not to the Spirit. Actually, when we pray to the Father, we pray to the Spirit. When we pray to the Son, we pray also to the Spirit. Who is God? God is the Spirit. Who is the Father? The Father is the Spirit. Who is Christ? Christ is the Spirit. The totality, the aggregate, the consummation, of the Triune God with all His ingredients is the Spirit. Therefore, in the Spirit we have the three of the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—with all the steps of God's process as the ingredients.

THE TRIUNE GOD BEING WROUGHT INTO US IN HIS CONSUMMATED STATE

The Triune God is now being wrought into us, not in His "raw" state but in His consummated state. God could not be wrought into Job in this way because at Job's time God was still "raw." He had not yet been processed and consummated through incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and descension. Apart from Christ's all-inclusive death, how could we be terminated? How could we be redeemed? Apart from Christ's resurrection, how could we be germinated? We need to see that we are living at a great time—the time after the Triune God has been processed and consummated.

Our unique need as Christians is the processed and

consummated Triune God as the all-inclusive, life-giving Spirit. The Spirit is all that we need. Mainly we do not need righteousness or justification, nor do we need holiness or sanctification—our central need is the consummated Triune God as the Spirit with His rich supply. This Spirit is now in us and is one with us in life, in nature, and in essence, and we are one with Him. We all need to have a clear vision concerning this.

I can testify that, although I am very busy day by day, I am not the one working; rather, Christ, who lives in me, is the One working. Sixty-five years ago I did many things, but by the Lord's mercy I have been learning of Paul to coordinate with the One living in me. In Galatians 2:20 Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me." In 1 Corinthians 15:10 he said, "By the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace unto me did not turn out to be in vain, but, on the contrary, I labored more abundantly than all of them, yet not I but the grace of God which is with me." Humanly speaking, I cannot carry out the Lord's work today or bear the burden of the churches around the globe. However, the work is easy to do and the burden is easy to bear when it is the processed and consummated One living in me who does the work and bears the burden. I praise Him that I simply enjoy His living and His working and rejoice in Him.

**THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN BE A CHRISTIAN—
THE PROCESSED AND CONSUMMATED TRIUNE GOD
LIVING IN US AS THE CONSUMMATED SPIRIT**

To be a Christian is not merely difficult—it is impossible. Only the processed and consummated Triune God living in us as the all-inclusive Spirit can be a Christian. What the New Testament requires of us is too high. The kind of holiness required, for example, is something that we cannot produce. We praise the Lord that it is not we who need to fulfill the New Testament requirements but the Spirit in us who fulfills them. Instead of doing things in ourselves, we should simply enjoy His living and His working. Only the Spirit can be a Christian, and only the Spirit can be an

overcomer. Remember, the Spirit is our God, our Father, our Lord, our Redeemer, our Savior, our Shepherd, and our life and life supply.

The Spirit is everything to us to live the Christian life. The Christian life is altogether the processed and consummated Triune God as the all-inclusive Spirit. In this Spirit we have the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. In this Spirit we are in the Father, the Son, and the Spirit (Matt. 28:19). What kind of God do we have today? Our God is the processed and consummated Triune God, who is the consummated, all-inclusive Spirit as everything for our Christian life. When we have a need or a disability, we can remind Him of it. When we are facing a difficult situation, we can talk to Him about it. Then He, the One who lives in us, will come in to face the situation and to do whatever is needed.

THE MARRIAGE OF THE CONSUMMATED TRIUNE GOD AND THE GLORIFIED TRIPARTITE MAN

In Acts 2 we see the pouring out of the consummated Triune God as the all-inclusive Spirit upon God's chosen people. At the end of the Bible we have the expression "the Spirit and the bride" (Rev. 22:17). Who are these two? The Spirit is the consummated Triune God, and the bride is the regenerated, sanctified, transformed, and glorified tripartite man. Eventually, the consummated Triune God and the glorified tripartite man will be married and become one in life, in nature, in element, and in essence. This will be a corporate entity—the New Jerusalem as the aggregate of the mingling of divinity and humanity to express the Triune God for eternity. Today's church life should be a miniature of the marvelous New Jerusalem.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE TWENTY

THE THIRD OF THE THREE ROUNDS IN THE DEBATES BETWEEN JOB AND HIS THREE FRIENDS

CHAPTERS 21—31

(3)

JOB'S FINAL SPEAKING TO HIS THREE FRIENDS

(1)

Scripture Reading: Job 26—28

In this message we will begin to consider, from chapters twenty-six through twenty-eight, Job's final speaking to his three friends.

I. REBUKING BILDAD SARCASTICALLY

In 26:1-4 Job rebuked Bildad sarcastically, saying, "How you have helped him who is without power! / How you have saved the arm of him who is without strength! / How you have counseled him who is without wisdom / And have plentifully declared sound knowledge! / To whom have you uttered words? / And whose spirit has come forth from you?" This surely was not a friendly word. Job's three friends had come to visit him for the purpose of comforting and supporting him, but eventually Job and his friends got into a debate, contending and even fighting with one another. Their words had no spiritual light or reality. Instead, their speaking was according to the principle of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Job's friends only had the knowledge about such matters as being good in order to please God and to receive prosperity.

II. SHOWING OFF HIS SUPERIOR KNOWLEDGE CONCERNING THE UNLIMITED POWER OF GOD

After rebuking Bildad, Job spoke to his friends regarding God's power as seen in His creation. Job's speaking here indicates that he had a superiority complex. In verses 5 through 14 Job showed off his superior knowledge concerning the unlimited power of God. Job said that Sheol is naked before God, that He hangs the earth upon nothing, that He spread His cloud over the face of His throne, that by His power He stilled the sea and by His understanding He struck down Rahab (a sea monster spoken of in ancient narratives), and that by His Spirit the heavens became beauty. Then Job concluded by saying, "Behold, these are but the fringes of His ways; / And how small a whisper do we hear of Him! / But as for the thundering of His mightiness, who can comprehend it?" (v. 14).

There was no need for Job to show off his superior knowledge or to speak to his friends in this way. The conversation between Job and his friends is not what we would expect from friends who care for each other. No one among them suggested that they pray and look to the Lord.

III. HOLDING FAST INSISTENTLY TO HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS AND INTEGRITY

Job's discourse in 27:1-7 shows us that he held fast insistently to his righteousness and integrity. He declared that as God lives and as long as his breath was in him, his lips would not speak anything wrong nor would his tongue utter deceit. Then he said to his friends, "Far be it from me to declare you righteous!" (v. 5a). Here Job was saying that he would never admit that his friends were right. Following this, Job spoke a strong word about his integrity and righteousness: "Until I die, I will not put away my integrity from me. / To my righteousness I will hold fast, I will not let it go; / My heart does not reproach me for any of my days" (vv. 5b-6). He finished this part of his discourse with a word regarding his enemy: "May my enemy be like a wicked man, / And may he who rises up against me be like someone unjust"

(v. 7). Job's thought was that, unlike others, he would never be unjust.

IV. TEACHING HIS FRIENDS HIGH-MINDEDLY CONCERNING THE HOPE OF THE PROFANE MAN

In verses 8 through 23 Job continued by teaching his friends high-mindedly concerning the hope of the profane man. First, Job asked about the hope of the profane man when God cuts him off, taking away his soul and not hearing his cry. Then Job, having a superiority complex, said to his friends, "I will teach you about the hand of God; / What is with the Almighty I will not conceal" (v. 11). After this, Job went on to instruct his friends regarding the portion which the wicked man would receive from the Almighty. Concerning the wicked, Job claimed that his children will be multiplied for the sword, that those who remain of him will be buried in death, that the righteous will wear his garments and that the innocent will divide his silver, that terrors will overtake him like waters, that God will hurl at him and not spare, and that men will hiss him out of his place.

There was no need for Job to speak a word such as this. This was a word with no light, life, love, or kindness. At best, this was a teaching as a kind of warning. However, none of his friends needed this teaching; they already knew these things and could have taught concerning them. Nevertheless, due to his superiority complex, he taught his friends in a high-minded manner.

V. SHOWING OFF HIS HIGH-PITCHED KNOWLEDGE CONCERNING THE WAY TO FIND WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING

In chapter twenty-eight Job went on to show off his high-pitched knowledge concerning the way to find wisdom and understanding. Job twice asked where wisdom can be found and where the place of understanding is (vv. 12, 20). Then he said that God, who sees to the ends of the earth and beholds all that is under heaven, knows the place of wisdom and the way to it (vv. 23-24). Thus, God said to man, "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; / And to depart

from evil is understanding" (v. 28). Surely Job's friends already knew about fearing the Lord and departing from evil. Every godly person knew this; there was no need for Job to repeat it. However, Job spoke in this way because he was high-minded and thought that in knowledge he was superior to his friends.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE TWENTY-ONE

THE THIRD OF THE THREE ROUNDS IN THE DEBATES BETWEEN JOB AND HIS THREE FRIENDS

CHAPTERS 21—31

(4)

JOB'S FINAL SPEAKING TO HIS THREE FRIENDS

(2)

Scripture Reading: Job 29—30

In this message we will continue to consider Job's final speaking to his three friends.

VI. DWELLING ON HIS EXCELLENT PAST

Chapter twenty-nine is a record of Job's dwelling on his excellent past. He recalled the days of his prime when the intimate counsel with God was over his tent, the Almighty was with him, and his children were around him. He remembered that he delivered the poor man who cried out and the orphan who had no one to help him. He also made the widow's heart shout for joy. Thus Job could declare, "I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; / My justice was like a robe and a turban" (v. 14). Job went on to say that, in his excellent past, he was eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, and a father to the needy. Others listened to his counsel, and after his words they did not speak again. Job chose the way for them and sat as chief, dwelling "as a king among the troops, / As one who comforts those who mourn" (v. 25).

VII. SIGHING OVER HIS MISERABLE PRESENT

After dwelling on his excellent past, Job in chapter thirty

sighed over his miserable present. Job said that those who were younger than he held him in derision and that others made him a byword, abhorred him, and stood aloof from him, casting off restraint in his presence. Next, Job said that terrors had turned upon him, that his prosperity had passed away like a cloud, that his soul was poured out within him, and that days of affliction had taken hold of him. Job continued by saying that he cried to God, but God did not answer him. According to Job's feeling, God had turned to become cruel to him. Job said to Him, "I know that You will bring me into death, / And to the house appointed for all living" (v. 23). Job also sighed over the fact that when he expected good, evil came, and when he waited for light, darkness came. Job concluded by saying that his inward parts were in turmoil, that days of affliction had drawn near to him, and that his harp had become mourning and his pipe, the voice of those who weep. Here we see a picture of Job's sufferings.

Job did not understand the reason for his sufferings, but today we know the reason. It was true that Job suffered, but his suffering was allowed by God for a purpose. God wanted to take away all his successes. Job was very successful, both materially and ethically. He had attained to a very high degree of perfection and uprightness. That was his integrity, and he was proud of it. Job considered his perfection and integrity as a robe to cover him and as a turban to glorify him (29:14). However, God took these away in order that Job would pursue God Himself instead of other things, yet Job did not understand. He thought that he was right and that God had done something wrong toward him. Therefore, he was hoping to have an opportunity to present his case before God. From this we can see that Job was altogether in another realm, one which was contrary to God's desire.

Eventually, Job recognized that he had known God only "by the hearing of the ear" (42:5a). He had heard about God and he had believed in God, but he had never seen God. However, through all the strippings and consumings, the time came when Job saw God (42:5b).

Matthew 5:8 says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they

shall see God." Here, seeing God is a great reward in the kingdom. According to the clear view in the New Testament, to see God is to receive God into us. If seeing God is merely an objective seeing of God and nothing else, that means very little. But seeing God is to receive God, and this means that God comes into us as our element to renew us, to transform us, because God's coming in adds the divine element into our being. This divine element works on us and in us to renew us, discharging all our old element. Eventually, our entire being becomes new. This is transformation.

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." First we behold God, that is, see God; then we reflect Him and are transformed. In our seeing God we are being transformed into His glorious image, from one degree of glory to another. This is from the Lord Spirit.

The God whom Job saw was also the Spirit, but at that time God was still in His original state. God had His divine element with His divine attributes, but He did not have anything related to incarnation, humanity, and human living. According to 2 Corinthians 3:18, the God whom we are looking at today is different, for He is much richer in His ingredients. Hence, the more we look at Him, the more we receive His ingredients into our being as our inner supply to work on us, to discharge the old, and to make us new. This is to transform us into God's image.

Seeing God should issue in the transformation of our being into God's image. I do not believe Job had such a realization when he saw God. It is a fact that his sufferings did issue in one thing—he saw God. It is hard to say, however, in what way Job saw God, whether in a physical way or in the way of a spiritual revelation.

Our way of looking at God today is altogether a matter in the spirit. The God whom we may look at is the consummated Spirit, and we can look at Him in our spirit. Sometimes we are too busy or too careless to take the opportunity to look at the Lord. In our morning watch, even

if only for fifteen or twenty minutes, we have time to be with the Lord, time to remain in the Spirit. At such a time we may pray-read His word, talk to Him, or pray to Him with short prayers. Then we will have the sense 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.

Our Christian life is a life not of changing outwardly but of being transformed from within by having the divine element added into our inner being to replace our old element. This is altogether by our looking at the processed and consummated God, who is the all-inclusive Spirit.

By reading Job's final word in chapter thirty, we can realize that Job and his friends were walking on the way of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They were not in the realm of endeavoring to see God in order to learn of Him and especially to receive Him so that they could be transformed with His element and essence to be made the same as God in life and in nature. We all need to see a clear comparison between the way taken by Job and his friends and the way revealed in the New Testament.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE TWENTY-TWO

GOD'S MOVE IN CHRIST TO BRING FORTH THE BODY

Scripture Reading: Phil. 3:8; Col. 1:24-29; 2:2; Eph. 3:4;
1 Thes. 5:17; Eph. 6:18

In this message I have the burden to speak a word concerning God's move in Christ to bring forth the Body.

TWO KINDS OF SUFFERINGS

Philippians 3:8 and Colossians 1:24 speak of two kinds of sufferings. In Philippians 3:8 Paul says, "Moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ." The suffering here is for the gaining of Christ. In Colossians 1:24 Paul says, "I now rejoice in my sufferings on your behalf and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body, which is the church." The suffering here is for the Body. On the one hand, Paul suffered in order to gain Christ; on the other hand, he suffered for the building up of the Body of Christ.

In verse 25 Paul went on to say that he became a minister of the church according to the stewardship of God to complete the word of God. The Greek word translated "stewardship" here is *oikonomia*, which has been anglicized as the word "economy." Hence, we may also say that Paul became a minister according to the economy of God. In his ministry Paul was charged by God to do a wonderful work—to complete the word of God, that is, to complete the divine revelation in God's written word. The "word of God" in verse 25 is, according to Greek grammar, the mystery in verse 26, "the mystery which has been hidden from the ages and from the

generations but now has been manifested to His saints; to whom God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (vv. 26-27). Paul announced Christ, admonishing and teaching in all wisdom, in order to present every man full-grown in Christ, and for this he labored, struggling according to the operation of the One who operated in him in power (vv. 28-29).

THE MOVE OF THE PROCESSED AND CONSUMMATED TRIUNE GOD

The New Testament unveils to us the move of the processed and consummated Triune God. In the Old Testament we do not see God's move but only God's preparatory work for Him to move. God's move began in the four Gospels with Christ's incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. This was the beginning of God's move in Christ to bring forth His Body.

Christ, the incarnated God, entered into humanity to bring divinity into humanity, making these two entities one, joining them together to be one entity, the God-man. Now God and man are one in nature, in life, in essence, in element, and even in expression. How wonderful that there is such a One in the universe! This One passed through human living, entered into the all-inclusive death, and came out of death into resurrection. Through resurrection and in resurrection He became the firstborn Son of God (Rom. 8:29) and the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45), and He regenerated all His believers to be the sons of God and the members of Himself. As a result, the church has appeared on the scene.

Before this, God's move was just in one person, Christ. This means that God was moving only in Himself. Now, since Christ ascended and descended to bring forth the church, God's move has entered into a second stage—the stage of God's move in a corporate vessel. First, God moved in Christ singly as a personal vessel; now God is moving in the church as a corporate vessel. As such a vessel the church is the enlargement of Christ, the expansion of Christ. Now God's move is in a

corporate way. This corporate way is just the Body of Christ, the church, the new man, the organism of the Triune God.

**GOD'S CORPORATE MOVE
REVEALED IN ACTS THROUGH REVELATION**

**The Two Mysteries
Being the Contents of the Divine Economy**

This stage of God's corporate move is revealed in Acts through Revelation. This is the deepest and the most profound, heavenly, divine, spiritual, and organic section of the Bible. This section concerns God's eternal economy regarding Christ as the mystery of God (Col. 2:2) and the church, the Body, as the mystery of Christ (Eph. 3:4, 6). Christ is the mystery of God, and the Body of Christ is the mystery of Christ. These two mysteries are the contents of the divine economy.

**The Processed Triune God
as the Consummated Spirit Being in Our Spirit**

In this section of the Word we have a full revelation concerning the Christian life. The substance, essence, element, and expression of this part of the Word are simply the processed, consummated Triune God as the all-inclusive, compound, indwelling Spirit who indwells us in our spirit to be our life, our nature, our essence, and our everything, that we may be the same as the Triune God in life and nature to be His fullness as His full expression in a corporate way.

The processed Triune God as the consummated Spirit is in our spirit. Therefore, as Christians we should remain in our spirit. We should not go to visit our flesh, and we should not befriend our soul. Our spirit is our precious place. To worldly people it is a prison, but to us it is a palace. Here in our spirit we can enjoy the processed Triune God.

Spiritual Breathing

We need to learn to exercise our spirit. Exercising our spirit is like breathing. Even when we are resting we are still breathing. We may say that breathing signifies our

exercising of our spirit. Just as we breathe without ceasing, we need to pray unceasingly (1 Thes. 5:17). Every time we pray we need to pray in our spirit (Eph. 6:18). This is spiritual breathing.

**Being Deified That We May Become
the Corporate Expression of the Triune God**

In our spiritual breathing by the exercise of our spirit, we enjoy, receive, and absorb the divine substance with the divine essence, the divine element, and the divine expression. This will cause us to be deified, that is, to be constituted with the processed Triune God to be made God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead. In this sense we may speak of the deification of the believers, a process that will consummate in the New Jerusalem.

Do you know what the New Jerusalem is? The New Jerusalem is a composition of God's chosen, redeemed, regenerated, sanctified, transformed, and glorified people who have been deified. On God's side, the Triune God has been incarnated to be a man; on our side, we are being deified, constituted with the processed and consummated Triune God so that we may be made God in life and in nature to be His corporate expression for eternity. This is the highest truth, and this is the highest gospel.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE TWENTY-THREE

THE THIRD OF THE THREE ROUNDS IN THE DEBATES BETWEEN JOB AND HIS THREE FRIENDS

CHAPTERS 21—31

(5)

JOB'S FINAL SPEAKING TO HIS THREE FRIENDS

(3)

Scripture Reading: Job 31:1—32:1

In this message we will consider 31:1—32:1, the conclusion of Job's final speaking to his three friends.

VIII. BOASTING OF HIS UPRIGHTNESS, RIGHTEOUSNESS, INTEGRITY, AND PERFECTION

In chapter thirty-one Job boasted of his uprightness, righteousness, integrity, and perfection.

A. Restraining the Lust of His Flesh in Fearing God

In order to practice his uprightness, righteousness, integrity, and perfection, Job restrained the lust of his flesh in fearing God (vv. 1-4). Job's word in verse 4 indicates that he feared God: "Does He not see my ways / And count all my steps?"

B. Not Walking with Falsehood and after Deceit

Job boasted that he did not walk with falsehood and after deceit (vv. 5-8). He said, "If I have walked with falsehood, / And my foot has hastened after deceit— / Let Him weigh me in a righteous balance, / And let God know my integrity"

(vv. 5-6). Humanly speaking, it was very good that Job did not practice falsehood or deceit.

C. Abhorring Adultery as a Heinous Act

Job went on to say that he abhorred adultery as a heinous act (vv. 9-12). Adultery is evil, and we all must hate it.

D. Not Despising the Cause of His Servant or Maid in His Fearing God

Job did not despise the cause of his servant or maid when they contended with him (v. 13). This means that he took care of their need. Verses 14 and 15 indicate that in this matter also Job feared God: "What then will I do when God rises up? / And when He visits me, what will I answer Him? / Did not He who made me in the womb make him? / And was it not One who fashioned us in the womb?"

E. Taking Care of the Poor, the Widow, the Orphan, and the Needy

In verses 16 through 23 Job boasted about taking care of the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the needy because of the calamity from God and His majesty. Job did not withhold food or clothing from the poor, and he did not raise his hand against the orphan. Concerning this also Job feared God, saying, "Calamity from God is dreadful to me, / And because of His majesty I can do nothing" (v. 23). He was threatened by God's majesty, and he feared that if he did not do well, calamity would come upon him.

F. Not Trusting in Gold and Rejoicing in Wealth

Job went on to say that he did not trust in gold and rejoice in wealth, nor was he enticed to worship the shining sun and the splendid moon and thus to deny God in the heavens (vv. 24-28). He did not make gold his hope or call fine gold his confidence, and he did not rejoice because his wealth was great. This means that what Job treasured was not gold but God. In this matter Job was different from most people, who treasure wealth but deny God.

G. Not Rejoicing at the Misfortune of the One Who Hated Him

Job said that he did not rejoice at the misfortune of the one who hated him, exult in his suffering, or curse his life (vv. 29-30).

H. Feeding Everyone and Lodging All the Sojourners

Job also boasted that he fed everyone who had a need and that he lodged all the sojourners (vv. 31-32).

I. Not Covering His Transgressions and Hiding His Iniquity because of the Fear of the Great Multitude

Job continued by saying that he did not cover his transgressions as Adam did nor hide his iniquity in his bosom because of the fear of the great multitude and because the contempt of the families frightened him (vv. 33-34). He realized that it would have been sinful to cover his transgressions because he was afraid of others. Then he said, "Oh that there were someone to hear me! / Here is my signature! Let the Almighty answer me. / And let my accuser write up the charge. / Surely I would carry it [the scroll containing the charge] on my shoulder; / I would bind it onto me like a crown; / I would declare to Him the number of my steps; / Like a prince I would approach Him!" (vv. 35-37).

J. Not Securing Land without Money or Causing Its Owners to Lose Their Life

Finally, Job boasted that he did not rob others of their real estate. He did not secure land without money or cause its owners to lose their life (vv. 38-40).

Job's boasting here indicates that he was in the realm of human ethics, not in the realm of the divine economy. Regarding human ethics, Job was quite good; however, regarding the divine economy he missed the mark. In the Lord's recovery today, we need to care for God's New Testament economy.

IX. JOB'S THREE FRIENDS CEASING TO ANSWER HIM

Job 32:1 says, "Then these three men ceased answering Job, for he was righteous in his own eyes." They could not handle Job, and they did not know what to do with him, so they stopped talking. No one forced them to cease answering Job. Having become tired of talking to Job, they decided to cease speaking to him.

X. JOB'S EXPOSING OF HIMSELF THROUGH HIS EIGHT TIMES OF SPEAKING TO HIS THREE FRIENDS

Through his eight times of speaking to his three friends, Job exposed himself, exposing many negative things concerning himself.

A. Self-righteous

Job exposed himself as being self-righteous (6:30; 9:20; 27:5-6; 32:1). He was righteous in his own eyes, and he held fast to his righteousness.

B. Full of Reasons

Job also exposed himself as a person who was full of reasons. A self-righteous person is always ready to give many reasons regarding his situation.

C. Blaming His Friends for Not Understanding Him

Job blamed his friends for not understanding him and for not sympathizing with him in love. His friends did not sympathize with him, but neither did he sympathize with them.

D. Complaining That God Was Not Fair in Treating Him in an Unexplainable, Severe Way

In his speaking to his friends, Job complained that God was not fair in treating him in an unexplainable, severe way.

E. Expecting and Waiting to Clear Up His Case with God

Job felt that there was a case between him and God. He expected and waited to clear up his case with God, even if this meant “taking God to court.”

F. Knowing God in the Vain Knowledge Inherited from Tradition

Job's speaking exposed him as being a person who knew God only in the vain knowledge inherited from tradition. Such knowledge was altogether objective.

G. Having Not Received the Divine Revelation concerning God's Ultimate Goal to Be Gained, Partaken Of, Possessed, and Enjoyed by His Chosen People

Job's speaking indicates that he had not received the divine revelation, as unveiled in the New Testament concerning God's eternal economy, that God's ultimate goal, as God desires for His good pleasure, is that He may be gained, partaken of, possessed, and enjoyed by His chosen people that they may be consumed by God's dealing, renewed in the divine nature (2 Cor. 4:16), and transformed in the divine life by the Spirit to the glorious image of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18) as the embodiment of God for God's expression. Job lived long before this revelation was given.

H. Darkened by the Success and Attainments of His Natural Being

Regarding ethical and moral things, Job had great success and high attainments. However, as exposed by his speaking, he was darkened by the success and attainments of his natural being.

I. Blinded by the Concept of His Natural Understanding

Job was also blinded by the concept of his natural understanding.

**J. Groping in Darkness and in Blindness
concerning His Relationship with God
according to What God Wants**

Furthermore, Job was a person groping in darkness and in blindness concerning his relationship with God according to what God wants. Job did not see that God's intention was to strip him of all his natural attainments, of his perfection and integrity, so that he could gain God.

K. Contented with What He Had Become

As indicated by his speaking, Job was a person who was contented with what he had become. He was proud of his robe of righteousness and of his crown, his turban, of integrity.

**L. Being Unaware
of His Miserable Situation before God**

Job was unaware of his miserable situation before God. He acknowledged God in name but not in reality. He had not been saturated by God and filled with God. He had not been mingled with God and had not become one with God. Furthermore, Job did not possess any element that indicated some aspect and some feature of the New Jerusalem as God's organism to live God and to express God for eternity. Job did not know his situation, and he did not know the New Jerusalem.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE TWENTY-FOUR

MAN MOVING IN GOD'S MOVE AND GOD MOVING IN MAN'S MOVE

Scripture Reading: Matt. 1:21-23; John 1:1, 14; Acts 16:6-10;
Rev. 22:17

In this message I would like to give a further word on God's move, in particular on man moving in God's move and God moving in man's move.

THE PRINCIPLE OF GOD'S MOVE ON EARTH

The New Testament, a record of God's move, shows us that God can never move apart from man. In the beginning of the New Testament, God moved into man, gained man, and became a man (Matt. 1:21-23; John 1:1, 14). He moved not only as God and not merely as man; He moved as the God-man. This was the reason that in the four Gospels the high priests, the elders, the scribes, and the Roman officials did not know who Jesus was. They could not determine whether His activities were the activities of God or the activities of a man. He was a mystery, for He was God, yet man; He was man, yet God.

Athanasius, one of the early church fathers, said concerning Christ, "He was made man that we might be made God," and "The Word was made flesh...that we, partaking of His Spirit, might be deified." This is the principle of God's move on earth. God's move is in man and through man. God's move is to deify man, making man God in life and in nature but not, of course, in the Godhead.

In the four Gospels Christ was just one person, but on the day of Pentecost, after His death, resurrection, ascension, and descension, He was enlarged and expanded from one person into thousands of persons (Acts 2:41). A large group

of people began to move in the divine move. In the four Gospels God moved in man's move, but in Acts man moved in God's move. God and man moved together. The chief priests, the elders, the scribes, and the Roman officials did not understand what had happened to Peter and John, because they knew them only as Galilean fishermen (4:13). Nevertheless, they had to admit that what these men did was divine (4:16). When they moved, God moved. Eventually, Gamaliel, a great rabbi, advised the Sanhedrin, the highest court of the Jews, concerning the apostles, saying, "Withdraw from these men and leave them alone; for should this counsel or this work be of men, it will be overthrown; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them, lest you be found to be even fighters against God" (5:38-39).

**CHRISTIANS BEING MYSTERIOUS
BECAUSE THEY MOVE IN GOD'S MOVE
AND GOD MOVES IN THEIR MOVE**

Genuine Christians are mysterious and cannot be understood by unbelievers. We Christians are a mystery because we move in God's move, and God moves in our move. God and we, we and God, move together. The worldly people know only the human part of us—they do not realize that we also have a divine part. This divine part, which is involved in our move in God's move and God's move in our move, is the consummated Spirit as the consummation of the processed and consummated Triune God.

THE REALM OF ETHICS AND THE REALM OF GOD

Job pursued something in the realm of ethics, but we Christians today pursue something in the realm of God. What we are doing is a mystery, and this mystery is the Triune God consummated as the Spirit indwelling us, moving with us, and even moving in us.

THE SPIRIT AND WE BEING ONE

We are not merely one *with* the Spirit, but we *and* the Spirit are one. This is illustrated by the move of the apostle Paul and his co-workers in Acts 16. They were forbidden by

the Holy Spirit to turn to the left into Asia (v. 6), and they were not allowed by the Spirit of Jesus to turn to the right into Bithynia (v. 7). This indicated a straight forward direction for their move. Paul then received a vision of a Macedonian man, and after considering the vision, Paul and his co-workers concluded that God had called them to announce the gospel to the Macedonians (v. 10). This is a wonderful picture of man moving in God's move, of man and God moving together.

**NOT TAKING ANY ACTION
APART FROM THE ALL-INCLUSIVE SPIRIT**

We should not take any action apart from the all-inclusive Spirit. We should not face any situation or meet any need apart from the Spirit. When He moves, we move; when we move, He moves. We need to practice this in our married life. If you desire to say something to your spouse, you should wait for a period of time, until you have the assurance that your speaking is the move of the Spirit.

We need to learn not to do things too quickly. Acting hastily is the living of a descendant of Adam. Those who live in that way are quick to speak, to act, and to deal with others. We must remember that, as Christians, we are not the only ones moving. On the contrary, we are moving in another One's moving, and another One is moving in our moving. This kind of life is a constituent of the church. This kind of life keeps the Body of Christ in a living condition. However, not to move in the Spirit's move and not to have the Spirit in our move will bring death into the church.

Revelation 22:17 does not say that the Spirit speaks with the bride; rather, this verse says, "The Spirit and the bride say...." The two speak together. This indicates that we should not merely speak *with* the Spirit; we *and* the Spirit should speak together. If this is the case, our speaking will be living and full of impact. The way we must take today is the way of moving in the move of the Spirit and of having the Spirit moving in our move.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE TWENTY-FIVE

ELIHU'S TURN TO SPEAK

CHAPTERS 32—37

(1)

ELIHU'S FIRST CORRECTION AND REFUTATION OF JOB

Scripture Reading: Job 32—33

In this message we will consider Elihu's first correction and refutation of Job.

I. HIS ANGER BEING KINDLED

A. Against Job

The anger of Elihu was kindled against Job because he justified himself rather than God (32:2).

B. Against Job's Three Friends

Elihu's anger was kindled also against Job's three friends because they found no answer but had condemned Job (v. 3).

Elihu thought of himself as wise, but in being angry against Job and his three friends he was very foolish. It is not wise to be burning with anger. We need to learn to be slow to anger. If we are angry, we should not do anything. Particularly in this matter of anger, we need to learn not to act in haste. If we allow ourselves to calm down when we are angry, we will be saved from making foolish mistakes caused by speaking or acting in anger.

II. WAITING TO SPEAK BECAUSE THE OTHERS WERE OLDER THAN HE

Elihu had waited to speak with Job because the others

were all older than he (vv. 4-14). In verses 6 and 7 he said, "I am young, / And you are aged; / Therefore I shrank back and was afraid / To declare to you what I know. / I said, Let age speak, / And let the multitude of years make wisdom known." Following this, he declared that it is not the great who are wise nor the old who understand justice. Then to these older ones Elihu said, "Hear me; / I too will declare what I know" (v. 10). Elihu's word here indicates that he was quite proud.

Elihu's detailed explanation in verses 11 through 13 is a further indication that he was lacking in wisdom. When a wise person says something, he speaks in a direct manner, without unnecessary words.

**III. BEING FULL OF WORDS,
HIS SPIRIT CONSTRAINING HIM,
AND HIS INWARD PARTS BEING LIKE NEW WINESKINS
THAT WERE ABOUT TO BURST**

Elihu said that he was full of words, that his spirit in his inward parts constrained him, and that his inward parts were like wine that was not vented and like new wineskins that were about to burst (vv. 15-19). He desired to speak that he might have some relief, without respecting any man's person nor flattering any man (vv. 20-22).

**IV. DECLARING THAT HIS WORDS
WOULD MANIFEST THE UPRIGHTNESS OF HIS HEART**

Elihu went on to speak to Job, saying, "Now, Job, hear my speaking, / And give ear to all my words" (33:1). Elihu spoke here without any politeness or humility. If we would speak to others in such a way, they would surely be offended. Today we certainly should not tell the saints to give ear to all our words.

Elihu then declared that his words would manifest the uprightness of his heart and that his tongue would speak what he knew sincerely (v. 3). Saying that the Spirit of God had made him and that the breath of the Almighty had enlivened him, Elihu told Job, "If you can, respond to me; / Arrange your words before me; take your stand" (v. 5).

Furthermore, Elihu said that no fear of him would terrify Job and that Elihu's pressure could not be heavy upon him (v. 7). This kind of talk was altogether unnecessary.

**V. CORRECTING JOB, TELLING HIM
THAT HE WAS NOT RIGHT IN SAYING
THAT HE WAS CLEAN AND WITHOUT TRANSGRESSION**

Elihu corrected Job, telling him that he was not right in saying, "I am clean and without transgression; / I am pure, and there is no iniquity in me" (v. 9). According to Elihu, Job was also not right in saying, "Behold, He finds occasions for hostility against me; / He considers me as His enemy. / He puts my feet in stocks; / He watches all my paths" (vv. 10-11). Explaining that God is greater than man, Elihu continued by rebuking Job, asking him, "Why do you contend with Him, / Saying that He does not answer for any of His affairs?" (v. 13). It is hard to understand why Elihu talked to Job in such a way.

VI. REFUTING JOB

After correcting and rebuking Job, Elihu refuted him (vv. 14-30).

**A. Saying That God
Speaks to Men and Instructs Them
That He May Turn Them Aside
to Be Kept from the Pit and from Perishing**

As Elihu refuted Job, he taught him, saying that God speaks to men and instructs them that He may turn them aside to be kept from the pit and from perishing (vv. 14-18). Elihu claimed that God speaks to men in two ways—in a dream, a night vision, and by opening the ears of men and sealing up their instruction. Do you believe that God contacts people only in these two ways? Elihu was actually setting up a rule for God to follow. This is something that no one should do.

**B. Saying That God Takes Care of a Man
Chastened with Sickness, Being Gracious to Him**

Next, Elihu said that God also takes care of a man

chastened with sickness, being gracious to him, delivering him from perishing in the pit, and returning him to the days of his youth so that he will be justified and accepted by God and seek God's face with joyous shouting, and his life will see the light. According to Elihu, God accomplishes all these things for a man twice, even three times (vv. 19-30).

**VII. CHARGING JOB TO HEAR HIM AND BE SILENT,
SO THAT HE MIGHT TEACH HIM WISDOM**

In verses 31 through 33 Elihu charged Job to hear him and be silent, so that he might teach him wisdom. What kind of wisdom could Elihu teach Job? No wisdom was expressed in Elihu's speaking.

Thus far, Elihu had not answered Job with a clear view—in spite of the full assurance he had that he could answer Job adequately concerning the purpose of God in dealing with Job—like the apostle Paul's clear vision in the New Testament concerning the goal of gaining Christ in his suffering of the loss of all things (Phil. 3:8-14). Elihu's word had nothing of the divine wisdom. With Paul, however, there was a clear word of revelation. Hence, Paul's word was truly the word of wisdom.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE TWENTY-SIX

ELIHU'S TURN TO SPEAK

CHAPTERS 32—37

(2)

ELIHU'S SECOND AND THIRD CORRECTIONS AND REFUTATIONS OF JOB

Scripture Reading: Job 34—35

Chapters thirty-four and thirty-five cover Elihu's second and third corrections and refutations of Job.

I. ELIHU'S SECOND CORRECTION AND REFUTATION OF JOB

Elihu's second correction and refutation of Job is recorded in chapter thirty-four.

A. Asking the Wise and Knowledgeable to Hear His Words

Elihu asked the wise and the knowledgeable to hear his words (vv. 1-4). According to him, the ear tries words as the palate tastes food. In verse 4 he said, "Let us choose for ourselves what is right; / Let us know among ourselves what is good."

B. Correcting Job for Saying That He Was Righteous and That God Had Taken Away His Right

Next, Elihu corrected Job for saying, "I am righteous, / And God has taken away my right," and, "It does not profit a man / To delight himself in God" (vv. 5, 9).

C. Condemning Job

Elihu also condemned Job.

1. Saying That He Went in Company with the Workers of Iniquity

First, Elihu condemned Job by saying that he went in company with the workers of iniquity and walked with wicked men (vv. 7-8).

2. Saying That He Had Spoken without Knowledge

Elihu also said that Job had spoken without knowledge and that his words were without insight (v. 35). Elihu even declared that he wished that "Job were tried to the limit / Because of his answering like evil men" (v. 36). Furthermore, Elihu condemned Job by saying that he added rebellion to his sin and that among them he clapped his hands and multiplied his words against God (v. 37).

D. Refuting Job

1. Saying That God Would Never Do Evil

Elihu went on to refute Job, saying that God would never do evil and that the Almighty would never commit iniquity (v. 10). Rather, God will render a man's work to him and will cause a man to receive that which is according to his own way (v. 11). In verses 12 through 20 Elihu spoke further concerning God's not doing evil and not perverting justice. In verses 12 through 15 he declared, "Indeed in all certainty God will not do evil, / And the Almighty will not pervert justice. / Who has ever put the earth in His charge? / Or who has ever set in order the whole world? / If He were to consider Himself only, / He would gather back to Himself His spirit and His breath; / All flesh would perish together, / And man would return to dust."

2. Saying That God Governs and Judges the Nations and Men Not to Fit Job

In verses 21 through 33 Elihu continued to refute Job, saying that God governs and judges the nations and men not to fit Job, since Job had rejected it. Elihu said that God's

eyes are upon the ways of a man and that He sees all their steps; that He, knowing the actions of the mighty men, breaks them in pieces without inquiry and puts others in their stead; and that He strikes them as He would evil men because they turned aside from following Him and would not regard any of His ways. Toward the end of this speech, Elihu asked Job, "Should He recompense to fit you, since you have rejected it?" (v. 33a).

By reading chapter thirty-four, we can realize that Elihu was a person who was full of the knowledge of good and evil. This young man should have considered that Job and his three friends already knew all the things that he was speaking. But he was so full of knowledge, he said that he would burst if he did not speak.

I have often wondered why this book does not say that Job and his three friends and Elihu came together to pray by exercising their spirits to touch God. I cannot understand how such a group of godly men could come together without any prayer. They just exercised their minds. Their speaking was all composed of poetry. Even Elihu's word was spoken in poetic form. That requires much exercise of the mentality. Why would they not pray together to seek the Lord's mind, to seek the Lord's purpose? What a pity that they did not do this!

II. ELIHU'S THIRD CORRECTION AND REFUTATION OF JOB

In chapter thirty-five we have Elihu's third correction and refutation of Job.

A. Correcting Job Further by Checking with Him concerning His Answer

Elihu corrected Job further by checking with him concerning his answer (vv. 1-3). Elihu asked him if he considered his answer to be just. Then he asked Job, "Do you say, My righteousness is more than God's, / That you say, What advantage is there to me, / What do I profit, more than if I had sinned?" (vv. 2-3).

B. Elihu's Refutation of Job before His Friends

In verse 4 Elihu said, "I will respond to you with words, / And to your companions with you." This indicates that Elihu was refuting Job before his friends.

1. Charging Job to Look unto Heaven and Behold the Skies

Elihu charged Job to look unto heaven and behold the skies, which were higher than him. "If you sin, what do you accomplish against Him? / And if your transgressions are multiplied, what do you do to Him? / If you are righteous, what can you give to Him, / Or what does He receive from your hand?" (vv. 6-7). Here Elihu was telling Job that whether he sinned or was righteous, that did not affect God.

Elihu's talk was vain. There was no need for him to charge Job in this way.

2. Teaching Job That Men Cry Out to God because of Oppressions and Cry for Help because of the Mighty Arm

Elihu continued by teaching Job that men cry out to God because of oppressions and cry for help because of the mighty arm (v. 9). But according to Elihu, no one says, "Where is God my Maker, / Who gives songs in the night, / Who teaches us more than the beasts of the earth / And makes us wiser than the birds of heaven?" (vv. 10-11). Elihu then said that God does not answer their cry because of the pride of evil men. He said further that God does not hear and regard an empty cry (vv. 12-13). Why did Elihu not charge Job and his friends to pray? Why did he not charge them to praise their Maker?

Elihu went on to say that Job had said that he did not behold God, that his cause was before God, and that he had to wait on God. According to Elihu, because God had not visited in His anger nor regarded such great arrogance, Job had opened his mouth in vanity and had multiplied words without knowledge (vv. 14-16). Elihu accused Job of speaking vanity, but what about his own words? As we read this chapter, we can see that there was no reality in Elihu's words.

In his further talk to Job, Elihu was still unable to answer Job concerning the purpose in God's dealing with him, as the apostle Paul did in declaring to the New Testament believers that the affliction that the believers are suffering works out for them an eternal weight of glory, which is the God of glory to be their glorious portion for them to gain and enjoy unto eternity (2 Cor. 4:17).

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE TWENTY-SEVEN

A PERSON IN THE SPIRIT

Scripture Reading: Rev. 1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10

The speaking of Job, of his three friends, and of Elihu was altogether lacking in the exercise of the spirit to contact God. They did not pray, and they did not have fellowship with God or with one another in spirit. Although they were godly men, they did not come together to pray by exercising their spirit to touch God. Instead of exercising their spirit, they exercised their mind to compose poetry and to make a display of their knowledge. In this matter, Elihu followed the example of the older ones and spoke in the same way. Therefore, he said, "Hear me; / I too will declare what I know" (32:10). As we have pointed out, Elihu was a person who was full of the knowledge of good and evil. He was not a person in the spirit.

IN SPIRIT ON THE LORD'S DAY

In the book of Revelation, at the very beginning, John said, "I was in spirit on the Lord's Day" (1:10). Here the word *spirit* refers not to the Spirit of God but to the human spirit as the organ for us to realize and respond to God's move. Only spirit (our spirit) can respond to Spirit (God's Spirit).

At that time John had been exiled to the island of Patmos. John was alone, having no church, church meetings, or fellowship with the saints. Nevertheless, John was in spirit. This means that John was a person who remained in his spirit. Because he was in his spirit, he was in reality a member of the Body of Christ and a part of the new man.

**SEEING VISIONS IN SPIRIT
AND BECOMING A PERSON IN THE SPIRIT**

While he was in spirit, John saw a number of visions, resulting in his writing the twenty-two chapters of the book of Revelation. This book is composed of four major visions: (1) the vision of the churches (chs. 1—3); (2) the vision of the destiny of the world (chs. 4—16); (3) the vision of Babylon the Great (chs. 17—18); and (4) the vision of the New Jerusalem (chs. 21—22). John was in his spirit when he saw these four visions (1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10). We too need to be in our spirit to see the visions in this book. It is not merely a matter of mental understanding in our mind but of spiritual realization in our spirit.

First, John saw the lampstands as the symbols of the churches (1:12, 20), indicating God's economy concerning the Body of Christ. Then in this book there are the seven epistles to the seven churches (chs. 2—3). In these seven epistles we have the speaking of the Spirit to the seven churches. This is followed by the scene in the heavens (chs. 4—5), the seven seals (6:1—8:5), the seven trumpets (8:6—11:19), and the seven bowls (15:1—16:21). John also saw the destruction of religious Babylon (17:1-18), the destruction of material, commercial Babylon (18:1-24), the marriage of the Lamb (19:5-10), Christ's defeating and destroying of Antichrist (19:11-21), the binding of Satan (20:1-3), the millennial kingdom (20:4-6), and the judgment of the great white throne (20:11-15). Eventually, John saw the new heaven and the new earth with the ultimate consummation of God's economy, the New Jerusalem (21:1-27). Such visions came to him because he was in spirit.

When I was young, I was very interested in studying the prophecies in the book of Revelation. Today I have less interest in the prophecies but more interest in being enlightened by considering the spiritual visions in this book, in particular the visions of the seven lampstands and of the New Jerusalem. At the beginning of Revelation, we have the local churches as the golden lampstands; at the end, we have the New Jerusalem as the unique, universal golden lampstand

in eternity (21:10-11, 18b, 23). Seeing the visions in Revelation will help you to be a person in the spirit.

LEARNING TO REMAIN IN OUR SPIRIT

Many readers of Revelation fail to see that the seer of the visions in this book was one who was doing nothing but remaining in the human spirit. On the Lord's Day John was in his spirit. We all need to learn to be imprisoned in our spirit and not to get out of our spirit. We must be persons who are in our spirit all the time. If we are this kind of person, others will not be able to understand us because in spirit we are moving as our God is moving in us.

When we turn to our spirit and get into our spirit, even while we are driving, we may sing, praise, or rejoice. We may also cry, weeping as we pray, "Lord, look at the situation of Your Body." We have all tasted this to some extent. We must be perfected and built up to be such persons. There is no other way to be a lover of God, to be a seeker of Christ, or to be an overcomer than to be in spirit.

ENJOYING CHRIST AND THE CHURCH IN THE SPIRIT

If you are a person in the spirit, then you will be in the spirit to meet God, to see God, and to stay with God. And this God is the consummated Spirit, the reality of Christ. Furthermore, when you have Christ, you have the church because Christ is the Head of the new man and the church is the Body. Then you will enjoy the church, the Body, as well as Christ, the Head.

THE PREVAILING PRAYERS OF A PERSON IN THE SPIRIT MOVING IN THE LORD'S MOVE

When you are in the spirit, the matters of the local church will come to you, and this will cause you to pray for the situation of the church. These prayers are the real, prevailing prayers because you pray in your spirit and because, in spirit, you are moving in the Lord's move. Your prayer is the Lord's move in you. You and the Lord, the Lord and you, are two moving together and praying together. This is quite sweet and is very different from the prayer that is out of responsibility,

obligation, or some kind of duty. This is a prayer in sweet fellowship with the Lord.

The way to be such a person is very simple—the way is to be in our spirit. I very much like the phrase “in spirit on the Lord’s Day.” First, John was in his spirit, and then he heard the voice, a “loud voice like a trumpet.” When he turned to see the voice that spoke with him, he saw the vision of the seven golden lampstands (Rev. 1:12). We all need to learn of John to be in our spirit to see the vision and to enjoy the Lord, to enjoy the Body, and to enjoy the speaking of the Spirit to the churches.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE TWENTY-EIGHT

ELIHU'S TURN TO SPEAK

CHAPTERS 32—37

(3)

ELIHU'S FINAL WORD TO JOB

Scripture Reading: Job 36—37

In this message we will consider chapters thirty-six and thirty-seven, which are Elihu's final word to Job. Once again, there was no prayer or exercise of the spirit in fellowship.

I. ELIHU HAVING MORE TO SAY FOR GOD

In 36:1-4 Elihu claimed that he had more to say for God. He said, "I will bring my knowledge from afar / And will ascribe righteousness to my Maker. / For truly my words are not false; / One perfect in knowledge is with you" (vv. 3-4). I do not believe that Elihu was speaking for God at all; he was speaking absolutely for himself, making a display of his knowledge. Actually, he had less knowledge than Job and the three friends. Although Elihu said that he ascribed righteousness to God, he in fact ascribed everything to himself, going so far as to refer to himself as "one perfect in knowledge."

II. SHOWING JOB THAT GOD TAKES CARE OF THE RIGHTEOUS

In verses 5 through 16 Elihu showed Job that God takes care of the righteous and that He allured Job from the jaws of distress into a spacious place. Here Elihu skipped from one subject to another, and it is difficult to know what he was talking about.

Elihu said that God "does not preserve the wicked man

alive" (v. 6a). This is not true, for many wicked people are still living. Elihu also said that those who hear God and serve Him "will spend their days in prosperity / And their years in pleasantness" (v. 11). Such a concept is altogether according to the principle of good and evil. In verse 16 he went on to say, "Indeed He allures you from the jaws of distress / Into a spacious place, where there is no constraint; / And what is upon your table would be full of fatness."

III. WARNING JOB THAT HE WAS FILLED WITH THE JUDGMENT OF THE WICKED

Next, Elihu warned Job that he was filled with the judgment of the wicked, telling him that judgment and justice had taken hold of him (v. 17). Here Elihu seemed to be saying that Job was not enjoying a table full of fatness because he was occupied with the judgment of the wicked, continually thinking that God should exercise His judgment upon the wicked, with justice being the verdict of judgment. Thus, judgment and justice had taken hold of Job.

IV. ADMONISHING JOB NOT TO LET WRATH ALLURE HIM INTO SCOFFING TOWARD GOD

In verses 18 through 23 Elihu admonished Job not to let wrath allure him into scoffing toward God, not to long for the night, and not to turn toward iniquity. In verses 22 and 23 he said, "Behold, God is exalted in His power: / Who is a teacher like Him? / Who has appointed His way for Him? / And who says, You have done wrong?"

V. REMINDING JOB TO MAGNIFY GOD'S WORK IN THE UNIVERSE AND EXALT HIS GREATNESS

Elihu went on to remind Job to magnify God's work in the universe and exalt His greatness (36:24—37:13). In 36:26 Elihu declared, "Behold, God is great, and we do not know Him; / The number of His years we also cannot search out." In 37:5 he said, "God thunders wondrously with His voice; / He does great things that we cannot comprehend." Elihu's speaking here is a display of his ability and capacity to

compose poetry. If we speak in such a way in the vital groups, the groups will be killed.

**VI. CHARGING JOB TO CONSIDER
GOD'S WONDROUS ACTS
IN THE SKIES AND ON THE EARTH**

Elihu then charged Job to consider God's wondrous acts in the skies and on the earth (vv. 14-23). He concluded his charge by saying, "The Almighty—we cannot find Him out; / He is excellent in power, / And justice and the abundance of righteousness / He will not damage" (v. 23).

VII. INSTRUCTING JOB TO FEAR GOD

Finally, in his last word to Job, Elihu instructed Job to fear God, who does not look upon any who are wise of heart (v. 24).

Concerning the purpose of God in dealing with Job, even in the highlight of his final word to Job, Elihu did not have the capacity to afford Job a divine revelation that is up to the New Testament level, namely, that God's purpose in allowing the believers to suffer the loss of all things is that they may gain God as their eternal portion for them to inherit and enjoy as the eternal life unto eternity, as the Lord revealed to His disciples in Matthew 19:27-29.

Job was suffering, and his three friends came to comfort him. Elihu was also there to help the situation. However, these godly people did not pray for Job nor did they fellowship with one another by exercising their spirit that all of them might receive a certain amount of spiritual supply. That would have helped them find out the real purpose of God's dealing with Job. They talked about God, and they also referred to their spirit, but in all their debates there is no hint that they were exercising their spirit. Rather, they were exercising their mind, searching for words from the heavens, from the air, from the birds in the air, from the beasts on the earth, and from the fish in the sea, to compose their poetry.

If we would have vital groups today, we need to be warned by these talks. The group we see in the book of Job affords

us a negative example, an example of the kind of group meeting we should not have in the church life today.

When we come together in the vital groups, the first thing we must do is to pray. The vital groups are groups of vital prayer. In the vital groups, learn not to pray old prayers with old terms, prayers according to your tradition. Learn always to pray new and fresh prayers. Try to exercise your spirit, because the very God, our present God, our God today, is right in our spirit with all His bountiful supply. Thus, when you come to the vital groups, you should remain in your spirit and exercise your spirit. In your spirit you will pick up some new terms and new expressions. You can do this because you have the Triune God as the consummated Spirit in your spirit.

The groups are vital in these two spirits: vital in our human spirit and vital in God's divine Spirit. The last part of the Bible—from Acts through Revelation—covers the matter of the divine Spirit who is now in our spirit to become one spirit (1 Cor. 6:17). The content of this portion of the Word is a life of these two spirits. God moves in man and man moves in God in these two spirits. Therefore, when you come to the vital groups, you should turn to the spirit, remain in the spirit, and exercise the spirit.

Do not come to the vital groups to talk naturally yet quite intimately. That kills the groups. Instead, exercise your spirit to praise God or to sing a stanza or a few lines of a hymn. This kind of praising and singing stirs up the spirits of those in the vital group. Then everyone will follow to pray.

The second thing we should do in the vital groups is to fellowship. After the prayer, we should fellowship, perhaps about the home affairs or the troubles of the saints, yet we should fellowship in our spirit by exercising our spirit. Our speaking concerning a saint who is sick should not be in ordinary words but in words from the all-inclusive, life-giving Spirit. When you speak out, try to bring the group into the two spirits. This will make a great difference, and this will help to lay the foundation for the vital group to move in the two spirits. Furthermore, when you visit others, at your home, in their home, or in the meeting hall, exercise your spirit.

The move of the Triune God today is altogether in the two spirits, in Himself as the consummated Spirit dwelling in our regenerated spirit. These two spirits—the divine Spirit and the human spirit—have become one spirit. To be a Christian is simply to take care of these two spirits for God's move. Learn to live a Christian life in this way. Do not try to learn so many teachings, but try to study and read the Bible for the nourishment and stirring up of your spirit that your spirit may be exercised to contact the divine Spirit in your spirit.

Learn to touch the divine Spirit in your spirit. This is the Christian life, and this should also be the Christian work. This is the move of God in man and the move of man in God to fulfill God's economy, His plan concerning Christ with His Body. We are here on earth for this, and for this we should live by the two spirits, follow the two spirits, and do everything according to the two spirits.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE TWENTY-NINE

GOD'S APPEARING TO JOB WITH THE DIVINE UNVEILINGS

Scripture Reading: Job 38—41

Chapters thirty-eight through forty-one, which we will consider in this message, cover God's appearing to Job with the divine unveilings.

I. GOD'S APPEARING TO JOB

In 38:1-3 and 40:1-14 we have God's appearing to Job.

A. Jehovah Answering Job out of the Whirlwind

In 38:1 and 40:6 we are told that "Jehovah answered Job out of the whirlwind." This whirlwind was something very frightening; it was not a matter of grace. The situation here certainly was not one of coming to the throne of grace to receive mercy and grace to meet the timely need.

B. Jehovah Charging Job to Gird Up His Loins like a Mighty Man

Jehovah charged Job to gird up his loins like a mighty man that he might answer God's questions (38:3; 40:7). Such a charge surely was not pleasant.

C. Jehovah's Questioning of Job

1. Asking Him about Who Is This Who Darkens Counsel by Words without Knowledge

In His questioning of Job, Jehovah first asked him, "Who is this who darkens counsel / By words without knowledge?" (38:2). Would you like to be addressed in this way? This kind of question is neither pleasant nor peaceful but quite threatening. Eventually, Job would have to admit that it was

he who darkened counsel by speaking words of nonsense, words without revelation.

2. Asking Him Whether One Who Finds Fault Shall Contend with the Almighty

In 40:2 Jehovah said to Job, "Shall one who finds fault contend with the Almighty? / Let him who argues with God answer it." Jehovah's question here indicates that He regarded Job as a fault finder, as one who was contending with the Almighty. Job had been arguing with God and even condemning him. Job could not deny that this was the very thing that he had been doing.

Would you like God to appear to you as the Almighty? I would prefer that He would come to me not as the Almighty but as the One who is full of mercy and lovingkindness.

3. Asking Him if He Will Annul God's Judgment

In 40:8 Jehovah asked Job further questions: "Will you indeed annul My judgment? / Will you condemn Me so that you may be justified?" Job had condemned his friends for talking so much about God's judgment, but here God vindicates His judgment. If there were no divine judgment, the world would be in a state of anarchy.

In previous messages we have emphasized the fact that God's dealing with His people is not for judgment or for punishment. However, this does not mean that God is not for judgment. Concerning this matter of judgment, we should not be careless. Rather, we need to differentiate between God's government with His judgment and God's dealing with His people. Often the dealings of God are related to the governmental judgment of God. God does not allow anyone to annul His judgment.

4. Asking Him if He Had an Arm like God's

Finally, Jehovah asked Job if he had an arm like God's and if he could thunder with a voice like His (v. 9).

The book of Job is a book of argument. In reading this

book, we need to learn of Job, of his three friends, and of Elihu to be silent and let God be the only one to speak.

D. Job Answering Jehovah

Job answered Jehovah, saying, "Behold, I am worthless. What shall I reply to You? / I lay my hand over my mouth. / I have spoken once, and I will not answer; / And twice, and I will proceed no further" (40:4-5). This word indicates that Job had been trained, disciplined, by God to be restricted in his speaking.

Many of the problems in married life are the result of our speaking. If husbands and wives did not argue or exchange words, there would be no divorce or separation. Much of our speaking is fleshly. If we apply the cross to our flesh, this kind of speaking will be terminated.

E. Jehovah Charging Job to Deck Himself with Majesty and Excellency and Array Himself with Honor and Splendor

Much of the speaking in this book is ambiguous. This is the case not only of the speaking of Job, of his friends, and of Elihu, but to some extent it seems to be the case even of the speaking of Jehovah in 40:10-14. Jehovah charged Job to deck himself with majesty and excellency and to array himself with honor and splendor (v. 10). Furthermore, God charged Job to pour forth the overflowings of his anger and to look upon everyone who is proud and to bring him down, to hide them in the dust together, and to bind their faces in the hidden place.

F. Jehovah Saying That He Would Praise Job

Then Jehovah said that even He would praise Job, that his own right hand could save him (v. 14).

II. WITH THE DIVINE UNVEILINGS

In 38:4—39:30 and 40:15—41:34 we see the divine unveilings that came with God's appearing to Job.

A. Concerning the Universe

Job 38:4-38 covers the divine unveiling concerning the universe, including matters related to astronomy and geography. During this unveiling Jehovah asked Job a number of questions. For instance, He asked him, "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? / Tell Me, if you have understanding. / Who set its measurements—if you know? / Or who stretched the measuring line over it? / Onto what were its bases sunk, / Or who laid its cornerstone, / When the morning stars sang together / And all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (vv. 4-7).

B. Concerning the Animals

The divine unveilings in 38:39—39:30 and 40:15—41:34 concern the animals.

C. Nothing concerning the Purpose of God in Dealing with Job

In the divine unveilings to Job, there was nothing concerning the purpose of God in dealing with Job. Thus, the adequate knowledge of this matter is not found in this book. The revelation regarding the purpose of God's dealing with Job had to wait until Christ came and until the apostle Paul was produced.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE THIRTY

THE FINAL OUTCOME, UNDER GOD'S CONSUMMATION, OF THE PROGRESSIVE DIVINE REVELATION IN THE NARRATION OF THE STORY OF JOB

Scripture Reading: Job 42

In this message we will consider chapter forty-two of the book of Job. This chapter reveals the final outcome, under God's consummation, of the progressive divine revelation in the narration of the story of Job.

I. JOB GAINING GOD IN HIS PERSONAL EXPERIENCE AND ABHORRING HIMSELF

"I had heard of You by the hearing of the ear, / But now my eye has seen You; / Therefore I abhor myself, and I repent / In dust and ashes" (vv. 5-6). This indicates that Job gained God in his personal experience (in addition to knowing God in his vain knowledge by tradition) and that he abhorred himself.

Seeing God equals gaining God (Matt. 5:8). To gain God is to receive God in His element, in His life, and in His nature. Eventually, this not only makes us one with God—it even makes us a part of God. I prefer not to use the phrase "one with" in describing our relationship with God because to be made a part of God, to be constituted with God in His life and nature, is more than being one with God. We see God that we may be constituted with God, yet we do not have any share in the Godhead.

All God's redeemed, regenerated, sanctified, transformed, conformed, and glorified people will see God's face (Rev. 22:4). Seeing God transforms us (2 Cor. 3:18), because in seeing God we receive His element into us. As we receive God, a new element comes into us, and the old element is discharged.

This metabolic process is transformation. To see God is to be transformed into the glorious image of God. This makes us a part of God that we may express God in His life and represent Him in His authority.

Job said not only that He saw God but also that he abhorred himself. According to our experience, the more we see God and love God, the more we abhor ourselves. The more we know God, the more we deny ourselves.

II. GOD CONDEMNING JOB'S THREE FRIENDS FOR NOT SPEAKING CONCERNING HIM THAT WHICH WAS RIGHT, AS HIS SERVANT JOB HAD

Job 42:7 tells us that God condemned Job's three friends for not speaking concerning Him that which was right, as His servant Job had. Job was right in saying that his sufferings were not a matter of God's judgment. Job felt that, according to his conscience, he had not done anything that required God to come in to judge him or to punish him. Nevertheless, he was suffering and he wanted to investigate his situation with God. Job's three friends, however, insisted that Job's sufferings were a proof that he had done something wrong and was being judged by God. Thus, God came in to condemn the three friends and to vindicate Job to a certain extent.

A. Job's Three Friends Not Being Right concerning God's Purpose in Dealing with His People

Job's three friends were not right concerning God's purpose in dealing with His people, because their concept was based on the principle of good and evil, on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the side line alongside the tree of life as the main line.

B. Job Being Right Because His Concept in General Was Not Based on the Principle of Good and Evil

Job was right because his concept in general was not based on the principle of good and evil. However, he was groping

in relation to the purpose for which God deals with His people. On the negative side, he was right; on the positive side, he was devoid of the divine revelation, not knowing that God's purpose in dealing with His people is that He wants His people to gain Him, to partake of Him, to possess Him, and to enjoy Him more and more, rather than all things, until their enjoyment reaches the fullest extent, as the divine revelation ultimately unveils in the New Testament, that His people may ultimately become the New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem is the enlargement of God. We all will become parts of the New Jerusalem.

C. God Not Making His Purpose in Dealing with His People Clear to Job

God, in His progressive revelation, did not make His purpose in dealing with His people clear to Job at his time. However, God did make this clear in the New Testament to the believers.

III. GOD PAYING NO ATTENTION TO ELIHU

In His reply to Job, God paid no attention to Elihu because his concept had not come up to the level of God's ultimate standard, though it was not wrong. Elihu, a young man, thought that he was somebody, but he actually was nobody.

IV. GOD CHARGING JOB'S THREE FRIENDS TO GO TO JOB AND OFFER A BURNT OFFERING FOR THEMSELVES

God charged Job's three friends to go to Job and offer a burnt offering for themselves that God's servant Job might pray for them (vv. 8-9). This charge was according to the level and standard of that time. The three friends did as Jehovah had told them, and Jehovah accepted Job.

V. JOB PRAYING FOR HIS FRIENDS, AND GOD TURNING THE CAPTIVITY OF JOB

Job prayed for his friends, and God turned the captivity of Job and gave Job twice as much as he had before (vv. 10-17). All his relatives and acquaintances came to him, ate bread

with him in his house, and consoled and comforted him for all the misfortune that had been brought upon him, and gave to him some gifts. Job had been in captivity, having been captured by Satan away from his common situation. God turned Job's captivity and blessed Job with physical blessings.

**VI. ALL THE PHYSICAL BLESSINGS
WITH WHICH GOD BLESSED JOB
BEING TO SHOW JOB GOD'S LOVINGKINDNESS
AND FAITHFULNESS IN HIS LATTER DAYS**

All the physical blessings with which God blessed Job were to show Job God's lovingkindness and faithfulness in his latter days. This indicates that God is perfect and kind in dealing with those who love Him. Even today, after God deals with us by stripping us and consuming us, and after His purpose is accomplished, God gives us His physical blessings. However, God's purpose in dealing with His people is not to give physical blessings to them but to give Himself to them as their eternal portion, which ultimately consummates in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21—22).

**VII. JAMES CONSIDERING JOB
AS AN EXAMPLE OF SUFFERING AND OF ENDURANCE**

"As an example, brothers, of suffering evil and of long-suffering, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord. Behold, we call those who endured blessed. You have heard of the endurance of Job, and you have seen his end from the Lord, that the Lord is very tenderhearted and compassionate" (James 5:10-11). Here we see that James considered Job as an example of suffering and of endurance.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE THIRTY-ONE

GOD'S INTENTION IN HIS APPEARING TO JOB

Scripture Reading: Job 38:1-7; 40:1-14; 42:1-6

In this message I would like to speak a further word concerning God's intention in His appearing to Job.

EXPOSING JOB

God's intention in appearing to Job was to expose him, to show him that he really was nothing. God's appearing also implied that He wanted to help Job to know that he was in the wrong realm. When God asked Job so many questions concerning the universe (38:4-38) and concerning the animals (38:39—39:30), His intention was to enable Job to see that he, a person who remained in himself, was considering things regarding the universe and God that were far beyond his capacity. Thus, God questioned Job again and again in order to silence him. God seemed to be saying, "Job, I am doing something that you do not know. I intend to give you something that is not in your realm but is in another realm."

In 40:10 God said to Job, "Deck yourself now with majesty and excellency, / And array yourself with honor and splendor." Here God was actually asking Job about his majesty and excellency and about his honor and splendor, with the intention that Job would realize that he did not have any majesty, excellency, honor, and splendor. In verses 12 and 13 God went on to say, "Look upon everyone who is proud; bring him down; / And tread down the wicked where they stand. / Hide them in the dust together; / Bind their faces in the hidden place." Here God was telling Job that he should look at himself and realize that he was proud, even though he had no reason to be proud. Furthermore, God was indicating

to Job that he should be abased, that he should be hidden in the dust and even buried there.

JOB BEING IN THE PRIMITIVE STAGE OF THE DIVINE REVELATION

Job was in the primitive stage of the divine revelation. Many things that God intended to do in His move, which began with the incarnation, Job knew nothing about. God had many things within Himself, but He could not unveil them to Job. God could not speak to Job about these things.

The word of the Lord Jesus to Nicodemus regarding regeneration can also be applied to Job's situation: "If I told you of the things on earth and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you of the things in heaven?" (John 3:12). As John 16:12 and 13 reveal, the Lord Jesus was even limited in what He could say to His disciples: "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of reality, comes, He will guide you into all the reality; for He will not speak from Himself, but what He hears He will speak; and He will declare to you the things that are coming." Many of these things were revealed to the apostle Paul. Today, following Paul, we speak of such matters as God's economy, the divine dispensing, and the all-inclusive Spirit as the consummation of the processed and consummated Triune God. However, many of today's Christians do not understand these matters and even regard them as nonsense.

God's move from the incarnation to the consummation of the New Jerusalem involves many spiritual things, including regeneration, renewing, sanctification, transformation, glorification, and transfiguration. Because Job was in the primitive stage of the divine revelation, he could not understand any of these things.

GOD'S DESIRE TO BRING JOB INTO ANOTHER REALM

Job was in the realm of building up something that was wrong. He was building up himself in his perfection, uprightness, and integrity. He thought that he was absolutely right. He was proud of what he had built up, and he trusted in

that and glorified himself in that. That was his robe to cover his entire being, and that was his crown to be his glory.

Actually, Job was wrong. God in His eternal economy has no desire to build up these things. Rather, He considers all these things as frustrations and intends to strip them away from us, consuming them bit by bit. When everything is stripped away, then you will see God, and He will attract you to receive Him. Then you will have God's nature, life, element, essence, and even His being. This will cause a metabolic change within you to transform you from the present form of your human being to another form, the form of the divine being. As a result of this transformation, you will be a person reflecting God, that is, expressing Him and dispensing Him to others.

This was God's intention with Job, and this is His intention with us today. Now you and God may be in two different realms. But God wants to transfer you from your present realm into His realm, not only to make you one with Him but even to make you a part of Him.

Suppose someone had tried to talk to Job about all these things. If someone had done this, Job might have said, "What are you talking about? I have learned a lot about God from my forefathers, and I have been paying attention to what I have learned. Yet you say that I am in the wrong realm and that God intends to build up something of Himself in me. You speak to me about incarnation, regeneration, and transformation, but I do not know what any of these things mean." Job simply did not have the capacity to receive such a revelation. He did not have these terms in his spiritual dictionary.

In principle, the situation is the same with many Christians today. The divine revelation has been given, it has been written, and it has been interpreted. Nevertheless, many believers have no understanding of the economy of God or of the divine dispensing according to the divine economy. They may think that being a Christian is simply a matter of believing that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is our Savior, who shed His blood for our sins and who has saved us through His death; that the Holy Spirit is now with us to help us to

behave ourselves well and to do good that God may be glorified; and that we will go to heaven when we die. Those who hold this concept of the Christian life may not realize that being a Christian also involves sanctification, transformation, conformation, the divine dispensing of the divine economy, and the New Jerusalem as the enlargement of the processed and consummated Triune God. If you want to teach them about these matters, you must do so in a very gradual way, beginning with the most elementary things.

THE REALM OF THE OLD CREATION AND THE REALM OF THE NEW CREATION

We all need to realize that today there are two different realms—the realm of the old creation and the realm of the new creation. The realm of the old creation is the realm of natural things, and the realm of the new creation is the realm of divine things. We were born into the old creation, into the natural sphere, yet God wants us to be divine. For this, we need a great transfer: We need to be transferred out of Adam into Christ. The first aspect of this transfer is regeneration. We need to be regenerated, and then we need to be renewed. As we are renewed, certain parts of our being will be “peeled off” and replaced by a new element that will cause us to be transformed and eventually conformed to the image of Christ, who is the firstborn Son of God (Rom. 8:29).

We also need to learn how to talk to others about the spiritual things in the new creation. For example, suppose that you speak to a believer about being transformed into the image of Christ as the firstborn Son of God. That believer might say, “I have heard about the only begotten Son of God but not about the firstborn Son. Who is the firstborn Son of God?” I am concerned that you may not be able to explain this.

If you would teach others concerning this, you need to tell them that when God was incarnated, He brought divinity into humanity and then was born in humanity to be the God-man. Whereas the only begotten Son of God had divinity but not humanity, the God-man Jesus had a part of His being—His humanity—which had not yet been made divine.

In order for this to take place, He had to die on the cross and then be resurrected. In resurrection He was begotten, born, as the firstborn Son of God in His humanity (Acts 13:33; Rom. 1:3-4). In this way His humanity was deified. We may also say that His humanity was "sonized," meaning that He became the Son of God not only in His divinity but also in His humanity.

**THE BELIEVERS TODAY LIVING IN A TIME
AFTER THE COMPLETION OF THE DIVINE REVELATION**

According to time, we are much better off than Job. The later we are in time, the better off we are. If we had been there with Noah, we probably would have realized even less than Job. But after the deluge, God was still moving on. He moved on from Noah to Abraham. We believe that Job was at the time of Abraham, so Job's blessing was on a level similar to that of Abraham's.

Today we have received every blessing (Eph. 1:3). The progression of the divine revelation has been perfected and completed by Paul through his writing, especially the four books of Galatians, Ephesians, Philipppians, and Colossians. In Colossians 1:25 Paul made it clear that he received a commission from God to complete God's word of revelation, especially regarding the mystery in God's economy. This mystery concerns both Christ and His Body, with the main point being that Christ is within His Body as the hope of glory (vv. 26-27). Now, the only thing that can be developed is our hope. The revelation has been completed and will have no more development. Today we have everything.

We need to value the Epistles. In Acts we can see God's move as the consummated One in His transformed saints. However, it is not so clearly defined, explained, and developed as in the fourteen Epistles of Paul. Paul's Epistles were arranged as the first among all the Epistles. Then the last part, the consummating part, was written by John. We need to study Paul's fourteen Epistles and John's three Epistles and Revelation. It was by these two apostles that the divine revelation has been fully completed.

Thank the Lord that we have His word, the completed

word, in our hands! I am very grateful to Him that through so many years He has kept me from the world that I could spend all my time on the Word, but mostly on the fourteen Epistles of Paul, the three Epistles of John, and Revelation. What a blessing!

**GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE
REALIZING AND EXPERIENCING CHRIST
FOR THE CONSUMMATION OF THE BODY AND
THE PREPARATION OF THE BRIDE**

Only that part of the divine revelation which is found in the Epistles of Paul and of John and in Revelation will consummate God's economy to have Christ fully realized and experienced by God's chosen people. Perhaps not the majority but the minority, a small number, will realize Christ to such an extent. Then the Body can be consummated and the bride can be prepared. Then the time will be right for Christ as the universal Bridegroom to come back. But now it would be impossible. If we consider the situation today, we will see that nothing is ready for Christ's coming back.

**RIISING UP TO BE OVERCOMERS
BY TAKING CARE OF THE TWO SPIRITS**

I believe that the Lord wants us to rise up, to be stirred up. I pray that the Lord will burden all of us to go on in a particular way in this last part of the latter days to experience Christ according to how we have seen Him that we may be actually the parts of Christ's Body.

We have to believe that today God is doing something in His recovery. The spreading of His recovery in Russia has become quite an encouragement to me. It is a new start, a new scene. I believe that the Lord will do the same thing in the United States and in all of Europe because these nations are full of the descendants of Japheth, one of Noah's sons. The Bible indicates that God's consummation will, in principle, come through God's move among the descendants of Japheth (Gen. 9:26-27).

Now that we have seen this vision, each one of us must rise up to be an overcomer by taking care of the two spirits—the

all-inclusive, life-giving Spirit and our regenerated human spirit. God Himself has been consummated, and He has also consummated us. All that is needed now is the application, which is just the consummated Spirit. If we take care of Him in our spirit, we will make it.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE THIRTY-TWO

THE COMPLETED DIVINE REVELATION IN THE ENTIRE SCRIPTURES CONCERNING GOD'S RELATIONSHIP WITH MAN

(1)

Scripture Reading: Gen. 1:26-27; 2:9-12

We need to see the completed divine revelation in the entire Scriptures concerning God's relationship with man. Seeing this revelation will help us to understand the book of Job. In this message we will cover the first three sections of this revelation.

I. FROM GOD'S CREATION OF MAN TO THE CALLING OF ABRAHAM

God's relationship with man in the Scriptures includes the dispensation, the section of time, before the law, part of which is the time from God's creation of man to the calling of Abraham.

A. God Creating Man and Wanting Man to Take Him as Life

God created man and wanted man to take Him as life that man might express Him, be transformed into precious materials for His building, and be built up to be His counterpart to match Him (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:9-12, 18-24). God took a rib out of Adam and built it up into a woman to match Adam to be his counterpart. This is a type showing how God in Christ is the Husband, needing a match, a counterpart. Therefore, in the fulfillment of this type, something came out of Christ—the divine life—to become the church, which is the bride to match Christ.

**B. After Man Became Fallen,
God Promising the Fallen Man
That Christ Would Come as the Seed of Woman**

After man became fallen, God promised the fallen man that Christ would come as the seed of woman to destroy the "serpent," Satan, for man and to redeem and justify man with the shed blood and the coats of the skins of the sacrifice, typifying Christ (3:8-9, 15, 21). These things are a part of God's relationship with us.

**C. God Regarding Man
and Being Pleased with Man
in the Burnt Offering**

Genesis 4:4 and 8:20-22 speak of the burnt offering, a type of Christ. God regarded man, that is, respected man, and was pleased with man, not in man's good doing, but in the burnt offering. This is why Abel came to offer the burnt offering to God and God regarded both him and his offering.

**D. God Judging the Corrupted World
with the Flood
and Saving Noah and His Family**

God judged the corrupted world with the flood and saved Noah and his family through the ark (6:11-20). The ark is another type of Christ.

E. God Judging the Rebellious Man at Babel

In the time from God's creation of man to the calling of Abraham, God also judged the rebellious man at Babel, which was the ancient Babylon (11:4-9).

**II. FROM THE CALLING OF ABRAHAM
TO THE DECREE OF THE LAW THROUGH MOSES**

The second dispensation covers the period of time from the calling of Abraham to the decree of the law through Moses. The most important aspect of this dispensation was God's promise to Abraham. For this reason, Bible teachers calls this dispensation the dispensation of promise.

A. God Regarding Man in the Burnt Offering

As a continuation of the previous dispensation, God again regarded man in the burnt offering (12:7; 13:18; 22:13; 31:54; Job 1:5).

B. God Promising Abraham That in His Seed All the Nations of the Earth Would Be Blessed

In addition, God promised Abraham that in his seed, the coming Christ, all the nations of the earth, including us, would be blessed (Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3:8, 16). Eventually this promise was absolutely fulfilled, as revealed in Galatians 3.

III. FROM THE DECREE OF THE LAW THROUGH MOSES TO THE FIRST COMING OF CHRIST

The third dispensation is the period of time from the decree of the law through Moses to the first coming of Christ. This is called the dispensation of the law.

A. God Decreeing the Law to Expose the Incapability of the People of Israel in Keeping the Law

Due to the blindness and stubbornness of the people of Israel, God decreed the law through Moses (Exo. 19:8, 16—20:21) to expose the incapability of the people of Israel in keeping His law (Rom. 3:20b; 5:20a; 7:7). God gave Abraham the promise, yet his descendants did not know themselves, considering that they could do everything God required. The law was given to test them, to prove that they did not have the capacity and the capability to do so.

B. God Granting the People of Israel the Tabernacle with the Priesthood and All Kinds of Offerings

God not only gave the people of Israel the law, but God also granted them the tabernacle with the priesthood and all kinds of offerings for them to worship Him, serve Him, contact Him, and partake of Him as their enjoyment (Exo. 25—Lev. 27). The tabernacle, the priesthood, and the offerings all

typify Christ. Christ is the tabernacle, our priesthood, and our offerings. Through Him we worship God, serve God, contact God, and partake of God as our enjoyment.

**C. God Promising the People of Israel
That He Would Be Incarnated
through Them to Be Their Christ**

In this dispensation God promised the people of Israel that He would be incarnated through them to be their Christ (Isa. 7:14; 9:6-7).

**D. God Promising the People of Israel
That Christ Would Come to Them
as Their Everything**

Furthermore, God promised the people of Israel that Christ would come to them as their everything and as the centrality and universality of God's economy for their revival and for the restoration of the universe (Micah 5:2-6; Psa. 2:6-7; Mal. 3:1; 4:2; Hos. 6:2; Isa. 2:2-4; 11:6-10; 65:17-25).

**E. God Promising the People of Israel
That He Would Pour Out His Spirit upon All Flesh**

As another part of His relationship with man, God promised the people of Israel that He would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh (Joel 2:28-29, 32a). This would be for the producing of God's chosen people in His New Testament economy—the church.

**F. God Promising the People of Israel
That He Would Covenant with Them
to Work Himself into Them**

Finally, God promised the people of Israel that He would covenant with them to work Himself into them to be their life, their law of life, and their everything (Jer. 31:31-34).

Job and his friends probably lived in the age of Abraham. At that time the Pentateuch of Moses was not yet written. Surely they had received some divine revelation from their forefathers verbally. However, what they had received of their forefathers could reach, at most, only the level of the

revelation in the age of Abraham. Hence, in their debates concerning God's relationship with man, there was no hint that indicates that they had received divine revelation beyond the matters of God's judgment and God's regard for man in his burnt offering. And they did not speak any word that implies anything concerning Christ and the Spirit of God. They were in the primitive stage of the divine revelation.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE THIRTY-THREE

THE CENTRAL POINT OF GOD'S APPEARING TO JOB

Scripture Reading: Job 42:1-6; 40:10-14; Col. 2:2b; Eph. 3:4

As we study the book of Job, we need to realize that to understand this book, we need the entire Bible. Therefore, in this life-study of Job, my principle has been to study Job in relation to the divine revelation in the Bible as a whole. We need to keep this in mind as we consider in this message the central point of God's appearing to Job.

JOB NOT KNOWING THAT GOD IS UNLIMITED AND UNSEARCHABLE AND NOT UNDERSTANDING HOW MUCH GOD COULD BE TO HIM

After all the speaking of Job, his three friends, and Elihu, we have God's appearing to Job with the divine unveilings (38:4—41:34). This is followed by a word concerning Job's gaining God in his personal experience and his abhorring of himself (42:1-6). I am concerned that, by paying attention to so many other things, you may not see the central point of God's appearing to Job. This central point concerns what God intended to do to Job by His appearing to him.

God appeared to Job in order to help him to realize that God is unlimited, unsearchable, and untraceable. God asked Job many questions about the universe and about the animals to impress him with the fact that He is unlimited. God seemed to be saying to him, "Job, you actually do not know who I am. You do not realize that I am unlimited. Also, you cannot imagine what I intend to give you. Job, I intend to give you Myself, making Myself your enjoyment so that you can become a part of Me. I am not satisfied that you have your own integrity, perfection, and uprightness. I want you to have Me. My intention is to give you nothing other than Myself."

**THE DIVINE REVELATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT
UNVEILING WHAT WAS ON GOD'S HEART
WHEN HE APPEARED TO JOB**

To understand God's intention in His appearing to Job, we need the entire Bible, especially the New Testament. For God to give Himself to Job was not a simple matter. This involved a long process beginning with Christ's incarnation and including His human living, His all-inclusive death on the cross, His resurrection, and His ascension. Because Job was in the primitive stage of the divine revelation, God could not have spoken to him about all these things. It would have been impossible for Job to understand them. All these matters were clearly defined and recorded in the New Testament two thousand years later. Even today, many believers do not have the proper understanding of these things.

As an illustration of our difficulty in understanding the divine things, let us consider the case of Nicodemus in John 3. The Lord Jesus said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (v. 3). Not understanding this, Nicodemus replied, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?" (v. 4). What a terrible misunderstanding! The Lord Jesus went on to speak to Nicodemus about being born of water and the Spirit, telling him that "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (v. 6). Nicodemus then asked, "How can these things be?" (v. 9). Eventually, the Lord Jesus said to him, "If I told you of the things on earth and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you of the things in heaven?" (v. 12). Regeneration, being born anew, concerns the divine life, yet it takes place on earth. If Nicodemus could not understand something that takes place on earth, how could he understand the things that take place in heaven?

Chapter three of John speaks not only about regeneration but also about the increase of Christ (v. 30). All the regenerated people will become the increase of Christ, and the increase of Christ is His bride (v. 29). In John 3 two crucial words are "bride" and "increase." We need to see that

as Christians we are Christ's increase. However, many of today's believers have no understanding concerning this.

In John 14 the Lord Jesus, on the night He was to be betrayed, took the opportunity to speak to His disciples certain matters concerning the Divine Trinity, who would produce the bride as the increase of Christ. In John 16 the Lord told His disciples that although He had yet many things to say to them, at that time they could not bear them (v. 12). Later, after Christ had passed through death and had entered into resurrection to become the firstborn Son of God and the life-giving Spirit, the Spirit of reality would come to guide the disciples into all the reality (v. 13). On the evening of the day of His resurrection, the Lord Jesus appeared to them, and "He breathed into them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit" (20:22). However, not even at that time was the divine revelation given in full. There was still the need for Christ to ascend and to pour out Himself as the Spirit upon His disciples to make them the church, as recorded in the first part of Acts. But not even then was the complete revelation given. Later, Paul was raised up by God, and to him was given the full revelation concerning the mystery of God, which is Christ (Col. 2:2b), and the mystery of Christ, which is the church (Eph. 3:4). The church is the issue of the Triune God to be the organism of the Triune God. This organism is the Body of Christ, and the Body of Christ is the new man. Eventually, all this will consummate in the New Jerusalem, the corporate expression of the Triune God for eternity in the new heaven and new earth. All these things—beginning with the incarnation of the Triune God and consummating with the New Jerusalem—were on God's heart when He appeared to Job.

**GOD REDUCING JOB TO NOTHING
AND MAINTAINING HIS EXISTENCE
THAT GOD MIGHT IMPART HIMSELF INTO HIM**

Instead of speaking to Job regarding these things that were on His heart, God asked him about other things, including himself. For instance, in 40:10-14 He said to him, "Deck yourself now with majesty and excellency, / And array

yourself with honor and splendor. / Pour forth the overflowings of your anger, / And look upon everyone who is proud, and abase him. / Look upon everyone who is proud; bring him down; / And tread down the wicked where they stand. / Hide them in the dust together; / Bind their faces in the hidden place. / Then even I will praise you, / That your own right hand can save you." Here God was asking Job if he had any majesty, excellency, honor, and splendor. God's intention was to cause Job to realize that he had nothing and that he was nothing.

Job did not know God's purpose in dealing with him, and God had no way to tell him about this. Not knowing about the councils held in the heavens concerning him, Job was enjoying his life on earth. Then, suddenly, he lost his possessions and his children. This was the stripping away of Job's possessions. Following this, there was an attack upon Job's body, and this led, through his daily sufferings, to the gradual consuming of Job himself. As we read the record in this book, we can see that layer after layer was peeled away from Job. This peeling away was the consuming. Job was consumed to such an extent that he became skin and bone.

Job did not know what was going on. He questioned God, but there was no answer. Eventually God came in to show Himself to Job. In His appearing, God seemed to be saying to Job, "Now here I am. Job, you must realize that I am unlimited, unsearchable, and untraceable. Look at Me—I am the One with majesty, excellency, honor, and splendor. Do you think that your small mind can search Me out or trace Me out? Do you still intend to litigate against Me, to take Me to court? You do not know what I intend to do with you. You do not know what I will give you. Job, My intention is to reduce you to nothing, yet to maintain your existence so that I may have a time to impart Myself into you. Job, I intend to give You Myself."

This was the central point of God's appearing to Job, but Job did not understand it. I believe, however, that Job will be with us in the New Jerusalem. I also believe that when we see him, we and he may rejoice. Then he may say,

“Brothers, now I am just as clear as you are concerning God’s intention. Let us all be at peace and praise the Lord!”

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE THIRTY-FOUR

THE COMPLETED DIVINE REVELATION IN THE ENTIRE SCRIPTURES CONCERNING GOD'S RELATIONSHIP WITH MAN

(2)

Scripture Reading: John 1:1, 14; Matt. 1:23; 2 Cor. 3:18; 4:16-17; Rom. 8:29-30; Col. 1:12, 14-19; 2:9; 3:4a, 10-11

God's answer to the book of Job is the completed divine revelation in the entire Scriptures concerning God's relationship with man. In a previous message we saw this relationship in the Old Testament. Now we will cover this matter in the New Testament.

IV. FROM THE FIRST COMING OF CHRIST TO THE MANIFESTATION OF THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH

God's relationship with man in the New Testament begins with the first coming of Christ and consummates with the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth.

A. God Coming to Be Conceived in a Human Virgin and to Be Born of Her to Be a Man

The New Testament reveals that God came to be conceived in a human virgin to be born of her to be a man, thus bringing divinity into humanity and causing God and man to be mingled as one entity but not as a third substance (John 1:1, 14; Matt. 1:20, 23; 1 Tim. 3:16). This is the first step God took in order to give Himself to Job by the way of dispensing.

**B. Jesus Christ,
as the Incarnated God
and as the Embodiment of the Triune God,
Dying in His Humanity
a Vicarious and All-inclusive Death**

Jesus Christ, as the incarnated God and as the embodiment of the Triune God (Col. 2:9), died in His humanity a vicarious and all-inclusive death to terminate all the negative things and to release the divine life from within Him for us.

**C. Christ Overcoming Death
and Entering into the All-producing Resurrection
and Being Begotten to Be God's Firstborn Son**

Christ overcame death and entered into the all-producing resurrection and was begotten to be God's firstborn Son, bringing humanity into divinity (Acts 13:33). In resurrection Christ also became the life-giving Spirit for the producing and the constituting of the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 15:45).

**D. Christ Accomplishing
the All-transcending Ascension to the Heavens**

Next, Christ accomplished the all-transcending ascension to the heavens and was made Lord, Christ, Leader, and Savior (Acts 2:36; 5:31) for His propagation and for the building up of the church as His kingdom.

**E. In His Death, Resurrection, and Ascension
Christ Making All His Believers One with Him**

In His death, resurrection, and ascension Christ made all His believers one with Him. Thus, His death, resurrection, and ascension have become theirs (Rom. 6:5-6; Eph. 2:5-6); hence, His experiences have become their history.

F. God Redeeming Us in Christ

God redeemed us in Christ, forgave our sins, washed us, justified us, and reconciled us to Him (Eph. 1:7; 1 Cor. 6:11; Rom. 3:22; 5:10).

G. God Having Put Us into Christ

God has put us into Christ and has made Him our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor. 1:30). By Christ as our righteousness (for our past) we have been justified by God, that we might be reborn in our spirit to receive the divine life. By Christ as our sanctification (for our present) we are being sanctified in our soul, that is, transformed in our mind, emotion, and will, with the divine life. By Christ as our redemption, (for our future), that is, the redemption of our body (Rom. 8:23) we will be transfigured in our body with the divine life to have His glorious likeness (Phil. 3:21).

H. God Having Regenerated Us through the Resurrection of Christ

God has regenerated us through the resurrection of Christ (1 Pet. 1:3), and now He renews us, transforms us, and conforms us to His image of glory, and ultimately He will glorify us in His glory (Titus 3:5; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:23; 2 Cor. 4:16; 3:18; Rom. 8:29-30).

I. God Consuming Us, Putting Us into Christ's Death for Our Fellowship of His Sufferings

In His renewing and transforming, God consumes us, putting us into Christ's death for our fellowship of His sufferings, which work out for us an eternal weight of glory, that we may experience Him in His resurrection and gain Him in His unsearchable riches (2 Cor. 4:16-17, 10; Phil. 3:10, 8; Eph. 3:8).

J. God the Father Being Embodied in God the Son, God the Son Being Realized as God the Spirit, and God the Spirit Coming to Indwell Us to Be the Reality of the Triune God

John 14:16-20 reveals that God the Father is embodied in

God the Son, that God the Son is realized as God the Spirit, and that God the Spirit comes to indwell us to be the reality of the Triune God. This is the gift that God intended to give Job, that is, Himself in His Divine Trinity embodied in the Son and realized as the Spirit.

**K. The Spirit of Reality
Revealing Many Things to the Believers
concerning the Mystery of the Triune God
Being the Reality in the Believers**

Concerning the mystery of the Triune God being the reality in the believers, Christ had many things to tell His disciples, but they could not bear them until the Spirit of reality came to reveal these things to them (John 16:12-15). This was done by the Spirit of reality mainly with the apostle Paul, who completed the word of God, that is, the divine revelation (Col. 1:25-27) regarding Christ as the mystery of God (Col. 2:2b) and the church as the mystery of Christ (Eph. 3:4).

**L. The Father, the Lord, and the Spirit
as the Triune God Becoming
the Source, the Element,
and the Essence of the Church
as the Body of Christ**

Ephesians 4:4-6 reveals that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit as the Triune God have become the source, the element, and the essence of the church as the Body of Christ. God the Father is the source, God the Son is the element, and God the Spirit is the essence.

**M. Christ as the Divine Portion
Allotted to the Saints by God
and as Life to the Believers
Having Become All the Members of the New Man**

Christ as the divine portion allotted to the saints by God and as life to the believers has become all the members of the new man, which is His organic Body (Col. 1:12; 3:4a, 10-11; 1 Cor. 12:12-13).

**N. God Wanting to Make Christ,
the Embodiment of God, Everything to Us**

In Colossians 1:15-19 we see that God wants to make Christ, the embodiment of God, everything to us, the believers of Christ.

**O. God in Christ
Carrying Out His Transforming Work on Us
until His Transformation
Consummates in the New Jerusalem**

God in Christ will carry out His transforming work on us until His transformation consummates in the New Jerusalem, firstly with the overcomers in the millennial kingdom (Rev. 2:7) and consummately with all the saints in the new heaven and new earth, making all His chosen and redeemed people His corporate expression, manifesting Himself, not any kind of merely human virtues, to the fullest extent in eternity (Rev. 21:1—22:5).

Job and his friends were devoid of all the above divine revelations. God's dealing with Job in all the disasters and His stripping him of all that he was, were to take away his contentment in his godly attainments and obtainments and to remove all the barriers and coverings so that he could be emptied for some further seeking after God and could realize that he was very short of something in his human life. At the end of the book of Job, after all, God came in, indicating that what Job was short of in his human life was God Himself. But up to the age of Job, there was not a revelation like what is positively, clearly, and fully unveiled in the New Testament. For this reason, the book of Job does not actually have a completed ending, which should be God fully gained in Christ by Job to make him one with God that he might enjoy God as his portion in Christ. Such a revelation can be fully found only in the New Testament.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE THIRTY-FIVE

THE COMPLETED DIVINE REVELATION IN THE ENTIRE SCRIPTURES CONCERNING MAN'S NEED BEFORE GOD

Scripture Reading: Acts 26:18; Eph. 1:17-23; 3:16-19

In previous messages we considered, in both the Old Testament and in the New Testament, the divine revelation in the Scriptures concerning God's relationship with man. We saw that in the New Testament God's relationship with man covers fifteen items, beginning with the incarnation and consummating in the New Jerusalem. We need to study the details of all these items and to have them in our heart. Then we will be able to speak of these things to others, not only in personal fellowship but also in the church meetings. If we know these items, we will be able to give messages on them, prophesying for the building up of the Body of Christ.

In this message we will go on to cover another matter—the completed divine revelation in the entire Scriptures concerning man's need before God. God wants to have a relationship with man, and man has a need before God.

I. THE MAN CREATED BY GOD IN HIS IMAGE NEEDING TO TAKE GOD AS HIS LIFE

As the man created by God in His image (Gen. 1:26), man needed to take God (symbolized by the tree of life) as his life that he might live God, express God, and represent God (2:9); and as such a one, he needed to be transformed into precious materials (vv. 10-12) and to be built up as a counterpart to God (vv. 18-24).

**II. THE FALLEN MAN NEEDING
TO RECEIVE CHRIST FOR HIS REDEMPTION
THAT HE MIGHT BE JUSTIFIED BY GOD IN CHRIST**

As a fallen man, man needed to receive Christ for his redemption (typified by the sacrifice with its shed blood) that he might be justified by God in Christ (typified by the coats of the sacrifice's skins—3:21). Fallen man also needed to receive Christ as the seed of the woman that he might be delivered from Satan the "serpent's" death-power (v. 15; Heb. 2:14).

All these matters—the sacrifice with its blood, the coats of skins, and the seed of the woman—are found in Genesis 3. I would encourage you all, even the young ones, to learn these things and then try to present them to others. For example, a young person may visit a younger relative and speak about the need of fallen man to be justified by God in Christ or about the need for Christ as the seed of woman. First, we should digest all these truths ourselves, and then we should learn how to present them to others.

**III. REDEEMED MAN NEEDING
TO OFFER CHRIST AS THE BURNT OFFERING
THAT HE MIGHT BE REGARDED BY GOD**

As a redeemed person, man needed to offer Christ as the burnt offering that he might be regarded, respected, by God (Gen. 4:4). Man also needs to call on the name of Jehovah (v. 26), to walk with God (5:22), to work for God that he might be delivered from the corrupted and God-condemned world (6:11-18), and to live before God through Christ as the burnt offering that the earth could be kept in order (8:20-22).

**IV. THE PEOPLE CHOSEN BY GOD
NEEDING TO RECEIVE AND ANSWER GOD'S CALL**

As people chosen by God, we, the descendants of Abraham, the race chosen by God, need to receive and answer God's call (Gen. 12:1-4), to live before God through Christ as our burnt offering (v. 7; 13:18; 22:13), to be exposed by the law that we might know that we are sinful and do not have the capacity to keep the law (Exo. 19:8, 21—20:21), and to live

with God by taking Christ as the tabernacle, the priest, and the offerings that we may enter into God and enjoy all that God is with Christ and in Christ (Exo. 25—Lev. 27).

The tabernacle in the Old Testament is a type of Christ's incarnation (John 1:14). The real tabernacle is God Himself embodied in Christ. This tabernacle is a dwelling place not only for God but also for God's chosen people. This means that, after the incarnation, God is enterable. To be in Christ means to enter into God to enjoy God. Within the tabernacle there are the showbread table for our food, the lampstand for our light, and the incense altar that we may be accepted through Christ as the incense in our prayer. In the tabernacle there is also the ark for God's testimony. Now through the redeeming blood we can have fellowship with God.

**V. A MAN IN THE INCARNATED GOD
AS HIS TABERNACLE NOT NEEDING
TO BUILD UP HIMSELF IN HUMAN VIRTUES,
SUCH AS PERFECTION, UPRIGHTNESS, AND INTEGRITY,
AS JOB DID, BUT NEEDING TO SEEK AFTER GOD
AND TO ENJOY GOD WITH GOD'S PEOPLE**

Such a man who is in the incarnated God as his tabernacle did not need to build up himself in human virtues, such as perfection, uprightness, and integrity, as Job did, but he needed to seek after God as a panting hart and to enjoy God with God's people in God's feasts (Psa. 42:1-5; 43:3-5) so that God could be everything to him to replace all that he had attained and obtained. This should be the answer to Job's three friends and even to Elihu and Job. Once again we see that if we would understand the book of Job, we need the entire Bible.

**VI. THE ONES CHOSEN AND CALLED BY GOD
NEEDING TO BELIEVE INTO JESUS CHRIST**

The ones who have been chosen and called by God need to believe into Jesus Christ, who is the incarnated God, who died, resurrected, and ascended for us and with us, and who became the life-giving Spirit as the pneumatic Christ to us, that He may be our salvation, life, and everything. This is

revealed in the New Testament, in the books from Matthew through Romans.

**VII. THE BELIEVERS IN CHRIST NEEDING
TO GROW IN THE DIVINE LIFE OF CHRIST
THAT WE MAY BE TRANSFORMED
INTO WHAT CHRIST IS
THROUGH THE LIFE-DISPENSING SPIRIT,
THAT WE MAY BE BUILT UP
TO BE THE BODY OF CHRIST AND
TO BE THE NEW MAN AS GOD'S NEW CREATION**

As believers in Christ, we need to grow in the divine life of Christ that we may be transformed into what Christ is through the life-dispensing Spirit, that we may be built up with the saints to be the Body of Christ, the organism of the Triune God in Christ, and to be the new man as God's new creation to carry out God's eternal economy in the consummation of the New Jerusalem as the mingling of the processed Triune God with the glorified tripartite man, to be the corporate God-man's manifestation in eternity. This is revealed in the New Testament, from 1 Corinthians through Revelation.

**VIII. A REGENERATED, TRANSFORMED,
AND GLORIFIED SAINT IN CHRIST
HAVING NOTHING TO DO WITH THE NATURAL MAN
AND NOT NEEDING TO BUILD UP HIMSELF
WITH THE NATURAL HUMAN VIRTUES**

Such a regenerated, transformed, and glorified saint in Christ has nothing to do with the natural man and does not need to build up himself with the natural human virtues. If Job and his friends had lived at the time to know this, they would have been saved from their time-wasting, pain-increasing, and vain debates in thirty-five chapters as a record of a group of blind persons groping in darkness.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE THIRTY-SIX

THE SIGNIFICANCE IN THE SEQUENCE OF JOB AND THE PSALMS

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 2:4; 1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18; Eph. 4:13

In this message we will consider the significance in the sequence of Job and the Psalms.

I. THE SEQUENCE OF JOB AND THE PSALMS BEING VERY SIGNIFICANT SPIRITUALLY

The sequence of the two books—Job and the Psalms—is very significant spiritually. Since the book of Psalms shows progress beyond the book of Job concerning the divine revelation and concerning our seeking after God, it would not be fitting for the Psalms to come before Job. Spiritually speaking, it is significant that, in the sequence of books in the Scriptures, the Psalms comes after Job.

II. A COMPARISON OF THE TWO BOOKS

A. The Book of Job Being a Record of Human Views Based on Human Concepts

The book of Job, preceding the Psalms, is a record of human views based on human concepts concerning the relationship between God and man.

1. Bearing Divine Revelation Only concerning the Burnt Offering, God's Judgment, and Some of God's Attributes

The book of Job bears no divine revelation except the divine revelation concerning God's redemption through the burnt offering (1:5), God's judgment on man's evil (9:19b), and some of God's attributes.

**2. Not Indicating Whether Job
or His Three Friends or Elihu Sought
to Gain God as Their Attainment and Enjoyment**

The book of Job does not indicate whether Job or his three friends or Elihu sought to gain God as their attainment and enjoyment. Rather, this book tells us only that Job was a perfect and upright man who feared God (1:1).

**3. Its Contents Being the Expressions
of Human Sentiments
in Natural Views and Concepts**

The contents of the book of Job are the expressions of the human sentiments of Job, of his three friends, and of Elihu in their natural views and concepts. In this book there is no prayer or praise offered to God. Furthermore, there is no hint that Job, his three friends, and Elihu had any kind of thirst for God. In contrast to the psalmists, they did not seek God, pant after God, pray to God, or wait on God.

B. The Psalms Being a Book of Mixtures

The Psalms is a book of mixtures. Some of the prayers in this book are high, but other prayers are quite low.

In Psalm 1 there is a certain amount of seeking after God, but it is a seeking after God in His law. In Psalm 2, on the contrary, we have the praise of Christ and the unveiling of Christ. In Psalm 1 the psalmist was seeking after God, yet he did not seek God directly, but made the law of God the goal of his seeking. However, in Psalms 2, 8, and 16 the psalmists were directly seeking God Himself. In Psalm 36 the psalmist was clear that the object of his seeking should be God Himself in His house. Such a seeking cannot be found in the book of Job.

**1. In a Great Part Being Mixed
with the Psalmists' Expressions
of Their Mixed Sentiments**

In a great part the book of the Psalms is mixed with the psalmists' expressions of their mixed sentiments according to their natural concepts concerning the psalmists' relationship

with God, with men, and with their enemies. This part corresponds with the record of Job and may be considered a continuation of Job in the style of human expressions of human sentiments in human views and concepts. In this matter, Job and the Psalms are like two brothers who closely resemble each other.

**2. In a Significant Part
Being Mixed with the Divine Revelations
of Christ with God in His House and in His City**

In a significant part the book of Psalms is mixed with the divine revelations of Christ with God in His house (temple) and in His city (Jerusalem). This part should be taken as the highest divine revelation in the Old Testament concerning Christ as the centrality and universality of God's economy, which is strongly stressed by Christ Himself in Luke 24:44 and by the apostle Paul in Hebrews 1:5-13 and 10:5-7.

**III. THE FUNCTION
OF THE BOOK OF JOB IN THE SCRIPTURES**

Although the book of Job contains very little of the divine revelation, this book nevertheless has a particular function in the Scriptures. This function has several aspects.

**A. To Minister to Its Readers
a Picture of Man's Concept concerning
God's Dealing with His Holy People**

First, the book of Job ministers to its readers a picture of man's concept concerning God's dealing with His holy people. Such a picture is clearly presented.

**B. To Expose the Deficiency
of the Divine Revelation in Job's Age**

Second, the function of this book is to expose the deficiency of the divine revelation in Job's age, which was quite primitive in knowing God. There was some divine revelation, but it was in a primitive stage.

**C. To Serve the Bible Readers
with a Negative Background
so That They Will Proceed Further
in Seeking the Divine and Spiritual Truths**

Third, in its function in the Scriptures, the book of Job serves the Bible readers with a negative background so that they will proceed further from what they can receive in the book of Job and seek the divine and spiritual truths as the progression of the divine revelation shown in the Psalms. For example, the divine revelation in Psalm 45 concerning Christ as the King is very high.

**D. To Stir Up the Bible Readers'
Hunger and Thirst for Knowing Christ
as the Centrality and Universality
of God's Eternal Economy**

The book of Job also functions to stir up the Bible readers' hunger and thirst for knowing Christ as the centrality and universality of God's eternal economy and to urge them to get out of their contentment in their present attainment in knowing God. Our contentment with what we know of God is a hindrance to our progressing in the understanding of the divine revelation.

**E. To Empty the Bible Readers' Spirit
That They May Have More Room in Their Spirit
to Gain God in His Riches More and More**

In addition, the book of Job functions to empty the Bible readers' spirit that they may have more room in their spirit to gain God in His riches more and more, to gain God more than anything else.

**F. To Serve the Bible Readers with a Capacity
to Understand the Secrets in the Psalms**

Finally, the book of Job functions to serve the Bible readers with a capacity to understand the secrets of the next book, the Psalms. If we come to the Psalms without reading the

book of Job, we will be lacking part of the background necessary for understanding the secrets in the Psalms.

We have seen that our principle in this study of Job is to study this book according to what is revealed in the Bible as a whole. If we come to the book of Job without the proper understanding of the divine revelation in the entire Scriptures, this book will not mean very much to us, and we will not understand the goal of God's dealing with Job.

Some readers of Job know about his patience and endurance (James 5:10-11) and about the material blessing Job received at the end, but they do not know either what it means to see God or what God's intention was in His appearing to Job. Regarding God's dealing with Job, there were certain mysterious things, and these things are to some extent unveiled in the Psalms. For a complete unveiling we need to come to the New Testament to see the revelation concerning Christ's incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and descension to produce the church as the Body of Christ, which will consummate in the New Jerusalem.

IV. THE FUNCTION OF THE PSALMS

The function of the Psalms also has several aspects.

A. To Fill the Gap Which Is Left at the End of the Book of Job

A large gap is left at the end of the book of Job, and the first function of the Psalms is to fill this gap.

B. To Show the Bible Readers How the Holy Spirit Turned the Psalmists from the Law to Christ

The Psalms also functions to show the Bible readers how the Holy Spirit turned the psalmists from the law, which they loved and tried to keep, to Christ, of whom they did not have any idea. The psalmists were right in seeking after God, but they were not right in making the law of God the goal of their seeking. They needed to be turned in their seeking from

the law to Christ. Whereas the law is a side line in the Scriptures, Christ, the tree of life, is the main line.

**C. To Minister to the Bible Readers
the All-inclusive Christ in God's Economy**

Next, the Psalms ministers to the Bible readers, in their ignorant seeking of God, the all-inclusive Christ in God's economy. It is not adequate for us to be turned from the law to Christ; we also need to know that Christ is the center and the circumference, the hub and the rim, of God's eternal economy. This means that in God's eternal economy Christ is everything. He is the centrality and He is also the universality. We need to study the Psalms in order to learn the details concerning this all-inclusive Christ in God's eternal economy.

**D. To Help the Bible Readers
to Know That the Divine Revelation
Is Progressive until It Reaches
the High Peak of the New Jerusalem**

Furthermore, the Psalms helps the Bible readers to know that the divine revelation is progressive, going higher and higher, deeper and deeper, richer and richer, not only from the book of Job to the Psalms but also from the Psalms to all the following books in the Old Testament and to those in the New Testament, until it reaches the high peak of the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth as the consummation and ending of the divine revelation according to God's eternal economy.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE THIRTY-SEVEN

TWO TREES, TWO SOURCES, TWO LINES, TWO PRINCIPLES, AND TWO ENDS IN THE DIVINE REVELATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

Scripture Reading: Rev. 1:1b; Gen. 2:9; Psa. 36:9a; Gen. 2:17; Matt. 19:17a; Gen. 3:3, 6b; 4:4-5; Heb. 11:39-40; Matt. 25:41; Jude 11; Gen. 4:16-24; 10:6-12; 2 Pet. 2:15; Rev. 20:15; 21:2, 11, 23; 22:1-2, 14; John 16:11; Rev. 21:8, 27; 22:15

In these messages we have been considering the significance of the book of Job according to the Bible as a whole. In the divine revelation in the holy Scriptures there are two trees, two sources, two lines, two principles, and two ends. These are the matters that we will cover in this message.

In Genesis 2 there are two trees—the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. However, in Revelation 21 and 22 we see only one tree—the tree of life—in a holy city. In the center of this city is the throne of God and of the Lamb (22:1), indicating God's administration. God and the Lamb are not sitting side by side on the throne; rather, God is in the Lamb much like light is in a lamp. The Lamb is the lamp (21:23), and God is the light in the lamp. This indicates that God and the Lamb, the light and the lamp, are one. Out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, that is, out of the one God, flows a river, and on the two sides of this river grows the tree of life (22:2a). According to the principle, if the tree of life ends in the city of water, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil must end in the lake of fire. All the evil things in Revelation 22 are involved with the lake of fire. Thus, the two ends are the city of water and the lake of fire. Between the two sources and the two ends are two lines, which become two ways. Each source

issues in a line that becomes a way consummating in an end.

I. TWO TREES

A. The Bible, as a Full Record of the Divine Revelation, Being a Book of Signs

The Bible, as a full record of the divine revelation, is a book of signs (Rev. 1:1b). In the book of Revelation, for example, there are many signs, such as the golden lampstands (1:12), the stars (v. 20), the Lion of the tribe of Judah (5:5), the Lamb (v. 6), the four horses (6:1-8), and the universal woman (12:1). The last and the greatest sign in Revelation is the New Jerusalem.

B. The Two Trees Being the Two Most Striking in the First Group of Signs in Genesis 1 and 2

The two most striking in the first group of signs in Genesis 1 and 2 are the two trees (Gen. 2:9).

1. The First Being the Tree of Life, as the Highest Sign

The first of these signs is the tree of life, as the highest sign, signifying God, even the Triune God, as life to man in man's relationship with Him (Psa. 36:9a). God created man, breathing into him the breath of life (Gen. 2:7), which became man's spirit; but at that time, He did not put Himself into man as man's life.

2. The Second Being the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, as the Highest Negative Sign

The second of these signs is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, as the highest negative sign, signifying Satan the devil, even the evil one, as death to man in man's fall before God (Gen. 2:17).

3. Both Signs Signifying Persons

Both of these signs, as the most striking ones, signify persons—God and Satan—not things or matters.

4. The First Tree Signifying God Only as Life

The first tree signifies God only as life, with no implications of other elements.

5. The Second Tree Signifying Satan as Death

The second tree signifies Satan as death, with the implications of knowledge, good, and evil. Whereas God is simple, Satan is very complicated.

6. Good and Evil Not Being Signified by Two Trees but by One Tree—the Second Tree

Good and evil are not signified by two trees but by one tree—the second tree. Thus, seeking good other than God belongs to Satan.

According to the divine revelation, knowledge is Satan, good is Satan, and evil is Satan. Today the world is in an age that worships knowledge. Before eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam and Eve were ignorant, not knowing, so they had no sin. After they ate of the tree of knowledge, their eyes were opened, and they became knowledgeable. That was sin. We all consider that to commit sin is sin, but we may not consider that knowing sin is sin.

7. The Genuine Good Being God Himself

The genuine good is God Himself (Matt. 19:17a); hence, gaining God equals gaining the genuine good. When the rich young ruler came to the Lord Jesus and called Him, “Good Teacher,” the Lord Jesus said, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good except One—God” (Mark 10:17-18). If besides God we gain any other good, that is terrible. If we touch the good things outside of God, this means that we touch Satan. The Bible teaches us that knowledge, good, and evil all are Satan. In the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, therefore, evil and good are equal.

C. The Two Trees
Not Being for Producing Materials
but for Man to Eat Their Fruit

The two trees are not for producing materials but for man to eat their fruit (Gen. 3:3, 6b), the fruit of the tree of life becoming food to man for nourishing, for the dispensing of life, and the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil becoming poison to man for killing. To eat means to take in something that is outside of us and then digest and assimilate it. We must be careful concerning what we eat. Surely, today's television and so many different kinds of newspapers and magazines are branches of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

II. TWO SOURCES

The two trees are two sources.

A. The Two Trees,
as Signs of God and Satan,
Being the Two Sources of Two Categories of Men

The two trees, as signs of God and Satan, are the two sources of two categories of men. The first tree is the source of men who seek God as life for their supply and enjoyment, of whom Abel is the leading one (Gen. 4:4). The second tree is the source of men who follow Satan as their poison unto death and eternal perdition, of whom Cain is the leading one (v. 5).

B. The Outcome of the Two Sources
Becoming Two Kingdoms on the Earth

The outcome of the two sources becomes two kingdoms on the earth. The first is the kingdom of God, which was first the kingdom of Israel according to God's Old Testament economy and then the church according to God's New Testament economy (Matt. 21:43). The second is the kingdom of Satan (cf. Matt. 12:26; Col. 1:13).

III. TWO LINES

Every source has an issue. These two sources issue in two lines.

A. The Two Lines Being the Two Ways

Each line is also a way. Thus, the two lines are the two ways.

1. The Two Lines, as the Two Ways, Originating from the Two Sources

The two lines, as the two ways, originate from the two sources.

2. The First Way Being the Way of Life

The first way is the way of life, the constricted way (Matt. 7:14), the Way (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:22), the straight way (2 Pet. 2:15), the way of righteousness (2 Pet. 2:21), the way of salvation (Acts 16:17), the way of God (Matt. 22:16; Acts 18:26), and the way of the Lord (Acts 18:25), for men to seek God, to gain God, and to enjoy God in His eternal life as the supply and unto His eternal life as the goal, that they may be born of God in His life and nature (John 1:12-13), transformed and conformed into His glorious image (2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:29), and glorified in Him as glory (Rom. 8:30; 1 Pet. 5:10a; Heb. 2:10a) to gain Him and participate in Him to the fullest extent. In this way of life are Abel, Seth, Enosh, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Samuel, all the Old Testament prophets, and all the New Testament believers (Heb. 11:39-40). God's purpose in dealing with Job was to turn him from the way of good and evil to this way of life that he might gain God to the fullest extent.

3. The Second Way Being the Way of Good and Evil

The second way is the way of good and evil, the way of death, the broad way (Matt. 7:13), for men to follow Satan to be his children (1 John 3:10a) unto death and his companions in his eternal perdition (Matt. 25:41). In this way of death and of good and evil are Cain, Lamech, Jabal, Jubal,

Tubal-cain (Jude 11a; Gen. 4:16-24), Ham, Cush, Nimrod (Gen. 10:6-12), Korah, Balaam (2 Pet. 2:15; Jude 11b), Saul, Absalom, Antichrist and his followers (Rev. 19:19-21), and all unbelievers (Rev. 20:15).

B. These Two Ways Leading Men to the Two God-ordained Ends

These two ways, the way of life and the way of death, lead men to the two God-ordained ends—the New Jerusalem and the lake of fire—respectively.

IV. TWO PRINCIPLES

A. The Two Ways Constituting the Two Principles

The two ways, the way of life and the way of death and of good and evil, constitute the two controlling, ruling, and regulating principles by which men have their relationship with God.

1. The First Principle Being the Principle of Life

The first principle is the principle of life, according to which all men in the way of life keep their contact with God, and by which they seek God, gain God, possess God, and enjoy God, step by step, until they reach the fullest extent.

2. The Second Principle Being the Principle of Death and of Good and Evil

The second principle is the principle of death and of good and evil, in which all men in the way of death follow Satan either consciously or unconsciously, and through which they reject God and His way of life to be Satan's companions unto death and eternal perdition.

B. God's Purpose in Dealing with Job Severely

God's purpose in dealing with Job severely was to adjust his logic concerning his relationship with God from the principle of good and evil according to ethics to the principle of life according to God, that he might be one who gained God and participated in God for the fulfillment of God's eternal economy.

V. TWO ENDS**A. The Two Ends Being
the Two Destinations of the Two Ways**

The two ends are the two destinations of the two ways men take in their relationship with God.

**1. The Destination of God's Way of Life
Being a City of Water of Life**

The destination of God's way of life is a city of water of life, the New Jerusalem, God's eternal dwelling (Rev. 21:2, 11, 23; 22:1-2, 14), as the best and most glorious goal for all the men who walk in the way of life according to God's desire and for God's pleasure, that they may participate with God in all the blessings of God as the eternal life for eternity.

**2. The Destination of the Way
of Death and of Good and Evil
Being a Lake of Fire of Brimstone**

The destination of the way of death and of good and evil is a lake of fire of brimstone, the Gehenna of fire (Matt. 5:22), Satan's eternal prison, as the worst and most miserable end for all the men who take the way of death according to Satan's evil device, that they may share with Satan the eternal judgment and eternal perdition (John 16:11; Matt. 25:41; Rev. 21:8, 27; 22:15).

**B. The New Jerusalem Being a Dynamic Incentive
and the Lake of Fire Being a Solemn Warning**

The New Jerusalem, as the best and most glorious end of God's way of life, is a dynamic incentive for us to seek God until we gain Him to the fullest extent according to His love and grace; and the lake of fire, as the worst and most miserable end of Satan's way of death and of good and evil, should be a solemn warning to the men who follow Satan in his way against God's economy, to turn from his way of death to God's way of life that they may escape Satan's eternal judgment and eternal perdition, according to God's righteousness and justice.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOB

MESSAGE THIRTY-EIGHT

AN ADDITIONAL MESSAGE

THE DIVINE DISPENSING OF THE DIVINE ECONOMY

Scripture Reading: Eph. 1:10; 3:8-10; 1 Tim. 1:4; Gal. 1:15-16; Col. 3:4a; John 12:24; 19:34; Rom. 5:10; John 3:3, 5-6; Titus 3:5; 1 Pet. 2:2; Eph. 4:12-13; 1 Cor. 14:3; Eph. 4:15-16; Rom. 8:2; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Phil. 1:19b; 1 Cor. 12:13b; John 7:37-39; Gal. 5:16, 25

There are two great things in the Bible—the divine dispensing and the divine economy. In this message we will cover these two matters.

I. THE DIVINE ECONOMY BEING GOD'S ETERNAL PLAN TO DISPENSE CHRIST INTO HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE

The word *economy* is an anglicized form of the Greek word *oikonomia*, which means “household law” or “household management” or “household administration” and derivatively “administrative dispensation,” “plan,” “economy.” The divine economy is God’s eternal plan to dispense Christ into His chosen people to produce, constitute, and build up the organic Body of Christ (Eph. 1:10; 3:8-10; 1 Tim. 1:4). Since Christ is the embodiment of the Triune God, for God to dispense Christ into His chosen people actually means that God dispenses Himself in Christ into His chosen people. In brief, God’s economy is to gain a Body for Christ. This Body is the enlargement of the Triune God for His expression that He may be satisfied.

II. THE DIVINE DISPENSING BEING TO IMPART CHRIST AS LIFE AND THE LIFE SUPPLY INTO HIS BELIEVERS

The divine dispensing is to impart Christ as life and the life supply into His believers (Gal. 1:15-16; Col. 3:4a).

A. In God's Redemption

This dispensing of Christ as the embodiment of the Triune God is first in God's redemption (John 12:24; 19:34). The central point, the goal, of God's redemption is not merely to redeem us from our sins and from the condemnation of sin (eternal perdition), but to release, that is, to dispense, God Himself as the divine life into His redeemed ones. John 12:24 says that Christ in His incarnation as a grain of wheat fell into the ground and died. Just as there is life in a grain of wheat, within the human shell of Christ's physical body there was the divine life. When He was on earth in the flesh, the divine life within Him was concealed in the shell of His human body. He went to the cross and died, and the death of the cross broke this human shell and released the divine life to produce many grains. This is to release the divine life into all these grains. Also, John 19:34 says that when Christ died on the cross, two elements, blood and water, flowed out of Him. Blood is for redemption, and water is for the releasing of the divine life. Thus, the redeeming death of Christ becomes the life-releasing death.

B. In God's Salvation

The divine dispensing is also in God's salvation (Rom. 5:10). God's redemption is the foundation of His salvation. Based on His redemption, God has to save us by the life of Christ. The first step of this saving is to regenerate us, which is to impart the divine life into us. Thus, God's salvation is centered in life-dispensing.

C. In Saving Sinners

The divine dispensing is involved also in the saving of sinners (John 3:3, 5-6; Titus 3:5). When God saves sinners, He regenerates them, dispensing Himself as life into their being. When we go to seek sinners for Christ, we need to point out to them that they need God's life and that the way to receive God's life is to be born of God, to be regenerated.

D. In Nourishing the New Believers

God's ordained way is first to regenerate us and then to nourish us. First Peter 2:2 says that as newborn babes we need to drink of the milk of the word so that we may grow unto salvation.

E. In Perfecting the Saints

Ephesians 4:12-13 speaks of perfecting the saints, something which is needed by all believers. To perfect the saints is to dispense Christ into them so that they can grow to maturity. When we preach the gospel, we impart Christ into sinners. When we nourish the new believers, we dispense Christ into them as food, as the nourishing element. Likewise, when we perfect the saints, we minister Christ to them, dispensing Christ into them not only as milk but also as solid food (1 Cor. 3:2; Heb. 5:13-14).

F. In Prophesying

The divine dispensing is also in prophesying (1 Cor. 14:3). When we prophesy in our meetings, our prophesying must minister Christ. We should not merely speak concerning a part of the Bible or merely talk about doctrine; we should do our best to put Christ into our prophesying. Then the reality of our ministry will be Christ Himself.

G. In Building Up the Body of Christ

All the foregoing items—to save sinners, to nourish the new believers, to perfect the saints, and to prophesy—are to build up the Body of Christ (Eph. 4:15-16).

We need to see that God's economy is to dispense Himself in Christ into us, beginning with regeneration and continuing with nourishing and perfecting until we become mature. Then we will be built into the Body of Christ.

III. THE DIVINE DISPENSING BEING CARRIED OUT BY THE SPIRIT OF LIFE

The divine dispensing is carried out by the Spirit of life

as the life-giving Spirit with His bountiful supply (Rom. 8:2; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Phil. 1:19b).

IV. THE WAY TO RECEIVE THE DIVINE DISPENSING

A. To Drink the Spirit

The way to receive the divine dispensing is first to drink the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13b; John 7:37-39) in our spirit by exercising our spirit.

B. To Live and Walk by the Spirit

The way to receive the divine dispensing is also to live and walk by the Spirit (Gal. 5:16, 25). This requires that we exercise our spirit.

God has done everything necessary to consummate Himself into the one Spirit. This Spirit today is the totality of the processed and consummated Triune God. When we were attracted by Christ, believed in Him, and called on the name of the Lord Jesus, a living person entered into us. This One is the Spirit as the consummation of the processed and consummated Triune God. When He as the Spirit dwells in us, that indwelling One is Christ, and Christ is the Triune God. This One is all-inclusive, and today as the consummated Spirit He indwells our spirit.

When we were saved, the Spirit came into our spirit to regenerate our spirit, to enliven our spirit, and to be mingled with our spirit. The Christian life is a story of this mingled Spirit. To live a normal Christian life is to care for the two spirits—the divine Spirit in our regenerated human spirit.

When we contact the Lord, when we pray to Him, and when we praise Him, our part is to receive His dispensing, and His part is to dispense. The more we receive, the more He dispenses. In this way we gain all the elements of the Triune God in His person, in His nature, and in His life. As a result, the Triune God grows in us. When He grows in us, we grow in Him. This is all a story of life-dispensing.

Through the abundant receiving of the divine dispensing, we have the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and we grow in the divine life. This is the Christian life, and

this Christian life is altogether due to the divine dispensing of the divine economy.

